

**THIỆN PHÚC**

**ESSENTIAL SUMMARIES OF  
THE QUINTESSENCE  
IN THE VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA  
(YÊU LƯỢC TÍNH HOA KINH DUY MA CẬT)**

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## *Preface*

Pure Name (Vimalakirti), name of a layman of Buddha's time who was excellent in Buddhist philosophy. Many questions and answers between Vimalakirti and the Buddha are recorded in the Vimalakirti-nirdesa. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Expedient Method (Upaya) of Teaching, in the great town of Vaisai, there was an elder called Vimalakirti, who had made offerings to countless Buddhas and had deeply planted all good roots, thereby, achieving the patient endurance of the uncreate. His unhindered power of speech enabled him to roam everywhere using his supernatural powers to teach others. He had achieved absolute control over good and evil influences (dharani) thereby, realizing fearlessness. So he overcame all passions and demons, entered all profound Dharma-doors to enlightenment, excelled in Wisdom perfection (prajna-paramita) and was well versed in all expedient methods (upaya) of teaching, thereby, fulfilling all great Bodhisatva vows. He knew very well the mental propensities of living beings and could distinguish their various (spiritual) roots. For along time, he had trodden the Buddha-path and his mind was spotless. Since he understood Mahayana, all his actions were based on right thinking. While dwelling in the Buddha's awe-inspiring majesty, his mind was extensive like the great ocean. He was praised by all Buddhas and revered by Indra, Brahma and worldly kings. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Expedient Method (Upaya) of Teaching, as he was set on saving men, he expediently stayed at Vaisali for this purpose. He used his unlimited wealth to aid the poor; he kept all the rules of morality and discipline to correct those breaking the precepts; he used his great patience to teach those giving rise to anger and hate; he taught zeal and devotion to those who were remiss; he used serenity to check stirring thoughts; and employed decisive wisdom to defeat ignorance. Although wearing white clothes (of the laity) he observed all the rules of the Sangha. Although a layman, he was free from all attachments to the three worlds (of desire, form and beyond form). Although he was married and had children, he was diligent in his practice of pure living. Although a householder, he delighted in keeping from domestic establishments. Although he ate

and drank (like others), he delighted in tasting the flavour of moderation. When entering a gambling house, he always tried to teach and deliver people there. He received heretics but never strayed from the right faith. Though he knew worldly classics, he always took joy in the Buddha Dharma. He was revered by all who met him. He upheld the right Dharma and taught it to old and young people. Although occasionally he realized some profit in his worldly activities, he was not happy about these earnings. While walking in the street, he never failed to convert others (to the Dharma). When he entered a government office, he always protected others (from injustice). When joining a symposium, he led others to the Mahayana. When visiting a school he enlightened the students. When entering a house of prostitution, he revealed the sin of sexual intercourse. When going to a tavern, he stuck to his determination (to abstain from drinking). When amongst elders he was the most revered for he taught them the exalted Dharma. When amongst (among) upasakas, he was the most respected for he taught them how to wipe out all desires and attachments. When amongst those of the ruling class, he was the most revered, for he taught them forbearance. When amongst Brahmins, he was the most revered, for he taught them how to conquer pride and prejudice. When amongst government officials he was the most revered, for he taught them correct law. When amongst princes, he was the most revered, for he taught them loyalty and filial piety. When in the inner palaces, he was the most revered, for he converted all maids of honour there. When amongst common people, he was the most revered, for he urged them to cultivate all meritorious virtues. When amongst Brahma-devas, he was the most revered, for he urged the gods to realize the Buddha wisdom. When amongst Sakras and Indras, he was the most revered, for he revealed to them the impermanence (of all things). When amongst lokapalas, he was the most revered, for he protected all living beings. Thus, Vimalakirti used countless expedient methods (upaya) to teach for the benefit of living beings. The Vimalakirti Sutra, a key Mahayana Sutra particularly with Zen and with some Pure Land followers. The main protagonist is a layman named Vimalakirti who is equal of many Bodhisattvas in wisdom and eloquence. He explained the teaching of “Emptiness” in terms of non-duality. When asked by Manjusri to define the non-dual truth, Vimalakirti simply remained



silent. The sutra emphasized on real practice “The true nature of things is beyond the limiting concepts imposed by words.” The sutra also emphasized on the primary aim of meditation is to let Zen Flowers blooming with the abilities to stop the flow of thoughts and to clear the mind as well as to eliminate sufferings and afflictions, and eventually producing fruits of Enlightenment and Emancipation with a life full of peace, mindfulness and happiness in this very life. In other words, in the Vimalakirti Zen Garden, Zen Flowers always produce fruits of Enlightenment and Emancipation in four seasons of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter.

This little book titled “Zen Flowers In the Vimalakirti Sutra” is only showing the cores of the quintessence which the author of this book considers as Zen Flowers that will surely produce fruits of Enlightenment and Emancipation in the Vimalakirti Sutra; it is not a profound study of wonderful meanings of this sutra. Devout Buddhists should always remember that Buddhist religion is the path of returning to self (looking inward), the goal of its education must be inward and not outward for appearances and matters. The most important thing here is to enter into practicing these cores of the quintessence in Buddhist teachings in order to be able to establish these patterns of virtues in daily life activities, to make our lives more peaceful, mindful and happy. In Buddhist scriptures, in this case, the Vimalakirti Sutra, Vimalakirti already explained clearly about the path of seeing the Buddha-Nature which He found out and advanced on that path. Now, it's our own responsibility to practice or not to practice. The path of cultivation still demands continuous efforts with right understanding and practice. Presently even with so many books available on Buddhism, I venture to compose this booklet titled “Zen Flowers In the Vimalakirti Sutra” in Vietnamese and English to introduce basic things in Buddhism to all Vietnamese Buddhist followers, especially Buddhist beginners, hoping this little contribution will help Buddhists in different levels to understand on how to achieve and lead a life of peace, mindfulness and happiness.

Respectfully,  
Thiền Phúc



***Part One***  
***An Overview of Buddhism &  
Some Basic Buddhist Doctrines***



## *Chapter One*

### *Summaries of the Buddha & Buddhism*

#### *I. Buddha's Birth Day:*

In the year 563 B.C. a baby was born into a royal family in northern India. "In the heavens above and earth beneath I alone am the honoured one." According to Indian legendary, this is first words attributed to Sakyamuni after his first seven steps when born from his mother's right side, not an arrogant speaking, it bears witness to an awareness of the identity of I, the one's own true nature or Buddha-nature with the true nature of the universe, not the earthly ego. This announcement is ascribed to every Buddha, as are also the same special characteristics attributed to every Buddha, hence he is the Tathagata come in the manner of all Buddhas. In Mahayanism he is the type of countless other Buddhas in countless realms and periods. He grew up in wealth and luxury but soon found that worldly comfort and security do not guarantee real happiness. He was deeply moved by the suffering he saw all around, so He resolved to find the key to human happiness. When he was 29 he left his wife and child and his Royal Palace and set off to sit at the feet of the great religious teachers of the day to learn from them. They taught him much but none really knew the cause of human sufferings and afflictions and how it could be overcome. Eventually, after six years study and meditation he had an experience in which all ignorance fell away and he suddenly understood. From that day onwards, he was called the Buddha, the Awakened One. He lived for another 45 years in which time he traveled all over northern India teaching others what he had discovered. His compassion and patience were legendary and he made hundreds of thousands of followers. In his eightieth year, old and sick, but still happy and at peace, he finally passed away into nirvana. It couldn't have been an easy thing for the Buddha to leave his family. He must have worried and hesitated for a long time before he finally left. There were two choices, dedicating himself to his family or dedicating himself to the whole world. In the end, his great compassion made him give himself to the whole world. And the whole world still

benefits from his sacrifice. This was perhaps the most significant sacrifice ever made.

Nowadays, there are still some discussions over the exact year of the Buddha's birth; however, the majority of opinions favor 623 B.C. The Buddha's birthday was the day of the full moon in May. It was a beautiful day. The weather was nice and a gentle breeze was blowing. All the flowers in the Lumbini Park were blooming, emitting fragrant scents, and all the birds were singing melodious songs. Together, they seemed to have created a fairy land on earth to celebrate the birth of the Prince, a coming Buddha. According to the Indian legends, at that time, the earth shook, and from the sky, two silvery currents of pure water gushed down, one was warm and the other cool, which bathed the body of the Prince. Nowadays, countries with Buddhist tradition usually celebrate the Buddha's Birthday around the middle of the fourth month of the Lunar Year. Also according to Indian legends, the more reliable Buddha's Birth Day, perhaps on the 4<sup>th</sup> month, 8<sup>th</sup> day; however, all Buddhist countries observe the Full Moon Day of the Lunar month of Vaisakha (April-May) as Buddha Birth Day Anniversary. For the Buddhist community, the most important event of the year is the celebration of the birth of the Buddha. It falls on the full-moon day in the fourth lunar month (in May of the Solar Calendar). This occasion is observed by millions of Buddhists throughout the world. It is called Vesak in Sri Lanka, Visakha Puja in Thailand. On this day, Buddhists in some countries like China and Korea would take part in the ceremonial bathing of the Buddha. They pour ladles of water scented with flower petals over a statue of the baby Buddha. This symbolizes purifying their thoughts and actions. The temple are elegantly decorated with flowers and banners; the altars are full of offerings. Vegetarian meals are provided for all. Captive animals, such as birds and turtles, are set free from their cages. This is a very joyous day for everyone. According to the Theravada tradition, the Buddha's Birth Day, perhaps on the 4<sup>th</sup> month, 8<sup>th</sup> day; however, all Buddhist countries observe the Full Moon Day of the Lunar month of Vaisakha (April-May) as Buddha Birth Day Anniversary. This is one of the major festivals of Buddhism because most Buddhist countries celebrate the day on which the Buddha was born, attained awakening, and passed into nirvana. According to the Mahayana tradition, the month

corresponding to April-May, on the Full Moon day of which is celebrated the Birth, Renunciation, Enlightenment and Parinirvana of the Buddha. The Vesak celebration consists of the presentation of the teaching, contemplation of the life of Buddha, the process around the sacred sites. Furthermore, Vesak festival goes beyond mere historical commemoration; it is a reminder for each of us to strive to become enlightened.

Even though the Buddha is dead but 2,500 years later his teachings still help and save a lot of people, his example still inspires people, his words still continue to change lives. Only a Buddha could have such power centuries after his death. The Buddha did not claim that he was a god, the child of god or even the messenger from a god. He was simply a man who perfected himself and taught that if we followed his example, we could perfect ourselves also. He never asked his followers to worship him as a god. In fact, He prohibited his followers to praise him as a god. He told his followers that he could not give favors to those who worship him with personal expectations or calamities to those who don't worship him. He asked his followers to respect him as students respect their teacher. He also reminded his followers to worship a statue of the Buddha to remind ourselves to try to develop peace and love within ourselves. The perfume of incense reminds us of the pervading influence of virtue, the lamp reminds us of the light of knowledge and the followers which soon fade and die, remind us of impermanence. When we bow, we express our gratitude to the Buddha for what his teachings have given us. This is the core nature of Buddhist worship. A lot of people have misunderstood the meaning of "worship" in Buddhism, even sincere Buddhists. Buddhists do not believe that the Buddha is a god, so in no way they could possibly believe that a piece of wood or metal is a god. In Buddhism, the statue of the Buddha is used to symbolize human perfection. The statue of the Buddha also reminds us of the human dimension in Buddhist teaching, the fact that Buddhism is man-centered, not god-centered, that we must look within not without to find perfection and understanding. So in no way one can say that Buddhists worship god or idols. In fact, a long time ago, when primitive man found himself in a dangerous and hostile situations, the fear of wild animals, of not being able to find enough food, of diseases, and of natural calamities or

phenomena such as storms, hurricanes, volcanoes, thunder, and lightning, etc. He found no security in his surroundings and he had no ability to explain those phenomena, therefore, he created the idea of gods in order to give him comfort in good times, courage in times of danger and consolation when things went wrong. They believed that god arranged everything. Generations after generations, man continues to follow his ancestors in a so-called “faith in god” without any further thinkings. Some says they in believe in god because god responds to their prayers when they feel fear or frustration. Some say they believe in god because their parents and grandparents believed in god. Some others say that they prefer to go to church than to temple because those who go to churches seem richer and more honorable than those who go to temples. Devout Buddhists should always remember that each religion has its own faith. We, Buddhists can neither compare this religion to that religion; nor can we say this religion is better than that religion. Be careful!

## ***II. The Buddha Is a Complete Enlightened One:***

The word Buddha is not a proper name, but a title meaning “Enlightened One” or “Awakened One.” Prince Siddhartha was not born to be called Buddha. He was not born enlightened; however, efforts after efforts, he became enlightened. Any beings who sincerely try can also be freed from all clings and become enlightened as the Buddha. All Buddhists should be aware that the Buddha was not a god or any kind of supernatural being. Like us, he was born a man. The difference between the Buddha and an ordinary man is simply that the former has awakened to his Buddha nature while the latter is still deluded about it. However, whether we are awakened or deluded, the Buddha nature is equally present in all beings. “Buddha” is an epithet of those who successfully break the hold of ignorance, liberate themselves from cyclic existence, and teach others the path to liberation. The word “Buddha” derived from the Sanskrit root *budh*, “to awaken,” it refers to someone who attains Nirvana through meditative practice and the cultivation of such qualities as wisdom, patience, and generosity. Such a person will never again be reborn within cyclic existence, as all the cognitive ties that bind ordinary beings to continued rebirth have been severed. Through their meditative



practice, Buddhas have eliminated all craving, and defilements. The Buddha of the present era is referred to as “Sakyamuni” (Sage of the Sakya). He was born Siddhartha Gautama, a member of the Sakya clan. The Buddha is One Awakened or Enlightened to the true nature of existence. The word Buddha is the name for one who has been enlightened, who brings enlightenment to others, whose enlightened practice is complete and ultimate. The term Buddha derived from the Sanskrit verb root “Budh” meaning to understand, to be aware of, or to awake. It describes a person who has achieved the enlightenment that leads to release from the cycle of birth and death and has thereby attained complete liberation. The Buddha is the Enlightened One. Chinese translation is “to perceive” and “knowledge.” Buddha means a person who has achieved the enlightenment that leads to release from the cycle of birth and death and has thereby attained complete liberation. There are three degrees of enlightenment: enlightenment derived from one’s self, enlighten others, and attain the Buddhahood. The Buddha is the Enlightened One with Great Loving Kindness. He benefitted and perfected of the self (to benefit oneself), or to improve himself for the purpose of improving or benefiting others. Self-benefiting for the benefit of others, unlimited altruism and pity being the theory of Mahayana. “Self profit, profit others,” the essential nature and work of a Bodhisattva, to benefit himself and benefit others, or himself press forward in the Buddhist life in order to carry others forward. Hinayana is considered to be self-advancement, self-salvation by works or discipline; Bodhisattva Buddhism as saving oneself in order to save others, or making progress and helping others to progress, Bodhisattvism being essentially altruistic. The second step is Benefiting or perfecting of others (to benefit others). And the third step is to attain of Buddhahood.

The Buddha is the person who has achieve the enlightenment that leads to release from the cycle of birth and death and has thereby attained complete liberation. The word Buddha is not a proper name but a title meaning “Enlightened One” or “Awakened One.” Prince Siddhartha was not born to be called Buddha. He was not born enlightened, nor did he receive the grace of any supernatural being; however, efforts after efforts, he became enlightened. It is obvious to Buddhists who believe in re-incarnation, that the Buddha did not come

into the world for the first time. Like everyone else, he had undergone many births and deaths, had experienced the world as an animal, as a man, and as a god. During many rebirths, he would have shared the common fate of all that lives. A spiritual perfection like that of a Buddha cannot be the result of just one life. It must mature slowly throughout many ages and aeons. However, after His Enlightenment, the Buddha confirmed that any beings who sincerely try can also be freed from all clings and become enlightened as the Buddha. All Buddhists should be aware that the Buddha was not a god or any kind of supernatural being (supreme deity), nor was he a savior or creator who rescues sentient beings by taking upon himself the burden of their sins. Like us, he was born a man. The difference between the Buddha and an ordinary man is simply that the former has awakened to his Buddha nature while the latter is still deluded about it. However, the Buddha nature is equally present in all beings.

According to the Zen sects, Buddhists accept the historic Sakyamuni Buddha neither as a Supreme Deity nor as a savior who rescues men by taking upon himself the burden of their sins. Rather, it venerates him as a fully awakened, fully perfected human being who attained liberation of body and mind through his own human efforts and not by the grace of any supernatural being. According to Buddhism, we are all Buddhas from the very beginning that means every one of us is potentially a Buddha; however, to become a Buddha, one must follow the arduous road to enlightenment. Various classifications of the stages of Buddhahood are to be found in the sutras. A Buddha in the highest stage is not only fully enlightened but a Perfect One, one who has become whole, complete in himself, that is, one in whom all spiritual and psychic faculties have come to perfection, to maturity, to a stage of perfect harmony, and whose consciousness encompasses the infinity of the universe. Such a one can no longer be identified with the limitations of his individual personality, his individual character and existence; there is nothing by which he could be measured, there are no words to describe him.

### ***III. The Birth of A Religion:***

Some twenty-five centuries ago a great man took up the life of a wandering ascetic in what is today Northern India. This in itself was not

a unique event: many others also sought spiritual liberation walking in the deep forests and high mountains. However, this man's quest resulted in answer that have been handed down to successive generations and, in the process, have been elaborated, interpreted and reinterpreted to form one of the greatest living religious traditions. In fact, Buddhism is much more than a religion: its cultural and philosophical impact has for centuries reverberated throughout South and Southeast Asia and, more recently, in the West. The tradition has become so vast and diverse that a superficial glance seems to reveal more disparity than continuity. Nevertheless, behind the many incongruities there is a recognizable common thread. All forms of Buddhism share the same roots and all are motivated by the quest to attain a long-lasting state of contentment through mental, spiritual and moral development. All relate in some way to the enlightenment experience of one man, who is known as the "Buddha." Buddhism began in India in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and all its variants can be traced to these origins. According to ancient Indian history, the precise historical beginning of the tradition is somewhat obscure, for at that time there were so many small kingdoms all over India. However, there is no question that around the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., an exceptionally charismatic teacher, probably a member of the Sakya clan in Kapilavastu, in present day Nepal, began to preach a new approach to the age-old problem of salvation. It has been suggested that his teaching was a reaction to the dominant "Brahmanical" culture of his time, which centered on the Vedas and on the sacrificial practices that were carried out by the priestly class. As a matter of fact, Buddhism is very simple. This religion is a demonstration of kindness towards other human beings. The most important thing in Buddhism is a good mind and warm feelings. The Buddha believes that each individual has an opportunity to change his own life and enlightenment is the utmost achievement of everybody. However, Buddhism exerted an enormous influence on the intellectual, religious and cultural life of India for more than sixteen centuries. It played a formative part in defining Hindu culture and, during its first centuries, was so enmeshed in Indian society (together with other spiritual teachings of the subcontinent) that it is misleading to think of it as a self-conscious reformist movement. Buddhism became established as a monastic religion, enjoying spells

of royal patronage, but around the 8<sup>th</sup> century it came under pressure from a resurgent Hinduism. Its decline was precipitated by Muslim invasions from the North, which began in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and gradually intensify during the following eight centuries. With the ruthless sacking of the great Buddhist universities at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Buddhism all but disappeared from India. The teachings of Buddhism have never been exclusive to one class or limited to one geographical area. The Buddha and his monks spent the dry months wandering in what is today northern India and, long before Buddhism's disappearance from India, their beliefs were carried by monks and travelers all over Asia, to Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, China, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Tibet and Vietnam, to name but few of the places where the tradition has taken root. Buddhism is particularly amenable to expansion because of the universality of the Buddha's teaching. His Dharma (Truth) is designed to appeal to every individual, regardless of rank or class, inviting him or her to follow the path leading to enlightenment and the cessation of suffering. Being linked to neither a specific place nor a single society, Buddhism has generally managed to incorporate the local customs and beliefs that it has encountered in its expansion, especially that are traditionally associated with the social life. This has opened up Buddhism to a host of influence and has resulted in a greatly varied tradition, which nevertheless manages to preserve the core of its teaching.

#### ***IV. An Overview of Buddhism:***

Buddhism is a philosophy, a way of life or a religion. The religion of the awakened one. One of the three great world religions. It was founded by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni over 25 centuries ago. Sakyamuni expounded the four Noble Truths as the core of his teaching, which he had recognized in the moment of his enlightenment. He had shown people how to live wisely and happily and his teachings soon spread from India throughout Asia, and beyond. The name Buddhism comes from the word "budhi" which means 'to wake up' and thus Buddhism is the philosophy of awakening. Therefore, the real definition of Buddhism is Noble Truth. The Buddha did not teach from theories. He always taught from a practical standpoint based on His understanding, His enlightenment, and His realization of the Truth.

This philosophy has its origins in the experience of the man named Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, who was himself awakened at the age of 36. Buddhism is now older than 2,500 years old and has more than 800 million followers world wide (including Chinese followers in Mainland China). People in the West had heard of the Buddha and his teaching as early as the thirteenth century when Marco Polo (1254-1324), the Italian traveler who explored Asia, wrote accounts on Buddhism in his book, "Travels of Marco Polo". From the eighteenth century onwards, Buddhist text were brought to Europe and translated into English, French and German. Until a hundred years ago, Buddhism was mainly an Asian philosophy but increasingly it is gaining adherents in Europe and America. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Alan Bennett, an Englishman, went to Burma to become a Buddhist monk. He was renamed Ananda Metteya. He returned to Britain in 1908. He was the first British person to become a Buddhist monk. He taught Dharma in Britain. Since then, Buddhist monks and nuns from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Japan, China and other Buddhist countries in Asia have come to the West, particularly over the last seventy years. Many of these teachers have kept to their original customs while others have adapted to some extent to meet the demands of living in a western society. In recent years, there has been a marked growth of interest in Buddhism in Europe. The membership of existing societies has increased and many new Buddhist centers have been established. Their members include large numbers of professionals and scholars. Today, Britain alone has over 140 Buddhist centers found in most major cities.

The word philosophy comes from two words 'philo' which means 'love' and 'sophia' which means 'wisdom'. So philosophy is the love of wisdom or love and wisdom, both meanings describing Buddhism perfectly. Buddhism teaches that we should try to develop our intellectual capacity to the fullest so that we can understand clearly. It also teaches us to develop loving kindness and compassion so that we can become (be like) a true friend to all beings. So Buddhism is a philosophy but not just a philosophy. It is the supreme philosophy. In the year 563 B.C. a baby was born into a royal family in northern India. He grew up in wealth and luxury but soon found that worldly comfort and security do not guarantee real happiness. He was deeply moved by

the suffering he saw all around, so He resolved to find the key to human happiness. When he was 29 he left his wife and child and his Royal Palace and set off to sit at the feet of the great religious teachers of the day to learn from them. They taught him much but none really knew the cause of human sufferings and afflictions and how it could be overcome. Eventually, after six years study and meditation he had an experience in which all ignorance fell away and he suddenly understood. From that day onwards, he was called the Buddha, the Awakened One. He lived for another 45 years in which time he traveled all over northern India teaching others what he had discovered. His compassion and patience were legendary and he made hundreds of thousands of followers. In his eightieth year, old and sick, but still happy and at peace, he finally passed away into nirvana.

It couldn't have been an easy thing for the Buddha to leave his family. He must have worried and hesitated for a long time before he finally left. There were two choices, dedicating himself to his family or dedicating himself to the whole world. In the end, his great compassion made him give himself to the whole world. And the whole world still benefits from his sacrifice. This was perhaps the most significant sacrifice ever made. Even though the Buddha is dead but 2,500 years later his teachings still help and save a lot of people, his example still inspires people, his words still continue to change lives. Only a Buddha could have such power centuries after his death. The Buddha did not claim that he was a god, the child of god or even the messenger from a god. He was simply a man who perfected himself and taught that if we followed his example, we could perfect ourselves also. He never asked his followers to worship him as a god. In fact, He prohibited his followers to praise him as a god. He told his followers that he could not give favors to those who worship him with personal expectations or calamities to those who don't worship him. He asked his followers to respect him as students respect their teacher. He also reminded his followers to worship a statue of the Buddha to remind ourselves to try to develop peace and love within ourselves. The perfume of incense reminds us of the pervading influence of virtue, the lamp reminds us of the light of knowledge and the flowers which soon fade and die, remind us of impermanence. When we bow, we express our gratitude to the Buddha for what his teachings have given us. This is the core

nature of Buddhist worship. A lot of people have misunderstood the meaning of “worship” in Buddhism, even sincere Buddhists. Buddhists do not believe that the Buddha is a god, so in no way they could possibly believe that a piece of wood or metal is a god. In Buddhism, the statue of the Buddha is used to symbolize human perfection. The statue of the Buddha also reminds us of the human dimension in Buddhist teaching, the fact that Buddhism is man-centered, not god-centered, that we must look within not without to find perfection and understanding. So in no way one can say that Buddhists worship god or idols. In fact, a long time ago, when primitive man found himself in a dangerous and hostile situations, the fear of wild animals, of not being able to find enough food, of diseases, and of natural calamities or phenomena such as storms, hurricanes, volcanoes, thunder, and lightning, etc. He found no security in his surroundings and he had no ability to explain those phenomena, therefore, he created the idea of gods in order to give him comfort in good times, courage in times of danger and consolation when things went wrong. They believed that god arranged everything. Generations after generations, man continues to follow his ancestors in a so-called “faith in god” without any further thinkings. Some says they in believe in god because god responds to their prayers when they feel fear or frustration. Some say they believe in god because their parents and grandparents believed in god. Some others say that they prefer to go to church than to temple because those who go to churches seem richer and more honorable than those who go to temples.

The Buddha taught us to try to recognize truth, so we can understand our fear, to lessen our desires, to eliminate our selfishness, and to calmly and courageously accept things we cannot change. He replaced fear, not with blindly and irrational belief but with rational understanding which corresponds to the truth. Furthermore, Buddhists do not believe in god because there does not seem to be any concrete evidence to support this idea. Who can answer questions on god? Who is god? Is god masculine or feminine or neuter? Who can provide ample evidence with real, concrete, substantial or irrefutable facts to prove the existence of god? So far, no one can. Buddhists suspend judgment until such evidence is forthcoming. Besides, such belief in god is not necessary for a really meaningful and happy life. If you

believe that god make your life meaningful and happy, so be it. But remember, more than two-thirds of the world do not believe in god and who can say that they don't have a meaningful and happy life? And who dare to say that those who believe in god, all have a meaningful and happy life? If you believe that god help you overcome disabilities and difficulties, so be it. But Buddhists do not accept the theological concept of salvation. In the contrary, based on the Buddha's own experience, he showed us that each human being had the capacity to purify the body and the mind, develop infinitive love and compassion and perfect understanding. He shifted the gods and heavens to the self-heart and encouraged us to find solution to our problems through self-understanding. Finally, such myths of god and creation concept has been superseded by scientific facts. Science has explained the origin of the universe completely without recourse to the god-idea.

Buddhism is a philosophy that teaches people to live a happy life. It's also a religion that teaches people to end the cycle of birth and death. The main teachings of the Buddha focus on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path. They are called "Noble" because they enoble one who understand them and they are called "Truths" because they correspond with reality. Buddhists neither believe in negative thoughts nor do they believe in pessimistic ideas. In the contrary, Buddhists believe in facts, irrefutable facts, facts that all know, that all have aimed to experience and that all are striving to reach. Those who believe in god or gods usually claim that before an individual is created, he does not exist, then he comes into being through the will of a god. He lives his life and then according to what he believes during his life, he either goes to eternal heaven or eternal hell. Some believe that they come into being at conception due to natural causes, live and then die or cease to exist, that's it! Buddhism does not accept either of these concepts. According to the first explanation, if there exists a so-called almighty god who creates all beings with all his loving kindness and compassion, it is difficult to explain why so many people are born with the most dreadful deformities, or why so many people are born in poverty and hunger. It is nonsense and unjust for those who must fall into eternal hells because they do not believe and submit themselves to such a so-called almighty god. The second explanation is more reasonable, but it still



leaves several unanswered questions. Yes, conception due to natural causes, but how can a phenomenon so amazingly complex as consciousness develop from the simple meeting of two cells, the egg and the sperm? Buddhism agrees on natural causes; however, it offers more satisfactory explanation of where man came from and where he is going after his death. When we die, the mind, with all the tendencies, preferences, abilities and characteristics that have been developed and conditioned in this life, re-establishes itself in a fertilized egg. Thus the individual grows, is reborn and develops a personality conditioned by the mental characteristics that have been carried over by the new environment. The personality will change and be modified by conscious effort and conditioning factors like education, parental influence and society and once again at death, re-establish itself in a new fertilized egg. This process of dying and being reborn will continue until the conditions that cause it, craving and ignorance, cease. When they do, instead of being reborn, the mind attains a state called Nirvana and this is the ultimate goal of Buddhism.



## ***Chapter Two***

### ***Buddhist Outlook on Cosmos-Life-Causation***

According to the Buddhist view on the universe, the universe is infinite. However, if we speak about the formation of our world system, we can speak about the formation process as follows: “In terms of elements that form the universe, wind is the first one. Its basis is space. Then the wind moves, and in dependence on the moving of the wind, heat occurs; then moisture, then solidity or earth.” Buddhist cosmology not only takes into account the existence of innumerable systems of worlds grouped into what we should call galaxies, but has equally vast conceptions of cosmic time. The Buddha proclaimed that on the highest level of understanding the entire cosmos is the original pure mind. However, on the ordinary level of understanding he painted a picture of a cosmos filled with countless worlds systems where countless of living beings of every sort reside. Thus, our world system is not the only unique or the only one world system in the universe. Other world systems also have their Buddhas who also teach the path of enlightenment. The most ancient Buddhist texts speak of the various phases in the evolution and devolution over enormous time-periods of these galaxies, how they gradually formed and how after a period of relative stability during which life may be found on their worlds, how, inevitably having come into existence, they must in due course decline and go to destruction. All this is the working of processes, one vent leading quite naturally to another. As you know that although the Buddha discovered the presence of numerous Gods throughout the universe, he never tried to diminish the importance of the God worshipped by the people of his time. He simply preached the truth and that truth does not affect the importance of any Gods. Similarly, the fact that there are numerous suns in the universe does not diminish the importance of the sun of our solar system, for our sun continues to provide us with light every day. To some other religions, Gods can be very powerful compared to human beings, but to Buddhism, they are still not free from sufferings and afflictions, and can be very angry. The

life of Gods may be very long, but not eternal as many other religions believe.

Outlook on life and universe has been discussed by a lot of famous scholars in the world. Examination of the origin or nature of life and universe is the task of the metaphysic experts. This problem has a very important position in philosophy. It was examined from the beginning of the Egyptian, Indian and Chinese civilizations. This book is designed to give you only an overview of the Buddhist cosmology. Buddhist cosmology not only takes into account the existence of innumerable systems of worlds grouped into what we should call galaxies, but has equally vast conceptions of cosmic time. According to Buddhist cosmology, the earth goes through periodic cycles. In some of the cycles it improves, in others it degenerates. The average age of a man is an index of the quality of the period in which the person lives. It may vary between 10 years and many hundreds of thousands of years. At the time of Sakyamuni Buddha, the average life-span was 100 years. After him, the world becomes more depraved, and the life of man shortens. The peak of sin and misery will be reached when the average life has fallen to 10 years. The Dharma of Sakyamuni Buddha will then be completely forgotten. But after that the upward swing begins again. When the life of man reaches 80,000 years, Maitreya Buddha from the Tusita Heaven will appear on the earth. Besides, the most ancient Buddhist texts speak of the various phases in the evolution and devolution over enormous time-periods of these galaxies, how they gradually formed and how after a period of relative stability during which life may be found on their worlds, how, inevitably having come into existence, they must in due course decline and go to destruction. All this is the working of processes, one vent leading quite naturally to another. The Buddha was the Teacher who discovered the real nature of the universal cosmic law and advised us to live in accordance with this law. The Buddha confirmed that it is impossible for anyone to escape from such cosmic laws by praying to an almighty god, because this universal law is unbiased. However, the Buddha has taught us how to stop bad practices by increasing good deeds, and training the mind to eradicate evil thoughts. According to the Buddha, a man can even become a god if he leads a decent and righteous way of life regardless of his religious belief. It is to say a man someday can obtain peace,

mindfulness, wisdom and liberation if he is willing to cultivate to perfect himself. The Buddha Sakyamuni himself realized the Noble Truths, considered all metaphysical questions are empty. He often kept silent and gave no answers to such metaphysical questions, because for Him, those questions do not realistically relate to the purpose of Buddhists, the purpose of all Buddhists is the final freedom. According to the Buddha, how can a man know what the universe really is when he cannot understand who he really is? Therefore, the Buddha taught: "The practical way for a man is turning back to himself and seeing where and who he is and what he is doing so that he can overcome the destruction of all hindrances to the truth of all things. That is to say, he has to cultivate to purify his body and mind." For the universe, the Buddha declared that the material world is formed by the Four Great Elements as many Indian thinkers before Him did. These are Earth element, Water element, Fire element and Air element. These elements are dynamic and impermanent, therefore, all existing things compounded by them must be impermanent too. The problem about the origin of the four elements becomes senseless and is unacceptable to the truth of Dependent Origination which was discovered and taught by the Buddha.

It is wrong to imagine that the Buddhist outlook on life and the world is a gloomy one, and that the Buddhist is in low spirit. Far from it, a Buddhist smiles as he walks through life. He who understands the true nature of life is the happiest individual, for he is not upset by the evanescent (extremely small) nature of things. He tries to see things as they are, and not as they seem to be. Conflicts arise in man when he is confronted with the facts of life such as aging, illness, death and so forth, but frustration and disappointment do not vex him when he is ready to face them with a brave heart. This view of life is neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but the realistic view. The man who ignores the principle of unrest in things, the intrinsic nature of suffering, is upset when confronted with the vicissitudes of life. Man's recognition of pleasures as lasting, leads to much vexation, when things occur quite contrary to his expectations. It is therefore necessary to cultivate a detached outlook towards life and things pertaining to life. Detachment can not bring about frustration, disappointment and mental torment, because there is no clinging to one thing and another, but letting go.

This indeed is not easy, but it is the sure remedy for controlling, if not eradicating, unsatisfactoriness. The Buddha sees suffering as suffering, and happiness as happiness, and explains that all cosmic pleasure, like all other conditioned attachments, is evanescent, is a passing show. He warns man against attaching too much importance to fleeting pleasures, for they sooner or later beget discontent. Equanimity is the best antidote for both pessimism and optimism. Equanimity is evenness of mind and not sullen indifference. It is the result of a calm, concentrated mind. It is hard, indeed, to be undisturbed when touched by the realities of life, but the man who cultivates truth is not upset. Absolute happiness can not be derived from things conditioned and compounded. What we hug in great glee this moment, turns into a source of dissatisfaction the next moment. Pleasures are short-lived, and never lasting. The mere gratification of the sense faculties we call pleasure and enjoyment, but in the absolute sense of the world such gratification is not happy. Joy too is suffering, unsatisfactory; for it is transient. If we with our inner eye try to see things in their proper perspective, in their true light, we will be able to realize that the world is but an illusion that leads astray the beings who cling to it. All the so-called mundane pleasures are fleeting, and only an introduction to pain. They give temporary relief from life's miserable ulcers. This is what is known as suffering produced by change. Thus, we see that suffering never ceases to work, it functions in some form or other and is always at work.

Regarding all beings in general, Buddhism considers all the living, which includes the vegetable kingdom; however, the term "sattva" limits the meaning to those endowed with reason, consciousness, and feeling. Those who are sentient, sensible, animate, and rational (sentient beings which possess magical and spiritual powers). According to Buddhism, what we call the self is simply the collection of mental facts, experiences, ideas and so forth which would normally be said to belong to self but there is no self over and above the experiences. So mentioned does not mean that people are not important. In fact, Buddhism which preached by the Buddha is totally built on human wisdom. The Buddha taught: "Be your own torch, your own refuge. Do not seek refuge in any other person." The Buddha added: "I am the Buddha fully realized, sentient beings will become Buddha." To Buddhism, all realizations come from effort and

intelligence that derive from one's own experience. The Buddha asked his disciples to be the master of their destiny, since they can make their lives better or worse. They can even become Buddha if they study and practice his teachings.

Regarding the point of view on Human Beings and deva Vehicle, according to the Mahayana Rebirth among men conveyed by observing the five commandments (Panca-veramani). However, there are many differences on human destinies in the world. For example, one is inferior and another superior, one perishes in infancy and another lives much longer, one is sick and infirm and another strong and healthy, one is brought up in luxury and another in misery, one is born a millionaire and another in poverty, one is a genius and another an idiot, etc. According to the Buddhist point of view on human life, all of the above mentioned results are not the results of a "chance." Science nowadays is indeed against the theory of "chance." All scientists agree on the Law of Cause and Effect, so do Buddhists. Sincere and devoted Buddhists never believe that the unevenness of the world is due to a so-called Creator and/or God. Buddhists never believe that happiness or pain or neutral feeling the person experiences are due to the creation of a Supreme Creator. According to the Buddhist point of view on human life, the above mentioned unevenness that exists in the world are due to the heredity and environment, and to a greater extent, to a cause or causes which are not only present but proximate or remotely past. Man himself is responsible for his own happiness and misery. He creates his own heaven and hell. He is the master of his own destiny. He is his own child of his past and his own parents of his future. Regarding the point of view on Deva, this is only one of the five vehicles, the deva vehicle or Divine Vehicle. It transports observers of the ten good qualities (thập thiện) to one of the six deva realms of desire, and those who observe dhyana meditation to the higher heavens of form and non-form. Sentient beings are to be reborn among the deva by observing the ten forms of good actions or Ten Commandments (Dasa-kusala).

Regarding the point of view on the Kaya and Citta, Buddhism talks about the theory of impermanence of the body and mind. Some people wonder why Buddhism always emphasizes the Theory of Impermanence? Does it want to spread in the human mind the seed of

disheartenment, and discourage? In their view, if things are changeable, we do not need to do anything, because if we attain a great achievement, we cannot keep it. This type of reasoning, at first, appears partly logical, but in reality, it is not at all. When the Buddha preached about impermanence, He did not want to discourage anyone, but warning his disciples about the truth. A true Buddhist has to work hard for his own well being and also for the society's. Although he knows that he is facing the changing reality, he always keeps himself calm. He must refrain from harming others, in contrast, strive to perform good deeds for the benefit and happiness of others. All things have changed and will never cease to change. The human body is changeable, thus governed by the law of impermanence. Our body is different from the minute before to that of the minute after. Biological researches have proved that the cells in our body are in constant change, and in every seven years all the old cells have been totally renewed. These changes help us quickly grow up, age and die. The longer we want to live, the more we fear death. From childhood to aging, human life is exactly like a dream, but there are many people who do not realize; therefore, they continue to launch into the noose of desire; as a result, they suffer from greed and will suffer more if they become attached to their possessions. Sometimes at time of death they still don't want to let go anything. There are some who know that they will die soon, but they still strive desperately to keep what they cherish most. Not only our body is changeable, but also our mind. It changes more rapidly than the body, it changes every second, every minute according to the environment. We are cheerful a few minutes before and sad a few minutes later, laughing then crying, happiness then sorrow.

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Manjusri Bodhisattva obeyed the Buddha's command to call on Upasaka Vimalakirti to enquire after his health, there was a conversation about the "body". Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "What should a Bodhisattva say when comforting another Bodhisattva who falls ill?" Vimalakirti replied: "He should speak of the impermanence of the body but never of the abhorrence and relinquishment of the body. He should speak of the suffering body but never of the joy in nirvana. He should speak of egolessness in the body while teaching and guiding all living beings (in spite of the fact that



they are fundamentally non-existent in the absolute state). He should speak of the voidness of the body but should never cling to the ultimate nirvana. He should speak of repentance of past sins but should avoid slipping into the past. Because of his own illness he should take pity on all those who are sick. Knowing that he has suffered during countless past aeons he should think of the welfare of all living beings. He should think of his past practice of good virtues to uphold (his determination for) right livelihood. Instead of worrying about troubles (klesa) he should give rise to zeal and devotion (in his practice of the Dharma). He should act like a king physician to cure others' illnesses. Thus a Bodhisattva should comfort another sick Bodhisattva to make him happy." Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should look into all things in this way. He should further meditate on his body which is impermanent, is subject to suffering and is non-existent and egoless; this is called wisdom. Although his body is sick he remains in (the realm of) birth and death for the benefit of all (living beings) without complaint; this is called expedient method (upaya). Manjusri! He should further meditate on the body which is inseparable from illness and on illness which is inherent in the body because sickness and the body are neither new nor old; this is called wisdom. The body, though ill, is not to be annihilated; this is the expedient method (for remaining in the world to work for salvation).

Regarding the point of view on the impurity of the Kaya and the Citta. Impurity is the nature of our bodies and minds. Impurity means the absence of an immaculate state of being, one that is neither holy nor beautiful. From the psychological and physiological standpoint, human beings are impure. This is not negative or pessimistic, but an objective perspective on human beings. If we examine the constituents of our bodies from the hair on our head to the blood, pus, phlegm, excrement, urine, the many bacteria dwelling in the intestines, and the many diseases present waiting for the opportunity to develop, we can see clearly that our bodies are quite impure and subject to decay. Our bodies also create the motivation to pursue the satisfaction of our desires and passions. That is why the sutra regards the body as the place where misleads gather. Let us now consider our psychological state. Since we are unable to see the truth of impermanence, suffering, and the selfless nature of all things, our minds often become the

victims of greed and hatred, and we act wrongly. So the sutra says, “The mind is the source of all confusion.”

Here is another point of view of the Buddhism on the Kaya is “It is difficult to be reborn as a human being”. Of all precious jewels, life is the greatest; if there is life, it is the priceless jewel. Thus, if you are able to maintain your livelihood, someday you will be able to rebuild your life. However, everything in life, if it has form characteristics, then, inevitably, one day it will be destroyed. A human life is the same way, if there is life, there must be death. Even though we say a hundred years, it passes by in a flash, like lightening streaking across the sky, like a flower’s blossom, like the image of the moon at the bottom of a lake, like a short breath, what is really eternal? Sincere Buddhists should always remember when a person is born, not a single dime is brought along; therefore, when death arrives, not a word will be taken either. A lifetime of work, putting the body through pain and torture in order to accumulate wealth and possessions, in the end everything is worthless and futile in the midst of birth, old age, sickness, and death. After death, all possessions are given to others in a most senseless and pitiful manner. At such time, there are not even a few good merits for the soul to rely and lean on for the next life. Therefore, such an individual will be condemned into the three evil paths immediately. Ancient sages taught: “A steel tree of a thousand years once again blossom, such a thing is still not bewildering; but once a human body has been lost, ten thousand reincarnations may not return.” Sincere Buddhists should always remember what the Buddha taught: “It is difficult to be reborn as a human being, it is difficult to encounter (meet or learn) the Buddha-dharma; now we have been reborn as a human being and encountered the Buddha-dharma, if we let the time passes by in vain we waste our scarce lifespan.”

## *Chapter Three*

### *An Overview of Mind & Consciousnesses in Buddhist Point of View*

#### *I. An Overview of Mind in Buddhist Point of View:*

*A Summary of Mind in Buddhist Point of View:* According to Buddhism, citta or the mind is the root of all dharmas. The “Intent” is the “Discriminating Mind,” the sixth consciousness. Not only does the “Mind” make discriminations, it is filled with idle thoughts. The six consciousnesses can also be said to be a perceptive nature. That is, from the six sense organs: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, the functions of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, and knowing arise. When people commit offenses, they do it with the six sense organs. When they cultivate, they also do it with the six sense organs. If you can remain unperturbed by external states, then you are cultivating. If you are turned by external states, then you will fall. In Contemplation of the Mind Sutra, the Buddha taught: “All my tenets are based on the mind that is the source of all dharmas.” The mind has brought about the Buddhas, the Heaven, or the Hell. It is the main driving force that makes us happy or sorrowful, cheerful or sad, liberated or doomed. There are several Sanskrit and Pali terms for mind such as Mana, Citta, Vijnana, and Vinnana. “Mind” is another name for Alaya-vijnana. Unlike the material body, immaterial mind is invisible. We are aware of our thoughts and feelings and so forth by direct sensation, and we infer their existence in others by analogy.

Mental or Intellectual consciousness. “Citta” is a Sanskrit term, temporarily considering and recognizing mind or thought. The mind that is attending, observing, thinking, reflecting, imagining (thought, intention, aim, wish, memory, intelligence, reason). Consciousness or mind: This is consciousness itself. It naturally functions in five ways corresponding to the five sense-organs. “Citta” refers to mental processes in general and is commonly said in Indian texts to be synonymous with Manas (sentience) and Vijnana (consciousness). In Tibetan Buddhist epistemology, it is said to refer to a “main mind,” which is accompanied by “mental factors.” The definition of Mind

varies with different people in different cultures. If you ask an ordinary Vietnamese where his mind is and chances are he will point to his heart or chest; however, when you ask the same question of a Westerner and he will indicate his head. According to the Buddha, mind (or heart as the seat of thought or intelligence or mental factors) is defined as clarity and knowing. It is formless which no one can see it; however, it is our mind which has created the actions which cause us to experience suffering and to be born in cyclic existence or samsara. All our physical, verbal and mental actions depend on our mind. The function of the mind is to perceive, to apprehend and to know its objects. It discerns and discriminates between forms, qualities, aspects and so forth. The only way to reach Buddhahood is by training in the control and transformation of our mind until we are completely free from all obscurations and defilements. In English “mind” means “heart,” “spirit,” “psyche,” or “soul.” Mind with a small “m” means the seat of the intellect. Mind with a capital “M” stands for absolute reality. From the standpoint of Zen experience, “mind” means total awareness. In other words, just listening when hearing.

According to Most Venerable Dhammananda in *The Gems of Buddhist Wisdom*, mind may be defined as simply the awareness of an object since there is no agent or a soul that directs all activities. It consists of fleeting mental states which constantly arise and perish with lightning rapidity. “With birth for its source and death for its mouth, it persistently flows on like a river receiving from the tributary streams of sense constant accretions to its flood.” Each momentary consciousness of this everchanging lifestream, on passing away, transmits its whole energy, all the indelibly recorded impressions, to its successor. Every fresh consciousness therefore consists of the potentialities of its predecessors and something more. As all impressions are indelibly recorded in this everchanging palimpsest-like mind, and as all potentialities are transmitted from life to life, irrespective of temporary physical disintegrations, reminiscence of past births or past incidents become a possibility. Mind is like a double-edged weapon that can equally be used either for good or evil. One single thought that arises in this invisible mind can even save or destroy the world. One such thought can either populate or depopulate a whole country. It is mind that creates one’s paradise and one’s hell.

Citta or the mind is also defined as the whole system of vijñanas, originally pure, or mind. Citta is generally translated as “thought.” In the Lankavatara Sutra as well as in other Mahayana sutras, citta may better be rendered “mind.” When it is defined as “accumulation” or as “store-house” where karma seeds are deposited, it is not mere thought, it has an ontological signification also. In The Dhammapada Sutta, the Buddha taught: “Mind fore-runs deeds; mind is chief, and mind-made are they.” In Buddhism, there is no distinction between mind and consciousness. Both are used as synonymous terms. According to Great Master Ying-Kuang: “The mind encompasses all the ten directions of dharma realms, including Buddha dharma realm, Bodhisatva dharma realm, Pratyeka-Buddha dharma realm, Sravaka dharma realm, Heaven dharma realm, Human dharma realm, Asura dharma realm, Animal dharma realm, Hungry Ghost dharma realm, and Hell dharma realm. One mind can give rise to everything. Buddhas arise from within the cultivator’s mind, Hells also arise from the cultivator’s mind.” The mind is so closely linked with the body that mental states affect the body’s health and well-being. Some doctors even confirm that there is no such thing as a purely physical disease. Unless these bad mental states are caused by previous evil acts, and they are unalterable, it is possible so to change them as to cause mental health and physical well-being to follow thereafter. Man’s mind influences his body profoundly. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster, can even kill a being; but it can also cure a sick body. When mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and understanding, the effect it can produce is immense. A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts really does lead to a healthy and relaxed life.

According to Buddhism, mind is the thinking consciousness that coordinates the perceptions of the sense organs, a mind which does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. The function of

Manovijnana is by hypothesis to reflect on Manas, as the eye-vijnana reflects on the world of forms and the ear-vijnana on that of sounds; but in fact as soon as Manas evolves the dualism of subject and object out of the absolute unity of the Alaya, Manovijnana and indeed all the other Vijnanas begin to operate. Thus, in the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha said: “Buddhist Nirvana consists in turning away from the wrongfully discriminating Manovijnana. For with Manovijnana as cause (hetu) and support (alambana), there takes place the evolution of the seven Vijnanas. Further, when Manovijnana discerns and clings to an external world of particulars, all kinds of habit-energy (vasana) are generated therefrom, and by them the Alaya is nurtured. Together with the thought of “me and mine,” taking hold of it and clinging to it, and reflecting upon it, Manas thereby takes shape and is evolved. In substance (sarira), however, Manas and Manovijnana are not different—the one from the other, they depend upon the Alaya as cause and support. And when an external world is tenaciously held as real which is no other than the presentation of one’s own mind, the mentation-system (citta-kalapa), mutually related, is evolved in its totality. Like the ocean waves, the Vijnanas set in motion by the wind of an external world which is the manifestation of one’s own mind, rise and cease. Therefore, the seven Vijnanas cease with the cessation of Manovijnana.”

It should be noticed that awareness simply means “being conscious of,” or “remembering,” or “becoming acquainted with.” But we must use it in the sense of “being in the process of being conscious of,” or “being in the process of remembering.” We have learned the word “Awareness” in the sense of recognition, or bare attention, but the meaning doesn’t stop there. In awareness, there are also the elements of concentration (Samadhi) and understanding (prajna). Concentration and understanding together are meditate on the absence of identity of all things. According to the Satipatthana Sutta, practitioner should “Contemplate the body in the body, contemplate the feelings in the feelings, contemplate the mind in the mind, contemplate the objects of mind in the objects of mind.” This means that practitioner must live in the body in full awareness of it, and not just study like a separate object. Live in awareness with feelings, mind, and objects of mind. Do not just study them. When we meditate on our body, we live with it as

truth and give it our most lucid attention; we become one with it. The flower blossoms because sunlight touches and warms its bud, becoming one with it. Meditation reveals not a concept of truth, but a direct view of truth itself. This we call “insight,” the kind of understanding based on attention and concentration. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that in cultivation, cultivation of the mind is the most difficult because everything comes to the mind, from the eyes, ears, noses, tongue and body... They all receive sensations and send them to the mind for needed actions. Mind is the boss of all organs in our system of body-mind. Buddhist practitioners should also always remember that if we want to have a life with more peace, mindfulness, and happiness, and a cultivation that is leading to emancipation, like or dislike, we have no other choice but taming our mind. We must always be mindful at all times, whether walking, standing, reclining, or sitting. In other words, we must be mindful at all times in all circumstances. This means that while walking we have mindfulness, while standing we have mindfulness, while reclining we have mindfulness, while sitting we have mindfulness. We put awareness into our walking, standing, reclining, and sitting at all times and under all circumstances.

***Buddhist Practitioners' Basic Understanding on the Mind:*** In Buddhism, mind is the root of all dharmas. The mind or thoughts is the storehouse of karma, wholesome or unwholesome. The Sanskrit term Citta is defined as the whole system of vijñanas, originally pure, or mind. Citta is generally translated as “thought.” In the Lankavatara Sutra as well as in other Mahayana sutras, citta may better be rendered “mind.” When it is defined as “accumulation” or as “store-house” where karma seeds are deposited, it is not mere thought, it has an ontological signification also. In The Dhammapada Sutta, the Buddha taught: “Mind fore-runs deeds; mind is chief, and mind-made are they.” “Mind” is another name for Alaya-vijñana. Unlike the material body, immaterial mind is invisible. We are aware of our thoughts and feelings and so forth by direct sensation, and we infer their existence in others by analogy. The mind is the root of all dharmas. In Contemplation of the Mind Sutra, the Buddha taught: “All my tenets are based on the mind that is the source of all dharmas.” The mind has brought about the Buddhas, the Heaven, or the Hell. It is the main driving force that makes us happy or sorrowful, cheerful or sad,

liberated or doomed. Ancient people believed that 'heart' is in the chest area. In Zen, it means either the mind of a person in the sense of all his powers of consciousness, mind, heart and spirit, or else absolutely reality, the mind beyond the distinction between mind and matter. It is for the sake of giving practitioners an easier understanding of Mind, Buddhist teachers usually divide the mind into aspects or layers, but to Zen, Mind is one great Whole, without parts or divisions. The manifesting, illuminating, and nonsubstantial characteristics of Mind exist simultaneously and constantly, inseparable and indivisible in their totality.

According to Buddhism, understanding is not an accumulation of knowledge. To the contrary, it is the result of the struggle to become free of knowledge. Understanding shatters old knowledge to make room for the new that accords better with reality. When Copernicus discovered that the Earth goes around the sun, most of the astronomical knowledge of the time had to be discarded, including the ideas of above and below. Today, physics is struggling valiantly to free itself from the ideas of identity and cause effect that underlie classical science. Science, like the Way, urges us to get rid of all preconceived notions. Understanding, in human, is translated into concepts, thoughts, and words. Understanding is not an aggregate of bits of knowledge. It is a direct and immediate penetration. In the realm of sentiment, it is feeling. In the realm of intellect, it is perception. It is an intuition rather than the culmination of reasoning. Every now and again it is fully present in us, and we find we cannot express it in words, thoughts, or concepts. "Unable to describe it," that is our situation at such moments. Insights like this are spoken of in Buddhism as "impossible to reason about, to discuss, or to incorporate into doctrines or systems of thought." Besides, understanding also means a shield to protect cultivator from the attack of greed, hatred and ignorance. A man often does wrong because of his ignorance or misunderstanding about himself, his desire of gaining happiness, and the way to obtain happiness. Understanding will also help cultivators with the ability to remove all defilements and strengthen their virtues.

Practitioners should always remember that all of our desires develop because of the thoughts of our mental factor intention. When we see an attractive object, we develop a wish to obtain that object. In



contrary, when we see an unattractive object, we develop a wish not to obtain that object; sometimes we hate the object. The functions of mind are very extensive and numberless. That's why the Buddha always reminded his disciples, "Mind is like an unrest monkey jumping from one tree to another." The activities of the mind have no limit; mind originates delusion; mind originates Enlightenment. According to the Zen Teaching of Huang Po, one day, Zen Master Huang Po entered the hall to preach the assembly: "Mind is Buddha, while the cessation of conceptual thought is the Way." Everything existence or phenomenon arises from the functions of the mind; mind creates Nirvana; mind creates Hells. An impure mind surrounds itself with impure things. A pure mind surrounds itself with pure things. Surroundings have no more limits than the activities of the mind; mind creates Buddhas (Buddha is like our mind); mind creates ordinary men (sentient beings are just like our mind). The mind is a skilful painter who creates pictures of various worlds; there is nothing in the world that is not mind-created; both life and death arise from the mind and exist within the mind. The mind creates greed, anger and ignorance; however, that very mind is also able to create giving, patience and wisdom. A mind that is bewildered by its own world of delusion will lead beings to an unenlightened life. If we learn that there is no world of delusion outside of the mind, the bewildered mind becomes clear, we cease to create impure surroundings and we attain enlightenment. The mind is the master of every situation (it rules and controls everything). The world of suffering is brought about by the deluded mortal mind. The world of eternal joy is also brought about by the mind, but a clear mind. The mind is as the wheels follow the ox that draws the cart, so does suffering follow the person who speaks and acts with an impure mind. If the mind is impure, it will cause the feet to stumble along a rough and difficult road; but if a mind is pure, the path will be smooth and the journey peaceful.

In The Studies of The Lankavatara Sutra, Zen Master D.T. Suzuki distinguished two kinds of functioning of the mind. First, functioning is dependent on the Individualizing Mind and is perceived by the minds of the two-vehicle followers. It is known as Responding Body. As they do not know that this is projected by their Evolving Mind, they take it for something external to themselves, and making it assume a

corporeal form, fail to have a thorough knowledge of its nature. Second, functioning is dependent on the Karma-consciousness, that is, it appears to the minds of those Bodhisattvas who have just entered upon the path of Bodhisattvahood as well as of those who have reached the highest stage. This is known as the Recompense Body. The body is visible in infinite forms, each form has infinite marks, and each mark is excellent in infinite ways, and the world in which the Body has its abode is also embellished in manners infinite varying. As the Body is manifested everywhere, it has no limitations whatever, it can never be exhausted, it goes beyond all the conditions of determination. According to the needs of all beings it becomes visible and is always held by them, it is neither destroyed nor lost sight of. All such characteristics of the Body are the perfuming effect of the immaculate deeds such as the virtues of perfection and also the work of the mysterious perfuming innate in the Tathagata-garbha. As it is thus possession of immeasurably blissful qualities, it is called Recompense Body.

Mind of Understanding Ourselves, understanding ourselves means understanding things as they really are, that is seeing the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-substantial or non-self nature of the five aggregates of clinging in ourselves. It is not easy to understand ourselves because of our wrong concepts, baseless illusions, perversions and delusions. It is so difficult to see the real person. The Buddha taught that in order to be able to understand ourselves, we must first see and understand the impermanence of the five aggregates. He compares material form or body to a lump of foam, feeling to a bubble, perception to a mirage, mental formations or volitional activities to water-lily plant which is without heartwood, and consciousness to an illusion. The Buddha says: "Whatever material form there be whether past, future or present, internal, external, gross or subtle, low or lofty, far or near that material form is empty, unsubstantial and without essence. In the same manner, the remaining aggregates: feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness are also empty, unsubstantial and without essence. Thus, the five aggregates are impermanent, whatever is impermanent, that is suffering, unsatisfactory and without self. Whenever you understand this, you understand yourselves."

According to Bikkhu Piyananda in *The Gems of Buddhism* Wisdom, you cannot run away from your mind. By meditation, you can train the mind to keep calm and be free from disturbances either from within or outside. Apply concentrated awareness to the internal confusions and mental conflicts, and observe or pay attention to all the changing states of your mind. When the mind is properly developed, it brings happiness and bliss. If the mind is neglected, it runs you into endless troubles and difficulties. The disciplined mind is strong and effective, while the wavering mind is weak and ineffective. The wise train their minds as thoroughly as a horse-trainer train their horses. Therefore, you should watch you mind. When you sit alone, you should observe the changing conditions of the mind. The task is only a matter of observing the changing states, not fighting with the mind, or avoid it, or try to control it. When the mind is in a state of lust, be aware that we are having a mind of lust. When the mind is in a state of hatred or when it is free from hatred, be aware that we are having a mind of hatred or free from hatred. When you have the concentrated mind or the scattered mind, you should be aware that we are having a concentrated or a scattered mind. You should always remember that your job is to observe all these changing conditions without identifying yourself with them. Your job is to turn your attention away from the outside world and focus in yourself. This is very difficult, but it can be done. In all activities of your daily life, you should always watch your mind and to observe your mind in all kinds of situations. To observe the working of your mind without identifying with or finding justification for your thoughts without erecting the screen of prejudice; without expecting reward or satisfaction. To observe the senses of desire, hatred, jealousy and other unwholesome states that arise and upset the balance of the mind. Continue meditation practices to check and eliminate these harmful elements. Practitioners should always remember that the mind is climbing and jumping like a monkey. Someone asks a Zen master on how to look into one's self-nature. The Zen master replies: "How can? For if there is a cage with six windows, in which there is a monkey. Someone calls at one window, 'O, monkey,' and he replies. Someone else calls at another window, and again he replies. And so on. Human's mind is no different from that monkey."

According to the Buddhist point of view, the mind or consciousness is the core of our existence. All our psychological experiences, such as pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness, good and evil, life and death, are not attributed to any external agency. They are only the result of our own thoughts and their resultant actions. Mind actually influences the body in every minute of life. If we allow it to function with the vicious and unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster; it can even kill another being. However, when the mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and understanding, it can produce an excellent effect. Thus, the Buddha taught: “No enemy can harm one so much as one’s own thoughts of craving, thoughts of hate, thoughts of jealousy, and so on.” A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts really lead to a peaceful and relaxed life.

Mind is not separate from the world of thoughts and feelings, how can it leave and retire into itself? When we look at the tree in front of us, our mind does not go outside of us into the forest, nor does it open a door to let the trees in. Our mind fixes on the trees, but they are not a distinct object. Our mind and the trees are one. The trees are only one of the miraculous manifestations of the mind. According to the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 31, the Buddha said: “There was once someone who, plagued by ceaseless sexual desire, wished to castrate himself. To cut off your sexual organs would not be as good as to cut off your mind. Your mind is like a supervisor; if the supervisor stops, his employees will also quit. If the deviant mind is not stopped, what good does it do to cut off the organs?” The Kasyapa Buddha taught: ‘Desire is born from your will; your will is born from thought. When both aspects of the mind are still, there is neither form nor activity.’”

The Mind is always functioning without limitations or obstacles. When we speak of mind, we usually think of psychological phenomena, such as feelings, thoughts, or perceptions. When we speak of objects of mind, we think of physical phenomena, such as mountains, trees, or animals. Speaking this way, we see the phenomenal aspects of mind and its objects, but we don’t see their nature. We have observed that these two kinds of phenomena, mind and objects of mind, rely on one another for their existence and are therefore interdependent. But we do not see that they themselves have the same nature. This nature is sometimes called “mind” and sometimes called “suchness.”

Whatever we call it, we cannot measure this nature using concepts. It is boundless and all inclusive, without limitations or obstacles. From the point of view of unity, it is called Dharmakaya. From the point of view of duality, it is called “mind without obstacle” encountering “world without obstacle.” The Avatamsaka Sutra calls it unobstructed mind and unobstructed object. The mind and the world contain each other so completely and perfectly that we call this “perfect unity of mind and object.”

In Zen, the moon is a symbol of the mind. The mind is just like the moon shining bright and helping us see all things; but the mind is not a thing we can point at; the mind has neither shadow nor shape. Existence is the mind manifesting; its true nature is the emptiness. We can hear the sound of a pebble hitting the surface of a road; the sound is the mind manifesting. We can see a banner waving in the wind; the flapping is the mind manifesting. That's all! “Citta” is defined as the whole system of vijñanas, originally pure, or mind. Citta is generally translated as “thought.” In the Lankavatara Sutra as well as in other Mahayana sutras, citta may better be rendered “mind.” When it is defined as “accumulation” or as “store-house” where karma seeds are deposited, it is not mere thought, it has an ontological signification also. In Buddhism, there is no distinction between mind and consciousness. Both are used as synonymous terms. In The Dhammapada Sutta, the Buddha taught: “Mind fore-runs deeds; mind is chief, and mind-made are they.” According to Great Master Ying-Kuang: “The mind encompasses all the ten directions of dharma realms, including Buddha dharma realm, Bodhisatva dharma realm, Pratyeka-Buddha dharma realm, Sravaka dharma realm, Heaven dharma realm, Human dharma realm, Asura dharma realm, Animal dharma realm, Hungry Ghost dharma realm, and Hell dharma realm. One mind can give rise to everything. Buddhas arise from within the cultivator's mind, Hells also arise from the cultivator's mind.”

Let's look inside ourselves to see that the mind has no form at all. The image comes and goes; the mind sees the image coming and going. The sound comes and goes; the mind hears the sound coming and going. Because the mind is formless, it can reflect all things coming and going in countless forms. Also because it is formless, the mind could manifest as the image we see, and as the sound we hear.

Practitioners should see that they are all states of mind only. Let's look at our mind to see that thoughts coming and going, arising and vanishing. The mind is just like a mirror that shows us the images of all things reflected. All images come and go, but the reflectivity is still there, unmoving and undying. In ancient times, the reason zen patriarchs awoke their disciples by clapping two hands, for when two hands clap they cause a sound; the sound comes and goes, but the nature of hearing ability is still there even in our sleep, unchanging, unmoving and undying. Devout Buddhists should always remember that clear mind is like the full moon in the sky. Sometimes clouds come and cover it, but the moon is always behind them. Clouds go away, then the moon shines brightly. So, devout Buddhists should not worry about clear mind. It is always there. Remember, when thinking comes, behind it is clear mind. When thinking goes, there is only clear mind. Thinking comes and goes, comes and goes without any exceptions. We must not be attached to the coming or the going of the thinking. We live together and act together in harmonious spirit. Acting together means cutting off my opinions, cutting off my condition, cutting off my situation. To be able to do this, our mind will naturally become empty mind. When our mind becomes empty mind, it is like a white paper. Then our true opinion, our true condition, our true situation will appear. In our daily cultivation, when we bow together and chant together, recite Buddha names together and eat together, our minds become one mind. It is like on the sea, when the wind comes, naturally there are many waves. When the wind dies down, the waves become smaller. When the wind stops, the water becomes a mirror, in which everything is reflected, mountains, trees, clouds, etc. Our mind is the same. When we have many desires and many opinions, there are many big waves. But after we sit in meditation and act together for some time, our opinions and desires disappear. The waves become smaller and smaller. Then our mind is like a clear mirror, and everything we see or hear or smell or taste or touch or think is the truth.

Practitioners should always be mindful that our body is changing, and our mind is wandering east and west. Let's keep practicing until we can realize that our mind is originally serene like the nature of the water: serene, unchanging and unmoving, despite the waves rising and falling, and despite the bubbles forming and popping. Practitioners

should see our mind just like an ox. Meditation is like taming an ox, but as a matter of fact, we do not need to tame anything; just watch the ox constantly. We know we see the mind when a thought arises. Until we no longer see the ox nor the ox keeper, then we have already seen that all things are empty in nature. Devout Buddhists should always remember that all things are playing in our mind. When we look around we cannot see the mind, but we cannot say there is no mind, because the consciousness arises and vanishes. We cannot say there is something called mind, because there is no trace of it at all. Thoughts come and go just like illusions. If we try to keep thoughts in our mind, we are trying to keep illusions; and there is no way we can get out of the sufferings and afflictions of the Saha World. However, practitioners should not try to empty any thought in our mind, because that is impossible. Just realize the law of dependent origination; just see the emptiness nature of all things. Let's open our eyes and see things, we will see that all things are empty in nature!

In short, in Buddhist point of view, man's mind influences his body profoundly. If allowed to function viciously and indulge in unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster, can even cause one's death. But on the other hand, a mind imbued with wholesome thoughts can cure a sick body. When the mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and right understanding, the effects it can produce are immense. Thus a mind with pure and wholesome thoughts leads to a healthy and relaxed life. Mind is such a subtle and intricate phenomenon that it is impossible to find two men of the same mind. Man's thoughts are translated into speech and action. Repetition of such speech and action gives rise to habits and finally habits form character. Character is the result of man's mind-directed activities and so the characters of human beings vary. Thus to understand the real nature of life, one has to explore the innermost recesses of one's mind which can only be accomplished by deep self-introspection based on purity of conduct and meditation. The Buddhist point of view is that the mind or consciousness is the core of our existence. Of all forces the force of mind is the most potent. It is the power by itself. All our psychological experiences, such as pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness, good and evil, life and death, are not attributed to any external agency. They are the result of our own thoughts and their

resultant actions. To train our “force of mind” means to try to guide our minds to follow the wholesome path and to stay away from the unwholesome path. According to Buddhism teachings, training the mind doesn’t mean to gain union with any supreme beings, nor to bring about any mystical experiences, nor is it for any self-hypnosis. It is for gaining tranquility of mind and insight for the sole purpose of attaining unshakable deliverance of the mind. For a long long period of time, we all talk about air, land and environment pollution, what about our mind pollution? Should we do something to prevent our minds from wandering far deep into the polluted courses? Yes, we should. We should equally protect and cleanse our mind. The Buddha once taught: “For a long time has man’s mind been defiled by greed, hatred and delusion. Mental defilements make beings impure; and only mental cleansing can purify them.” Devout Buddhists should always keep in mind that our daily life is an intense process of cleansing our own action, speech and thoughts. And we can only achieve this kind of cleansing through practice, not philosophical speculation or logical abstraction. Remember the Buddha once said: “Though one conquers in battle thousand times thousand men, yet he is the greatest conqueror who conquers himself.” This is nothing other than “training of your own monkey mind,” or “self-mastery,” or “control your own mind.” It means mastering our own mental contents, our emotions, likes and dislikes, and so forth. Thus, “self-mastery” is the greatest empire a man can aspire unto, and to be subject to our own passions is the most grievous slavery.

***The Functioning of the Mind:*** In The Studies of The Lankavatara Sutra, Zen Master D.T. Suzuki distinguished two kinds of functioning of the mind. *First*, functioning is dependent on the Individualizing Mind and is perceived by the minds of the two-vehicle followers. It is known as Responding Body. As they do not know that this is projected by their Evolving Mind, they take it for something external to themselves, and making it assume a corporeal form, fail to have a thorough knowledge of its nature. *Second*, functioning is dependent on the Karma-consciousness, that is, it appears to the minds of those Bodhisattvas who have just entered upon the path of Bodhisattvahood as well as of those who have reached the highest stage. This is known as the Recompense Body. The body is visible in infinite forms, each form has



infinite marks, and each mark is excellent in infinite ways, and the world in which the Body has its abode is also embellished in manners infinite varying. As the Body is manifested everywhere, it has no limitations whatever, it can never be exhausted, it goes beyond all the conditions of determination. According to the needs of all beings it becomes visible and is always held by them, it is neither destroyed nor lost sight of. All such characteristics of the Body are the perfuming effect of the immaculate deeds such as the virtues of perfection and also the work of the mysterious perfuming innate in the Tathagata-garbha. As it is thus possession of immeasurably blissful qualities, it is called Recompense Body. *Besides these two kinds of functioning, the third kind of functioning is that the Mind always functioning without limitations or obstacles* When we speak of mind, we usually think of psychological phenomena, such as feelings, thoughts, or perceptions. When we speak of objects of mind, we think of physical phenomena, such as mountains, trees, or animals. Speaking this way, we see the phenomenal aspects of mind and its objects, but we don't see their nature. We have observed that these two kinds of phenomena, mind and objects of mind, rely on one another for their existence and are therefore interdependent. But we do not see that they themselves have the same nature. This nature is sometimes called "mind" and sometimes called "suchness." Whatever we call it, we cannot measure this nature using concepts. It is boundless and all inclusive, without limitations or obstacles. From the point of view of unity, it is called Dharmakaya. From the point of view of duality, it is called "mind without obstacle" encountering "world without obstacle." The Avatamsaka Sutra calls it unobstructed mind and unobstructed object. The mind and the world contain each other so completely and perfectly that we call this "perfect unity of mind and object."

***The Mind Is the Core of Our Existence:*** According to the Buddhist point of view, the mind or consciousness is the core of our existence. All our psychological experiences, such as pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness, good and evil, life and death, are not attributed to any external agency. They are only the result of our own thoughts and their resultant actions. Mind actually influences the body in every minute of life. If we allow it to function with the vicious and unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster; it can even kill another being.

However, when the mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and understanding, it can produce an excellent effect. Thus, the Buddha taught: “No enemy can harm one so much as one’s own thoughts of craving, thoughts of hate, thoughts of jealousy, and so on.” A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts really lead to a peaceful and relaxed life.

Mind is not separate from the world of thoughts and feelings, how can it leave and retire into itself? When we look at the tree in front of us, our mind does not go outside of us into the forest, nor does it open a door to let the trees in. Our mind fixes on the trees, but they are not a distinct object. Our mind and the trees are one. The trees are only one of the miraculous manifestations of the mind. According to the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 31, the Buddha said: “There was once someone who, plagued by ceaseless sexual desire, wished to castrate himself. To cut off your sexual organs would not be as good as to cut off your mind. You mind is like a supervisor; if the supervisor stops, his employees will also quit. If the deviant mind is not stopped, what good does it do to cut off the organs?” The Kasyapa Buddha taught: ‘Desire is born from your will; your will is born from thought. When both aspects of the mind are still, there is neither form nor activity.’” *The mind within the body or the mind outside the body?:* If the mind is within the body, it ought to know the things inside the body; but people are interested in external things and seem to know or care little for the things within the body. If the mind is located outside the body, it should not be in contact with the needs of the body. But, in fact, the body feels what the mind knows, and the mind knows what the body feels. Therefore, it can not be said that the human mind is outside of the body. *Mind is not separate from the world of thoughts and feelings:* Mind is not separate from the world of thoughts and feelings, how can it leave and retire into itself? When we look at the tree in front of us, our mind does not go outside of us into the forest, nor does it open a door to let the trees in. Our mind fixes on the trees, but they are not a distinct object. Our mind and the trees are one. The trees are only one of the miraculous manifestations of the mind. *Mind is like a supervisor:* According to the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 31, the Buddha said: “There was once someone who, plagued by ceaseless sexual desire, wished to castrate himself. To cut off your sexual organs would

not be as good as to cut off your mind. You mind is like a supervisor; if the supervisor stops, his employees will also quit. If the deviant mind is not stopped, what good does it do to cut off the organs?" The Kasyapa Buddha taught: 'Desire is born from your will; your will is born from thought. When both aspects of the mind are still, there is neither form nor activity.'

***The Original Mind:*** According to Buddhism, original mind is the source of all phenomena. According to the Awakening of Faith, the original mind is the source of all phenomena, the mind which is in all things. This is the primal mind behind all things. Original mind is Buddha-wisdom, innocent mind in all which is independent of birth and death, one of the three states of mind or consciousness mentioned in the Lankavatara Sutra. Also according to the Awakening of Faith, original mind or the real knowledge is a knowledge which is free from illusion, the sixth vijñāna. The original mind is the inner self or one's own heart from the beginningless time. The immanent or space-like mind in all things (dharmakaya: Pháp thân). Original awareness or inherent enlightenment in the form of primal intelligence), awareness, wisdom or knowledge, or the immanent mind in all things. When one gives up their attachment, imagination, false discrimination, and so on, one restores the purity of their original mind, then both body and mind would be free from defilement and suffering. According to the Platform Sutra, the First Chapter, when the Fifth Patriarch knew of Hui Neng's enlightenment to his original nature and said to him, "Studying the Dharma without recognizing the original mind is of no benefit. If one recognizes one's own original mind and sees one's original nature, then one is called a great hero, a teacher of gods and humans, a Buddha." He received the Dharma in the third watch and no one knew about it. The Fifth Patriarch also transmitted the Sudden Teaching, the robe and bowl saying, "You are the Sixth Patriarch. Protect yourself carefully. Take living beings across by every method and spread the teaching for the sake of those who will live in the future. Do not let it be cut off." Listen to my verse:

'With feeling comes,  
The planting of the seed.  
Because of the ground,  
The fruit is born again

Without feeling,  
 There is no seed at all.  
 Without that nature,  
 There is no birth either.”

According to the Buddhist teachings, no matter how confused or deluded we may be at the moment, the fundamental nature of being is clear and pure. In the same way, clouds can temporarily obscure but cannot damage the light-giving power of the sun, so does the temporary afflictions of body and mind. The ultimate goal of all Buddhists, regardless of sects, is to uncover and make contact with this fundamental pure nature. According to Buddhist terminology, the ultimate goal of our individual human evolution is enlightenment or Buddhahood. This state can be achieved by everyone. This state can be achieved when all the delusions, greed, hatred, ignorance, etc presently obscure our mind have been completely removed. According to Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki in *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, for Zen students the most important thing is not to be dualistic. Our "original mind" includes everything within itself. It is always rich and sufficient within itself. You should not lose your self-sufficient state of mind. This does not mean a closed mind, but actually an empty mind and a ready mind. If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything; it is open to everything. In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities; in the expert's mind there are few.

Original mind, initial form, original form or original face, is also called Buddha-nature. This is an important term in Zen Buddhism, which refers to one's buddha-nature (buddhata), the fundamental reality that is obscured by attachment to conceptual thoughts and language. The term is used in one of the best-known Koans, "What is your original face before your parents were born? According to Zen Master Daito (1282-1334) in *A First Zen Reader*: "All Zen students should devote themselves at the beginning to zazen (sitting in meditation). Sitting in either the fully locked position or the half-locked position, with the eyes half-shut, see the original face that was before father or mother was born. This means to see the state before the parents were born, before heaven and earth were parted, before you received human form. What is called the original face will appear. The original face is something without color or form, like the empty sky in

whose clarity there is not form. The original face is really nameless, but it is indicated by such terms as original face, the Lord, the Buddha-nature, and the true Buddha. It is as with man, who has no name at birth, but afterwards various names are attached to him. The seventeen hundred koan or themes to which Zen students devote themselves are all only for making them see their original face. The World-honored One sat in meditation in the snowy mountains for six years, then saw the morning star and was enlightened, and this was seeing his original face... Every time a thought arises, throw it away... The thoughts are like clouds, when the clouds have cleared, the moon appears. The moon of eternal truth is the original face." According to 'The Three Pillars of Zen', one day Zen Master Bassui Tokusho (1327-1386) entered the hall to teach the assembly: "If you would free yourself of the sufferings of samsara, you must learn the direct way to become a Buddha. This way is no other than the realization of your own Mind. Now what is this Mind? It is the true nature of all sentient beings, that which existed before our parents were born and hence before our own birth, and which presently exists, unchangeable and eternal. So it is called one's Face before one's parents were born. This Mind is intrinsically pure. When we are born it is not newly created, and when we died it does not perish. It has no distinction of male or female, nor has it any coloration of good or bad. it cannot be compared with anything, so it is called Buddha-nature. Yet countless thoughts issue from this Self-nature as waves arise in the ocean or as images are reflected in a mirror... Imagine a child sleeping next to its parents and dreaming it is being beaten or is painfully sick. The parents cannot help the child no matter how much it suffers, for no one can enter the dreaming mind of another. If the child could awaken itself, it could be freed of this suffering automatically. In the same way, one who realizes that his own Mind is Buddha frees himself instantly from the sufferings arising from ignorance of the law of ceaseless change of birth-and-death." Zen Master Tokugaku (fifteenth century) wrote about the original face in Zen Poems of China and Japan as follows:

"Original Face is the reality of realities:  
 Stretch your hand to the winging bird.  
 Vertical nose, horizontal eye, and then?  
 What if your mind is empty?"

Talking about the Original Primeval Buddhahood, one day, Zen master Yung-chia Hsuan-chiao entered the hall to address the monks with a verse, saying:

"The real nature of blindness is the real nature of Buddha.

This illusory physical body is the Dharmakaya itself.

When one realizes the Dharmakaya, he sees that nothing exists.

This is called "The Original Primeval Buddhahood."

In fact, if we, Zen practitioners, with this understanding, will abruptly throw our mind into the abyss where mind and thought cannot reach, we will then behold the absolute, void Dharmakaya. This is where one emancipates oneself from Samsara. People have always been abiding in the cave of thought and intellection. As soon as they hear someone says "Get rid of thinking," they are dazed and lost and do not know where to go. They should know that the moment when this very feeling of loss and stupefaction arises is the best time for them to attain realization (literally, for them to release their body and life).

## ***II. An Overview of Consciousnesses In Buddhist Point of View:***

***A Summary of Consciousnesses:*** "Vijnana" is another name for "Consciousness." Theravada considered the six kinds of consciousness as "Vijnana." Mahayana considered the eight kinds of consciousness as "Vijnana." Externalists considered "vijnana" as a soul. Consciousness is another name for mind. Consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning. It is interpreted as the "mind," mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned. According to Buddhism, our "Nature" is the "Buddha". The "Consciousness" is the "Spirit", the "Intention" or "Mano-vijnana" is the "Discriminating Mind", and the "Mind" is what constantly engages in idle thinking. The "Nature" is originally perfect and bright, with no conception of self, others, beauty, or ugliness; no falling into numbers and discriminations. But as soon as there is "Consciousness", one falls into numbers and discriminations. The "Intention" or "Mano-vijnana" also makes discriminations, and it is the sixth consciousness. It is relatively turbid, while the seventh and eighth consciousnesses are relatively more pure. There are eight kinds of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, klista-mano-vijnana,

and alaya-vijnana. Fundamentally speaking, consciousness is not of eight kinds, although there are eight kinds in name. We could say there is a single headquarters with eight departments under it. Although there are eight departments, they are controlled by just one single headquarters. “Vijnana” translated as “consciousness” is the act of distinguishing or discerning including understanding, comprehending, recognizing, intelligence, knowledge. There are eight consciousnesses. The first five arise as a result of the interaction of the five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind) and the five dusts (Gunās); the sixth consciousness comes into play, all kinds of feelings, opinions and judgments will be formed (the one that does all the differentiating); the seventh consciousness (Vijnana) is the center of ego; the eighth consciousness is the Alayagarbha (a lai da), the storehouse of consciousness, or the storehouse of all deeds or actions (karmas), whether they are good, bad or neutral. “Vijnana” also means cognition, discrimination, consciousness, but as any one of these does not cover the whole sense contained in Vijnana. “Vijnana” also means relative knowledge. This term is usually used as contrasted to Jnana in purely intellectual sense. Jnana is transcendental knowledge dealing with such subjects as immortality, non-relativity, the unattained, etc., whereas Vijnana is attached to duality of things.

***Five Basic Sensory Consciousnesses:*** Consciousness is another name for mind. Consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning. It is interpreted as the “mind,” mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned. According to Buddhism, there are five basic consciousnesses (Pancavijnana (skt)). The five senses of consciousness or five pariñanas, perceptions or cognitions; ordinarily those arising from the five senses form, sound, smell, taste, touch. There are five sense-cognitions (sense-consciousness groups), which are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and body-consciousnesses. Of each pair, one is kusala-vipaka and one is akusala-vipaka. Aggregate of consciousness is the most important of the aggregates; for it is the receptacle, so to speak, for all the fifty-two mental concomitants or factors, since without consciousness no mental factors are available. Consciousness and the factors are interrelated, inter-dependent, and co-existent.

Aggregate of consciousness has six types and its function is varied. It has its basis and objects. All our feelings are experienced through the contact of sense faculties with the external world. According to the Mahayana, the five basic senses of consciousness comprise of: visual sense, auditory sense, olfactory sense, gustatory, and tactile sense.

*First, Eye Consciousness:* The function of the eye consciousness is to perceive and apprehend visual forms. Without the eye consciousness we could not behold any visual form; however, the eye consciousness depends on the eye faculty. When the eye faculty and any form meet, the eye consciousness develops instantly. If the eye faculty and the form never meet, eye consciousness will never arise (a blind person who lacks the eye faculty, thus eye consciousness can never develop). Buddhist cultivators should always understand thoroughly this vital point to minimize the meeting between eye faculty and visual forms, so that no or very limited eye consciousness will ever arise. The Buddha reminded his disciples that meditation is the only means to limit or stop the arising of the eye consciousness.

*Second, Ear Consciousness:* The function of the ear consciousness is to perceive and apprehend sounds; however, ear consciousness depends on the ear faculty. Ear faculty and any sound meet, the ear consciousness develops instantly (in a deaf person, ear faculty and sounds never meet, therefore no ear consciousness will arise). Buddhist cultivators should always remember this and try to practise meditation stop or close the ear consciousness if possible.

*Third, Smell Consciousness:* The nose consciousness develops immediately from the dominant condition of the nose faculty when it focuses on smell. Nose consciousness completely depends on the nose faculty. Someone who lacks smelling capability, nose faculty and smell never meet, therefore, nose consciousness will never arise. Buddhist cultivators should always practise meditation to stop or close the nose consciousness.

*Fourth, Taste Consciousness:* The tongue consciousness develops immediately through the dominant condition of the tongue when the tongue faculty focuses on a certain taste. At that very moment, we experience and distinguish between tastes and desire arises.

*Fifth, Tactile Sensation Consciousness:* Body consciousness develops when the dominant condition in which the body faculty meets an object of touch. The location of the body faculty is throughout the entire body. Cognition of the objects of touch, one of the five forms of



cognition. Here a monk, on touching a tangible object with the body, is neither pleased nor displeased, but remains equable, mindful and clearly aware. This is one of the six stable states which the Buddha taught in the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses.

***Eight Consciousnesses In Buddhist Teachings: A Summary of the Eight Consciousnesses:*** In Buddhism, Theravada considered the six kinds of consciousness as “Vijnana.” Mahayana considered the eight kinds of consciousness as “Vijnana.” Externalists considered “vijnana” as a soul. Consciousness is another name for mind. Consciousness means the art of distinguishing, or perceiving, or recognizing, discerning, understanding, comprehending, distinction, intelligence, knowledge, learning. It is interpreted as the “mind,” mental discernment, perception, in contrast with the object discerned. According to Buddhism, our “Nature” is the “Buddha”. The “Consciousness” is the “Spirit”, the “Intention” or “Mano-vijnana” is the “Discriminating Mind”, and the “Mind” is what constantly engages in idle thinking. The “Nature” is originally perfect and bright, with no conception of self, others, beauty, or ugliness; no falling into numbers and discriminations. But as soon as there is “Consciousness”, one falls into numbers and discriminations. The “Intention” or “Mano-vijnana” also makes discriminations, and it is the sixth consciousness. It is relatively turbid, while the seventh and eighth consciousnesses are relatively more pure. There are eight kinds of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, klista-mano-vijnana, and alaya-vijnana. Fundamentally speaking, consciousness is not of eight kinds, although there are eight kinds in name. We could say there is a single headquarters with eight departments under it. Although there are eight departments, they are controlled by just one single headquarters. “Vijnana” translated as “consciousness” is the act of distinguishing or discerning including understanding, comprehending, recognizing, intelligence, knowledge. There are eight consciousnesses. The first five arise as a result of the interaction of the five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind) and the five dusts (Gunas); the sixth consciousness comes into play, all kinds of feelings, opinions and judgments will be formed (the one that does all the differentiating); the seventh consciousness (Vijnana) is the center of ego; the eighth consciousness is the Alayagarbha (a lai da), the storehouse of

consciousness, or the storehouse of all deeds or actions (karmas), whether they are good, bad or neutral. “Vijnana” also means cognition, discrimination, consciousness, but as any one of these does not cover the whole sense contained in Vijnana. “Vijnana” also means relative knowledge. This term is usually used as contrasted to Jnana in purely intellectual sense. Jnana is transcendental knowledge dealing with such subjects as immortality, non-relativity, the unattained, etc., whereas Vijnana is attached to duality of things.

As mentioned above, the doctrine of Idealism School concerns chiefly with the facts or specific characters (lakshana) of all elements on which the theory of idealism was built in order to elucidate that no element is separate from ideation. The main goal of the Studies of Consciousness-Only is to transform the mind in cultivation in order to attain enlightenment and liberation. According to The Mahayana Awakening of Faith, there are eight consciousnesses: The first six-sense consciousnesses: seeing or sight consciousness, hearing or hearing consciousness, smelling or scent consciousness, tasting or taste consciousness, touch or touch consciousness, and mind or mano consciousness (the mental sense or intellect, mentality, apprehension, the thinking consciousness that coordinates the perceptions of the sense organs). The last two-sense consciousnesses: Seventh, Klista-mano-vijnana or Klistamanas consciousness. The discriminating and constructive sense. It is more than the intellectually perceptive. It is the cause of all egoism (it creates the illusion of a subject “I” standing apart from the object world) and individualizing of men and things (all illusion arising from assuming the seeming as the real). The self-conscious defiled mind, which thinks, wills, and is the principal factor in the generation of subjectivity. It is a conveyor of the seed-essence of sensory experiences to the eighth level of subconsciousness. Eighth, Alaya-vijnana or Alaya consciousness. The storehouse consciousness or basis from which come all seeds of consciousness or from which it responds to causes and conditions, specific seeds are reconveyed by Manas to the six senses, precipitating new actions, which in turn produce other seeds. This process is simultaneous and endless.

*Functionings of the Eight Consciousnesses:* “Vijnana” is another name for “Consciousness.” Theravada considered the six kinds of consciousness as “Vijnana.” Mahayana considered the eight kinds of

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the “Discriminating Mind”, and the “Mind” is what constantly engages in idle thinking. The “Nature” is originally perfect and bright, with no conception of self, others, beauty, or ugliness; no falling into numbers and discriminations. But as soon as there is “Consciousness”, one falls into numbers and discriminations. The “Intention” or “Mano-vijnana” also makes discriminations, and it is the sixth consciousness. It is relatively turbid, while the seventh and eighth consciousnesses are relatively more pure. There are eight kinds of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind, klista-mano-vijnana, and alaya-vijnana. Fundamentally speaking, consciousness is not of eight kinds, although there are eight kinds in name. We could say there is a single headquarters with eight departments under it. Although there are eight departments, they are controlled by just one single headquarters. “Vijnana” translated as “consciousness” is the act of distinguishing or discerning including understanding, comprehending, recognizing, intelligence, knowledge. There are eight consciousnesses. The first five arise as a result of the interaction of the five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and mind) and the five dusts (Gunas); the sixth consciousness comes into play, all kinds of feelings, opinions and judgments will be formed (the one that does all the differentiating); the seventh consciousness (Vijnana) is the center of ego; the eighth consciousness is the Alayagarbha (a lai da), the storehouse of consciousness, or the storehouse of all deeds or actions (karmas), whether they are good, bad or neutral. “Vijnana” also means cognition, discrimination, consciousness, but as any one of these does not cover the whole sense contained in Vijnana. “Vijnana” also means relative knowledge. This term is usually used as contrasted to Jnana in purely intellectual sense. Jnana is transcendental knowledge dealing with such subjects as immortality, non-relativity, the unattained, etc., whereas Vijnana is attached to duality of things.

Thought or the mind-sense, the sixth of the senses, the perception of thinking or faculty of thinking or the thinking mind which includes the perception of thinking, Faculty of thinking, and the organ of mind. The discriminating and constructive sense. It is more than the intellectually perceptive. It is the cause of all egoism (it creates the illusion of a subject “T” standing apart from the object world) and individualizing of men and things (all illusion arising from assuming the

seeming as the real). The self-conscious defiled mind, which thinks, wills, and is the principal factor in the generation of subjectivity. It is a conveyor of the seed-essence of sensory experiences to the eighth level of subconsciousness. Meanwhile, the mind consciousness does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. Buddhism distinguishes eight classes of consciousness. The first six are the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and thought (intellect). While the intellect creates the illusion of a subject 'I' standing apart from and object world, it is not persistently conscious of this 'I'. Only the seventh class of subconsciousness (manas) is this awareness of a discrete ego-'I' constant. Manas also acts as conveyor of the seed-essence of sensory experiences to the eighth level of subconsciousness (alaya-vijnana), from which, in response to causes and conditions, specific 'seeds' are reconveyed by manas to the six senses, precipitating new actions, which in turn produce other 'seeds'. This process is simultaneous and endless. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds.

When we talk about "Consciousnesses" we usually misunderstand with the sixth consciousness according to Buddhist psychology. In fact, there are six basic sense consciousnesses, and the sixth one being the mental consciousness. Buddhist psychology bases the perception process on six sense faculties: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and thought. Each faculty relates to a sense organ (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) and to a consciousness which functions specifically with that organ. The sixth consciousness, or the mind consciousness is not the mind, it is the function of the mind; it does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell and touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects and imagines in the past and even in the future, then it transfers these objects or imagines to the seventh consciousness, and in turn, the seventh consciousness will transfer these objects to the

Alaya Consciousness. Let us examine the body and mind to see whether in either of them we can locate the self, we will find in neither of them. Then, the so-called “Self” is just a term for a collection of physical and mental factors. Let us first look at the aggregate matter of form. The aggregate of form corresponds to what we would call material or physical factors. It includes not only our own bodies, but also the material objects that surround us, i.e., houses, soil, forests, and oceans, and so on. However, physical elements by themselves are not enough to produce experience. The simple contact between the eyes and visible objects, or between the ear and sound cannot result in experience without consciousness. Only the co-presence of consciousness together with the sense organ and the object of the sense organ produces experience. In other words, it is when the eyes, the visible object and consciousness come together that the experience of a visible object is produced. Consciousness is therefore an extremely important element in the production of experience. Consciousness or the sixth sense, or the mind. This sense organ together with the other five sense organs of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body to produce experience. The physical and mental factors of experience worked together to produce personal experience, and the nature of the five aggregates are in constant change. Therefore, according to the Buddha’s teachings, the truth of a man is selfless. The body and mind that man misunderstands of his ‘self’ is not his self, it is not his, and he is not it.” Devout Buddhists should grasp this idea firmly to establish an appropriate method of cultivation not only for the body, but also for the speech and mind. Besides, we also have the seventh consciousness, or the *mano-vijnana*, which is the transmitting consciousness that relays sensory information from the mind to the Alaya Consciousness, or the eighth consciousness which functions as a storehouse of all sensory information.

The *Mano Consciousness* is the thinking consciousness that coordinates the perceptions of the sense organs. The mind consciousness, the sixth or the intellectual consciousness is not the mind, it’s the function of the mind. The sentient being’s mind is an ever-spinning whirlpool in which mental activities never cease. There are four stages of production, dwelling, change, and decay. A mind which does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the

immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. The function of Manovijnana is by hypothesis to reflect on Manas, as the eye-vijnana reflects on the world of forms and the ear-vijnana on that of sounds; but in fact as soon as Manas evolves the dualism of subject and object out of the absolute unity of the Alaya, Manovijnana and indeed all the other Vijnanas begin to operate. Thus, in the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha said: "Buddhist Nirvana consists in turning away from the wrongfully discriminating Manovijnana. For with Manovijnana as cause (hetu) and support (alambana), there takes place the evolution of the seven Vijnanas. Further, when Manovijnana discerns and clings to an external world of particulars, all kinds of habit-energy (vasana) are generated therefrom, and by them the Alaya is nurtured. Together with the thought of "me and mine," taking hold of it and clinging to it, and reflecting upon it, Manas thereby takes shape and is evolved. In substance (sarira), however, Manas and Manovijnana are not different; the one from the other, they depend upon the Alaya as cause and support. And when an external world is tenaciously held as real which is no other than the presentation of one's own mind, the mentation-system (citta-kalapa), mutually related, is evolved in its totality. Like the ocean waves, the Vijnanas set in motion by the wind of an external world which is the manifestation of one's own mind, rise and cease. Therefore, the seven Vijnanas cease with the cessation of Manovijnana." A mind which does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. Consciousness refers to the perception or discernment which occurs when our sense organs make contact with their respective objects. The first five consciousness correspond to the



five senses. The sixth consciousness integrates the perceptions of the five senses into coherent images and make judgments about the external world. The seventh consciousness is the active center of reasoning, calculation, and construction or fabrication of individual objects. It is the source of clinging and craving, and thus the origin of self or ego and the cause of illusion that arises from assuming the apparent to be real. The terms “conscious” and “unconscious” are used with several different meanings. In one meaning, which might be called functional, “conscious” and “unconscious” refer to a subjective state within the individual. Saying that he is conscious of this or that psychic content means that he is aware of affects, of desires, of judgments, etc.

In Buddhism, it is called “mental faculty” for it constitutes man as an intelligent and moral being. It is commonly thought to be equated with the terms “citta” or “consciousness.” It is derived from the Sanskrit root “man,” which means “to think” or “to imagine” and is associated with intellectual activity of consciousness. This is the discriminating and constructive sense. It is more than the intellectually perceptive. It is the cause of all egoism (it creates the illusion of a subject “I” standing apart from the object world) and individualizing of men and things (all illusion arising from assuming the seeming as the real). The self-conscious defiled mind, which thinks, wills, and is the principal factor in the generation of subjectivity. It is a conveyor of the seed-essence of sensory experiences to the eighth level of subconsciousness. It is described as a sea in which currents of thought surge and seethe. It is the transmitting consciousness that relays sensory information from the mind or mano consciousness to the storehouse or Alaya-vijnana. According to The Lankavatara Sutra, this system of the five sense-vijnanas is in union with Manovijnana and this mutuality makes the system distinguish between what is good and what is not good. Manovijnana in union with the five sense-vijnanas grasps forms and appearances in their multitudinous aspect; and there is not a moment’s cessation of activity. This is called the momentary character of the Vijnanas. This system of vijnanas is stirred uninterruptedly and all the time like the waves of the great ocean. Klistamanas consciousness is the thinking consciousness that coordinates the perceptions of the sense organs. The mind

consciousness, the sixth or the intellectual consciousness is not the mind, it's the function of the mind. The sentient being's mind is an ever-spinning whirlpool in which mental activities never cease. There are four stages of production, dwelling, change, and decay. A mind which does not depend on any of the five sense faculties, but on the immediately preceding continuum of mind. Mental consciousness apprehends not only objects (form, sound, taste, smell, touch) in the present time, but it also apprehends objects in the past and imagines objects even in the future. Mental consciousness will go with us from one life to another, while the first five consciousnesses are our temporary minds. Consciousness is also one of the five skandhas. This acts like the collection station for the first six consciousnesses. The seventh of the eight consciousnesses, which means thinking and measuring, or calculating. It is the active mind, or activity of mind, but is also used for the mind itself. The waves will be seen ruffling the surface of the ocean of Alayavijnana when the principle of individuation known as Vishaya blows over it like the wind. The waves thus started are this world of particulars where the intellect discriminates, the affection clings, and passions and desires struggle for existence and supremacy. This particularizing agency sits within the system of Vijnanas and is known as Manas; in fact it is when Manas begins to operate that a system of the Vijnanas manifests itself. They are thus called "object-discriminating-vijnana" (vastu-prativikalpa-vijnana). The function of Manas is essentially to reflect upon the Alaya and to create and to discriminate subject and object from the pure oceans of the Alaya. The memory accumulated (ciyate) in the latter is now divided into dualities of all forms and all kinds. This is compared to the manifoldness of waves that stir up the ocean of Alaya. Manas is an evil spirit in one sense and a good one in another, for discrimination in itself is not evil, is not necessarily always false judgment (abhuta-parikalpa) or wrong reasoning (prapanca-daushtulya). But it grows to be the source of great calamity when it creates desires based upon its wrong judgments, such as when it believes in the reality of an ego-substance and becomes attached to it as the ultimate truth. For manas is not only a discriminating intelligence, but a willing agency, and consequently an actor. Manyana is a kind of intuition, the sense that there is a separate self which can exist independently of the rest of the

world. This intuition is produced by habit and ignorance. Its illusory nature has been constructed by *vijnapti*, and it, in turn, becomes a basis for *vijnapti*. The object of this intuition is a distorted fragment of *alaya* which it considers to be a self, comprised of a body and a soul. It of course is never reality in itself, but just a representation of reality. In its role as a self as well as consciousness of the self, *manyana* is regarded as the basic obstacle to penetrating reality. Contemplation performed by *vijnapti* can remove the erroneous perceptions brought about by *manas*. The function of *Manovijnana* is by hypothesis to reflect on *Manas*, as the eye-*vijnana* reflects on the world of forms and the ear-*vijnana* on that of sounds; but in fact as soon as *Manas* evolves the dualism of subject and object out of the absolute unity of the *Alaya*, *Manovijnana* and indeed all the other *Vijnanas* begin to operate. Thus, in the *Lankavatara Sutra*, the Buddha said: “Buddhist Nirvana consists in turning away from the wrongfully discriminating *Manovijnana*. For with *Manovijnana* as cause (*hetu*) and support (*alambana*), there takes place the evolution of the seven *Vijnanas*. Further, when *Manovijnana* discerns and clings to an external world of particulars, all kinds of habit-energy (*vasana*) are generated therefrom, and by them the *Alaya* is nurtured. Together with the thought of “me and mine,” taking hold of it and clinging to it, and reflecting upon it, *Manas* thereby takes shape and is evolved. In substance (*sarira*), however, *Manas* and *Manovijnana* are not different—the one from the other, they depend upon the *Alaya* as cause and support. And when an external world is tenaciously held as real which is no other than the presentation of one’s own mind, the mentation-system (*citta-kalapa*), mutually related, is evolved in its totality. Like the ocean waves, the *Vijnanas* set in motion by the wind of an external world which is the manifestation of one’s own mind, rise and cease. Therefore, the seven *Vijnanas* cease with the cessation of *Manovijnana*.”

*Alaya Vijnana*, the receptacle intellect or consciousness, basic consciousness, Eighth consciousness, subconsciousness, and store consciousness. The storehouse consciousness or basis from which come all seeds of consciousness or from which it responds to causes and conditions, specific seeds are reconveyed by *Manas* to the six senses, precipitating new actions, which in turn produce other seeds. This process is simultaneous and endless. “*Alayavijnana* is also called

“Open knowledge”, the store of knowledge where all is revealed, either good or bad. Alaya means a house or rather a home, which is in turn a place where all the valued things for use by us are kept and among which we dwell. Also called “Store consciousness,” “eighth consciousness,” or “karma repository.” All karma created in the present and previous lifetime is stored in the Alaya Consciousness. According to the Consciousness-Only, there are eight consciousnesses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, mind, Mana and Alaya). These consciousnesses enable sentient beings to discriminate between right and wrong of all dharmas (thoughts, feelings, physical things, etc). However, human beings have a deep consciousness which is called Alaya-consciousness which is the actual subject of rebirth, and is mistakenly taken to be an eternal soul or self by the other consciousnesses. It is in the Alaya-consciousness that the impressions of action and experience are stored in the form of ‘seeds’ and it is these seeds which engender further experiences according to the individual situation. According to Asvaghosa Bodhisattva in the Awakening of Faith and the Samparigraha, the Alaya or store is the consciousness in which the true and the false unite. When Alaya Consciousness becomes pure and taintless, it is Tathata (Thusness). Also known as Alayavijnana. In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha told Mahamati: “Oh Mahamati! The Tathagata-garbha contains in itself causes alike good and not-good, and from which are generated all paths of existence. It is like an actor playing different characters without harboring any thought of ‘me and mine.’” Alaya means all-conserving. It is in company with the seven Vijnanas which are generated in the dwelling-house of ignorance. The function of Alayavijnana is to look into itself where all the memory (vasana) of the beginningless past is preserved in a way beyond consciousness (acintya) and ready for further evolution (parinama); but it has no active energy in itself; it never acts, it simply perceives, it is in this exactly like a mirror; it is again like the ocean, perfectly smooth with no waves disturbing its tranquillity; and it is pure and undefiled, which means that it is free from the dualism of subject and object. For it is the pure act of perceiving, with no differentiation yet of the knowing one and the known. According to Prof. Junjiro Takakusu in *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, when all things are reflected on our mind, our

discriminating or imagining power is already at work. This called our consciousness (vijnana). Since the consciousness co-ordinating all reflected elements stores them, it is called the store-consciousness or ideation-store. The ideation-store itself is an existence of causal combination, and in it the pure and tainted elements are causally combined or intermingled. When the ideation-store begins to move and descend to the everyday world, then we have the manifold existence that is only an imagined world. The ideation-store, which is the seed-consciousness, is the conscious center and the world manifested by ideation is its environment. It is only from the Buddha's Perfect Enlightenment that pure ideation flashed out. This pure ideation can purify the tainted portion of the ideation-store and further develop its power of understanding. The world of imagination and the world of interdependence will be brought to the real truth (parinispanna). This having been attained, the seed-store, as consciousness, will disappear altogether and ultimately will reach the state where there is no distinction between subject and object. The knowledge so gained has no discrimination (Avikalpa-vijnana). This ultimate state is the Nirvana of No Abode (apratisthita-nirvana), that is to say, the attainment of perfect freedom, not being bound to one place. The function of Alayavijnana is to look into itself where all the memory (vasana) of the beginningless past is preserved in a way beyond consciousness (acintya) and ready for further evolution (parinama); but it has no active energy in itself; it never acts, it simply perceives, it is in this exactly like a mirror; it is again like the ocean, perfectly smooth with no waves disturbing its tranquillity; and it is pure and undefiled, which means that it is free from the dualism of subject and object. For it is the pure act of perceiving, with no differentiation yet of the knowing one and the known. The initiator of change, or the first power of change, or mutation, i.e. the alaya-vijnana, so called because other vijnanas are derived from it. An important doctrinal concept that is particularly important in the Yogacara tradition. This term is sometimes translated by Western scholars as "storehouse consciousness," since it acts as the repository (kho) of the predisposition (thiên về) that one's actions produce. It stores these predispositions until the conditions are right for them to manifest themselves. The Tibetan translators rendered (hoàn lại) it as "basis of all" because it serves as the basis for all of the

phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvana. Through meditative practice and engaging in meritorious actions, one gradually replaces afflicted seeds with pure ones; when one has completely purified the continuum of the alaya-vijnana, it is referred to as the “purified consciousness.” Alaya means all-conserving mind. It is in company with the seven Vijnanas which are generated in the dwelling-house of ignorance. Alaya means the preconsciousness, or the eighth consciousness, or the store-consciousness. It is the central or universal consciousness which is the womb or store consciousness (the storehouse consciousness where all karmic seeds enter and cause all thought activities). All karma created in the present and previous lifetime is stored in the Alaya Consciousness. This is like a storage space receiving all information collected in the Mana consciousness. When a sentient being dies, the first seven consciousnesses die with it, but the Alaya-Consciousness carries on. It is the supreme ruler of one existence which ultimately determines where one will gain rebirth in the six realms of existence.

In the Vijnaptimatratna-Trimsika, the sixth stanza emphasized on the the five sense-vijnanas in union with Manovijnana as mentioned by the philosophers of the Mind-Only School. This system of the five sense-vijnanas is in union with Manovijnana and this mutuality makes the system distinguish between what is good and what is not good. The five sense-vijnanas in union with Manovijnana grasps forms and appearances in their multitudinous aspect; and there is not a moment's cessation of activity. This is called the momentary character of the Vijnanas. This system of vijnanas is stirred uninterruptedly and all the time like the waves of the great ocean. Practitioners should always remember that each of the eight consciousnesses possesses the fundamental powers and the functioning powers. The substances of the consciousnesses are the fundamental minds; while the activities or functions of the consciousnesses are the functioning or the concomitant minds. However, the school of Consciousness believe that the eight consciousnesses are fundamentally discrete. Some other schools consider the eight perceptions are fundamentally a unity, opposed by the school of Consciousness with the doctrine that the eight consciousnesses are fundamentally discrete.

## *Chapter Four*

### *Thirty-Seven Conditions Leading to Bodhi*

#### *I. An Overview of the Thirty-Seven Conditions Leading to Bodhi:*

After mighty and terrible struggles with himself, the Buddha had conquered in his body all those natural defects and human appetites and desires that prevent our ability of seeing the truth. He had to overcome all the bad influences of the sinful world around Him. Like a soldier fighting desperately in battle against many enemies, He struggled like a hero who conquers, he eventually gained his objects. He also discovered supportive conditions leading to bodhi or Buddhahood. Thirty-seven limbs of enlightenment comprise of four right efforts, four sufficiencies, four foundations of mindfulness, five faculties, five powers, seven limbs of enlightenments, and the eightfold noble path. *Right effort of four kinds of restrain*, or four essentials to be practiced vigilantly. A Sanskrit term for “Effort.” Right Effort of four kinds of restraint, or four essentials to be practiced vigilantly, or four factors that are developed through meditation and moral training. In Buddhism, Viriya is the energy expended to direct the mind persistently, continuously toward cultivation. Even ordinary people who are hardworking and industrious have the capacity to be heroic in whatever they do. Devout Buddhists who are endowed with courageous effort will be bold in going forward, unafraid of the difficulties we may encounter in the path of cultivation. The special characteristics of “Viriya” is an enduring patience in the face of suffering or difficulty. Viriya is the ability to see to the end no matter what, even if one has to grit one’s teeth. Devout Buddhists need courageous effort, with its characteristic of forbearance in the face of difficulty. If we raise our energy level, the mind will gain enough strength to bear with challenges. Besides, viriya has the power to freshen the mind and keep it robust, even in difficult circumstances. Rddhipada or *four sufficiencies*. *Four meditations*, or four foundations of Mindfulness, or four objects on which memory or thought should dwell. Four types of Buddhist meditation for eradicating illusions and

attaining enlightenment. Hinayana calls these practices ‘basis of action’ (kammathana) which is one of the modes of analytical meditation. *Five roots* or faculties are the five roots that give rise to other wholesome dhammas. The five sense-organs can be entrances to the hells; at the same time, they can be some of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with them, we create karmas and sins, but also with them, we can practise the right way. *The five powers* or faculties for any cultivator or the powers of five spiritual faculties which are developed through strengthening the five roots. Thus in Buddhism, power or ability is always used as the sense organs to discern the truth. In Mahayana Buddhism, it is the eighth “perfection” (paramita) of the tenfold list of perfections that a Bodhisattva cultivates on the path to Buddhahood. *Seven factors of enlightenment* bring extraordinary benefits for Buddhist practitioners. Once fully developed, they have the power to bring samsaric suffering to an end.” This means that the perpetual, cyclical birth and death of beings who are composed of mental and physical phenomena can come to a complete stop. Besides, these factors of enlightenment also have the capacity to pulverize mara’s armies, the destructive inner forces which keep us bound on the wheel of suffering and rebirth. The Buddha and enlightened ones develop the factors of enlightenment and are thus able to transcend all three realms of sensual pleasures, realm of subtle forms and formless realms. When fully developed, these factors of enlightenment bring practitioners to attain the peace and joy of Nirvana. In this they are comparable to strong and effective medicine. They confer the strength of mind necessary to withstand the ups and downs of life. Moreover, they often cure physical and mental illnesses. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are seven Limbs (factors) of Enlightenment, or the seven Bodhi shares. Practicing the seven awakening states will result in the following achievements: Elimination of evil; development of virtue; feeling of cheerfulness versus suffering; final enlightenment. However, one does not become enlightened by merely gazing into the sky or looking around on the earth. One does not become enlightened by reading or studying the scriptures, nor by thinking, nor by wishing for enlightened state to burst into one’s mind. There are certain necessary conditions or prerequisites which cause enlightenment to arise. How can one



develop these factors in himself or herself? By means of cultivation of precepts, meditation, and wisdom. The Buddha said: “Oh, Bhiksus, if the four foundations of mindfulness are practiced persistently and repeatedly, the seven types of “Bojjhargas” will be automatically and fully developed.” Practicing the four foundations of mindfulness does not simply mean studying them, thinking of them, listening to discourses about them, nor discussing them. What we must do is be directly and experientially aware of the four foundations of mindfulness, the four bases on which mindfulness can be established. *The Noble Eightfold Path* is the fourth Noble Truth in the Four Noble Truths that can help us prevent problems or deal with any problems we may come across in our daily life. This is the path that leads to the end of sufferings and afflictions. If we follow it, we are on the way to less suffering and more happiness. The eight right (correct) ways. The path leading to release from suffering, the goal of the third in the four noble truths. These are eight in the 37 bodhi ways to enlightenment. Practicing the Noble Eight-fold Path can bring about real advantages such as improvement of personal conditions. It is due to the elimination of all evil thoughts, words, and actions that we may commit in our daily life, and to the continuing practice of charitable work; improvement of living conditions. If everyone practiced this noble path, the world we are living now would be devoid of all miseries and sufferings caused by hatred, struggle, and war between men and men, countries and countries, or peoples and peoples. Peace would reign forever on earth; attainment of enlightenment or Bodhi Awareness. The Noble Eight-fold Path is the first basic condition for attaining Bodhi Consciousness that is untarnished while Alaya Consciousness is still defiled. The eightfold noble path consists in *right view, right thinking, right speech, right action, right living, right endeavor, right memory, and right meditation*. Right view means to abandon a self-centered way of looking at things and to have a right view of the Buddha, that is “Nothing has its own self; everything exists due to temporary combination. If this exists, the other exists; if this ceases to exist, the other is in no way to be able to exist.” Right thinking means not to include toward a self-centered attitude toward things but to think of things rightly. Right view teaches us to abandon the three evils of the mind such as covetousness, resentment, and evil-mindedness; and to think of things rightly, with as

generous a mind as the Buddha: not to have greedy mind (covetousness) or not to think only of one's own gain; not to have the angry mind (resentment) or not to get angry when things do not turn out as one wishes; not to have the evil mind (evil-mindedness). Right speech teaches us to use right words in our daily lives and to avoid the four evils of the mouth such as not to lie (to use false language), not to speak with a double tongue, not to commit ill-speaking, and not to use improper language (careless language). Right action means daily conduct in accordance with the precepts of the Buddha. It is to say one must refrain from the three evils of the body that hinder right action such as needless killing, stealing, and committing adultery or other sexual misconduct. Right living means to gain food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities of life in a right way. Right living teaches us not to earn our livelihood through work that makes trouble for others or through a career useless to society, but to live on a justifiable income that we can obtain through right work and a vocation useful to others. Right endeavor means to engage constantly in right conduct without being idle or deviating from the right way, avoid such wrongs as the three evils of the mind, the evils of the mouth, and the three evils of the body. Right memory means to practice with a right mind as the Buddha did, that is, we must address ourselves to all things in the universe with a fair and right mind. And finally, right meditation means not to be agitated by any change of external circumstances. In short, the sutras that the Buddha taught for forty-five years, these essential teachings can be extracted and summarized in the thirty-seven limbs. These are essential teachings that Buddhist practitioners must have in order to step on the path of enlightenment and emancipation.

## ***II. A Summary of the Content of Thirty-Seven Conditions Leading to Bodhi:***

***Four Right Efforts:*** According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, Right effort of four kinds of restraint, or four essentials to be practiced vigilantly. A Sanskrit term for "Effort." Right Effort of four kinds of restraint, or four essentials to be practiced vigilantly, or four factors that are developed through meditation and moral training. *First, endeavor to start performing good deeds (to produce merit):* Effort to initiate virtues not yet arisen. Bringing forth

goodness not yet brought forth (bring good into existence). To induce the doing of good deeds. Here a practitioner rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to produce unarisen wholesome mental states. Here a monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to produce unarisen wholesome mental states. *Second, endeavor to perform more good deeds:* Effort to consolidate, increase, and not deteriorate virtues already arisen. Developing goodness that has already arisen (develop existing good). To increase merit when it was already produced. To encourage the growth and continuance of good deeds that have already started. Here a practitioner rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to maintain wholesome mental states that have arisen, not to let them fade away, to bring them to greater growth, to the full perfection of development. Here a monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to maintain wholesome mental states that have arisen, not to let them fade away, to bring them to greater growth, to the full perfection of development. *Third, endeavor to prevent evil from forming:* Effort not to initiate sins not yet arisen, that is to say preventing evil that hasn't arisen from arising, or to prevent any evil from starting or arising, or to prevent demerit from arising. Here a practitioner rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to prevent the arising of unarisen evil unwholesome mental states. Here a monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to prevent the arising of unarisen evil unwholesome mental states. *Fourth, endeavor to eliminate already-formed evil:* Effort to eliminate sins already arisen. Putting an end to existing evil, or to abandon demerit when it arises. To remove any evil as soon as it starts. Here a practitioner rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to overcome evil unwholesome mental states that have arisen. Here a monk rouses his will, makes an effort, stirs up energy, exerts his mind and strives to overcome evil unwholesome mental states that have arisen.

Also according to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, the Buddha taught about eight occasions for making an effort for practitioners: *The first occasion for making an effort:* Here a monk who has a job to do. He thinks: "I've got this job to do, but in doing it I

won't find easy to pay attention to the teaching of the Buddhas. I'll have to stir up my energy." And he stirs up sufficient energy to complete the uncompleted, to accomplish the unaccomplished, to realise the unrealised. *The second occasion for making an effort*: "Here a monk who has done some work, and thinks: Well, I did the job, but because of it I wasn't able to pay sufficient attention to the teaching of the Buddhas. So I will stir up sufficient energy." And he stirs up sufficient energy to complete the uncompleted, to accomplish the unaccomplished, to realise the unrealised. *The third occasion for making an effort*: Here a monk who has to go on a journey, and thinks: "I have to go on this journey, but in doing it I won't find easy to pay attention to the teaching of the Buddhas. I'll have to stir up energy." And he stirs up sufficient energy to complete the uncompleted, to accomplish the unaccomplished, to realise the unrealised. *The fourth occasion for making an effort*: Here a monk who has been on a journey, and he thinks: "I have been on a journey, but because of it I wasn't able to pay sufficient attention to the teaching of the Buddhas. I'll have to stir up energy." And he stirs up energy to complete the uncompleted, to accomplish the unaccomplished, to realise the unrealised. *The fifth occasion for making an effort*: Here a monk who goes for alms-round in a village or town and does not get his fill of food, whether coarse or fine, and he thinks: "I've gone for alms-round without getting my fill of food. So my body is light and fit. I'll stir up energy." And he stirs up energy to complete the uncompleted, to accomplish the unaccomplished, to realise the unrealised. *The sixth occasion for making an effort*: Here a monk who goes for alms-round in a village or town and gets his fill of food, whether coarse or fine, and he thinks: "I've gone for alms-round and get my fill of food. So my body is strong and fit. I'll stir up energy." And he stirs up energy to complete the uncompleted, to accomplish the unaccomplished, to realise the unrealised. *The seventh occasion for making an effort*: Here a monk who has some slight indisposition, and he thinks: "I get some slight indisposition, and this indisposition might get worse, so I'll stir up energy." And he stirs up energy to complete the uncompleted, to accomplish the unaccomplished, to realise the unrealised. *The eighth occasion for making an effort*: Here a monk who is recuperating from an illness, and he thinks: "I am just recuperating from an illness. It

might be that the illness will recur. So I'll stir up energy." And he stirs up energy to complete the uncompleted, to accomplish the unaccomplished, to realise the unrealised.

**Four Sufficiencies:** The Four Sufficiencies or Roads to Fulfillment that the Buddha taught His disciples to equip them with the necessities for them to be successful in their cultivation. The Buddha called them 'Four Sufficiencies' for they are different roads that lead us onward. They are four different qualities of character, each reflecting a different strength of our personality. Practitioners should recognize which of them is our own particular strength, then we can develop what need be cultivated. One of the greatest challenges of practitioners is achieving the aim of emancipation, and bringing the liberating qualities of the mind to dissolve in each moment of our life in the present. The path of our mindfulness must be continuing from moment to moment and must be right here in this very life. *First, Sufficiency of Desire:* Desire to develop magic, strong aspiration or will (intensive longing). We nourish a strong desire to practice meditation in our daily life. When we possess this quality, we will sense that nothing can finally impede us in our cultivation. Furthermore, when we possess this quality, we feel that we will not be satisfied until we have realized our goal. This is a desire to cultivate, a powerful aspiration that leads us to success. Here a monk develops CONCENTRATION OF INTENTION accompanied by effort of the will power. *Second, Sufficiency of Concentration:* Endeavor to remember to practice correct dharmas (intense concentration or thoughts, intense concentration). Memory or intense holding on to the position reached, or the love for the truth that keeps our mind continually absorbed in the practice. Endeavor to remember to practice correct dharmas has great purity of consciousness and is extremely ardent. Endeavor to remember to practice correct dharmas becomes a path to understanding when it fills our minds. Here a monk develops concentration of consciousness accompanied by effort of the thought power. Once we possess 'Endeavor to remember to practice correct dharmas', we continually reflect on Dharma and practice it; nothing else seems equally important. *Third, Sufficiency of Energy:* Intensified effort, or effort to realize magic, vigor or exertion. This is the quality of energy. Practitioners who possess this quality do not only remain undaunted by the effort required, but also find

inspiration in the challenge. Here a monk develops concentration of energy accompanied by strenuous efforts. In fact, the Buddha was a typical example for this quality. Viriya is the energy expended to direct the mind persistently, continuously toward cultivation. Even ordinary people who are hardworking and industrious have the capacity to be heroic in whatever they do. Practitioners who are endowed with courageous effort will be bold in going forward, unafraid of the difficulties we may encounter in the path of cultivation. The special characteristics of “Viriya” is an enduring patience in the face of suffering or difficulty. Viriya is the ability to see to the end no matter what, even if one has to grit one’s teeth. Practitioners need courageous effort, with its characteristic of forbearance in the face of difficulty. If we raise our energy level, the mind will gain enough strength to bear with challenges. Besides, viriya has the power to freshen the mind and keep it robust, even in difficult circumstances. There are two ways that help increase our energy level: To increase viriya by ourselves, and to seek out the inspiration from spiritual friends. Before His awakening, when He was still seeking the truth, He made this determination: “If the end is attainable by human effort, I will not rest or relax until it is attained. Let only my skin and sinews and bones remain. Let my flesh and blood dry up. I will not stop the course of my effort until I win that which may be won by human ability, human effort, and human exertion.” *Fourth, Sufficiency of Contemplation:* Meditation on one subject means an intense contemplation (meditation on one subject, intense contemplation or meditation, investigation, or the state of dhyana). Some people have a strong interest in understanding the deepest and most profound aspects of the dharmas. They are not satisfied to know just the surface of things. Here a monk develops concentration of investigation accompanied by effort of deep thinking, for this kind of mind contemplates the immensity of samsara, the circle of birth and death, the immensity of planes of existence, and the implications in our lives in this world. Practitioners cultivate the reflective knowledge into the rapid arising and passing away of phenomena, then we will have an intuitive insight of impermanence, suffering and no-self.

***Four Kinds of Mindfulness:*** Four kinds of mindfulness are four basic subjects of Buddhist meditation: impermanence, suffering, no-

self, and impurity. If we always remember and meditate on these four principles of reality, we will gradually be released from the round of birth and death (samsara). The first basic subject of Buddhist meditation is contemplation on impurity of the body. Impurity is the nature of our bodies and minds. Impurity means the absence of an immaculate state of being, one that is neither holy nor beautiful. From the psychological and physiological standpoint, human beings are impure. This is not negative or pessimistic, but an objective perspective on human beings. If we examine the constituents of our bodies from the hair on our head to the blood, pus, phlegm, excrement, urine, the many bacteria dwelling in the intestines, and the many diseases present waiting for the opportunity to develop, we can see clearly that our bodies are quite impure and subject to decay. Our bodies also create the motivation to pursue the satisfaction of our desires and passions. That is why the sutra regards the body as the place where misdeeds gather. Let us now consider our psychological state. Since we are unable to see the truth of impermanence, suffering, and the selfless nature of all things, our minds often become the victims of greed and hatred, and we act wrongly. So the sutra says, "The mind is the source of all confusion." The second basic subject of Buddhist meditation is contemplation suffering of sensation. The ancient people of India said that all things are composed of four elements: earth, water, fire, and air. Acknowledging this, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas understand that when there is a harmonious relationship among the four elements, there is peace. When the four elements are not in harmony, there is suffering. Because all things are created by a combination of these elements, nothing can exist independently or permanently. All things are impermanent. Consequently, when we are caught up in the things of the world, we suffer from their impermanent nature. And since all things are empty, when we are caught up by things, we also suffer from their emptiness. Awareness of the existence of suffering leads us to begin to practice the way of realization. This is the first of the Four Noble Truths. When we lose awareness of and do not meditate on the existence of suffering in all things, we can easily be pushed around by passions and desires for worldly things, increasingly destroying our lives in the pursuit of these desires. Only by being aware of suffering can we find its cause, confront it directly, and eliminate it. The third

basic subject of Buddhist meditation is contemplation on impermanence of the mind or the impermanent nature of all things. All things in this world, including human life, mountains, rivers, and political systems, are constantly changing from moment to moment. This is called impermanence in each moment. Everything passes through a period of birth, maturity, transformation, and destruction. This destruction is called impermanence in each cycle. To see the impermanent nature of all things, we must examine this closely. Doing so will prevent us from being imprisoned by the things of this world. The fourth basic subject of Buddhist meditation is the contemplation of selflessness of things. For practitioners, they should see the nature of our bodies are selfless. Buddhism teaches that human beings' bodies are composed of five aggregates, called skandhas in Sanskrit. If the form created by the four elements is empty and without self, then human beings' bodies, created by the unification of the five skandhas, must also be empty and without self. Human beings' bodies are involved in a transformation process from second to second, minute to minute, continually experiencing impermanence in each moment. By looking very deeply into the five skandhas, we can experience the selfless nature of our bodies, our passage through birth and death, and emptiness, thereby destroying the illusion that our bodies are permanent. In Buddhism, no-self is the most important subject for meditation. By meditating no-self, we can break through the barrier between self and other. When we no longer are separate from the universe, a completely harmonious existence with the universe is created. We see that all other human beings exist in us and that we exist in all other human beings. We see that the past and the future are contained in the present moment, and we can penetrate and be completely liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

Four meditations, or four foundations of Mindfulness, or four objects on which memory or thought should dwell. Four types of Buddhist meditation for eradicating illusions and attaining enlightenment. Hinayana calls these practices 'basis of action' (kammathana) which is one of the modes of analytical meditation. Some forty such meditations are given in the Visuddha-Magga: four 'measureless meditations, ten impurities, four formless states, ten universals, ten remembrances, one sign, and one mental reflex. *First,*



*Meditation and Full Realization on the Impurity of the Body:* Due to illusions, most of us think that our body is more valuable than any thing else. So it needs be provided with better foods and expensive clothes. Therefore, the ‘struggle for life’ has come into play. Life is no longer a peaceful place, but a battle field with greed, hatred, envy, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying. Evil karma is gradually formed as a result. Earnest Buddhists should view the body (eye, ear, skin, hair, nose, tongue, mouth, anus, etc) is unclean (Quán thân bất tịnh) which covered with a bag of skin, inside are flesh, fat, bone, blood, mucus and waste matters of which no one wishes to touch. The body itself, if not being washed frequently with fragrant water and soap, no one wants to stay close to it. In addition, it is prone to decay minute after minute, second after second. If we stop breathing, what is the body called if not a corpse? During the first day, its color is changing. A few days later, it becomes bluish and produces offensive odor. At this time, even if that disintegrated body once was the most beautiful woman or a handsome man, no one wants to be close to it. Earnest Buddhist should always contemplate that the body is unclean. This contemplation is designed to cure greed, attachment, selfishness, and arrogance. Also, when people realize that they are physically and biologically the same, they would easily understand, tolerate and compassionate among themselves and others. The discrimination against the aging, people with disabilities, and the other race would be diminished. As we see above, through contemplation we see that our body is not clean. It is viewed as a skinned bag containing dirty trash that will soon be disintegrated. Therefore, we must not become attached to it. The nature of our bodies and minds are impure which is neither holy nor beautiful. From psychological and physiological standpoint, human beings are impure. This is not negative or pessimistic. Objectively speaking, if we examine the constituents of our bodies from the hair, blood, pus, excrement, urine, intestines, liver, and stomach, etc., they are dwelling places for many bacteria. Many diseases are awaiting for the opportunity to develop. In fact, our bodies are impure and subject to decay. The body as an abode of mindfulness. Contemplation of the impurity of the body, or to contemplate the body as impure. Mindfulness of the body as impure and utterly filthy (consider the body is impure). This negates the idea of “Purity.”. Here

a monk abides contemplating body as body, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world. *Second, Meditation and Full Realization on the Evils of Sensations:* All sensations are evil, no matter they are painful, joyous, or indifferent sensations. To view all the feelings are painful. There are three kinds of feelings: pleasures, pain and neutral ones; however, according to Buddha's teaching, all feelings are painful because they are impermanent, transcient, ungraspable, and therefore, they are unreal, illusive and deceptive (quán thọ thị khổ). Furthermore, when you accept something from others, naturally, you have to do something else for them in return. It might cost you more than what you have accepted. However, we can easily refuse material things, but the hardest thing to escape is our own feelings. Feeling is a form of acceptance that most of us could easily be trapped. It is very subtle, but its effect is so destructible. We usually feel whatever conveyed to us by the six senses. For example, hearing someone bad-mouth on us, we feel angry at once. Seeing something profitable, we readily feel greedy. After all, if we don't cultivate, greed and angry are two uncontrollable agents which dominate and overwhelm our daily activities. To contemplate all the feelings are painful will gradually assist us to keep the feelings under control as well as to purify our mind; and as a result, provide us the joy and peace. We experience good and bad feelings from our five senses. But good feelings never last long; and sooner or later they will disappear. Only bad feelings remain from which we will suffer. Nothing in the universe can exist independently or permanently. All things including bodies of human beings are composed of four elements: earth, water, fire, and air. When there is a harmonious relationship among these four elements, there is peace. When the four elements are not in harmony, there is suffering. Feelings as an abode of mindfulness, or to contemplate all feelings or sensations lead to suffering, or mindfulness of feeling as the cause of suffering. Sensation or consciousness as always resulting in suffering (receiving is self-binding; consider feelings or the senses as a source of suffering). This negates the idea of "Joy." Here a monk abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering. According to the Satipatthanasutta, contemplation of feelings or sensations means to be mindful of our feeling, including

pleasant, unpleasant and indifferent or neutral. When experiencing a pleasant feeling we should know that it is a pleasant feeling because we are mindful of the feeling. The same with regard to all other feelings. We try to experience each feeling as it really is. Generally, we are depressed when we are experiencing unpleasant feelings and are elated by pleasant feelings. Contemplation of feelings or sensations will help us to experience all feelings with a detached outlook, with equanimity and avoid becoming a slave to sensations. Through the contemplation of feelings, we also learn to realize that there is only a feeling, a sensation. That feeling or sensation itself is not lasting and there is no permanent entity or “self” that feels. According to the Satipatthana Sutta in the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha taught “How, Bhikkhus, does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating feelings as feelings? Here, when feeling a pleasant feeling, a Bhikkhu understands: ‘I feel a pleasant feeling;’ when feeling a painful feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a painful feeling;’ when feeling a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.’ When feeling a worldly pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a worldly pleasant feeling;’ when feeling an unworldly pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘I feel an unworldly pleasant feeling;’ when feeling a worldly painful feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a worldly painful feeling;’ when feeling an unworldly painful feeling, he understands: ‘I feel an unworldly painful feeling;’ when feeling a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘I feel a worldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling;’ when feeling an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, he understands: ‘I feel an unworldly neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.’ In this way he abides contemplating feelings as feelings internally, or he abides contemplating feelings as feelings externally, or he abides contemplating feelings as feelings both internally and externally. Or else he abides contemplating in feelings their arising factors, or he abides contemplating in feelings their vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in feelings both their arising and vanishing factors. Or else, mindfulness that ‘there is feeling’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And, he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a Bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings.” Cultivation on the

Sensations means meditation and full realization on the evils of sensations, no matter they are painful, joyous, or indifferent sensations. We experience good and bad feelings from our five senses. But good feelings never last long; and sooner or later they will disappear. Only bad feelings remain from which we will suffer. Nothing in the universe can exist independently or permanently. All things including bodies of human beings are composed of four elements: earth, water, fire, and air. When there is a harmonious relationship among these four elements, there is peace. When the four elements are not in harmony, there is suffering. Feelings as an abode of mindfulness, or to contemplate all feelings or sensations lead to suffering, or mindfulness of feeling as the cause of suffering. Sensation or consciousness as always resulting in suffering (receiving is self-binding. Consider feelings or the senses as a source of suffering). This negates the idea of "Joy." Here a monk abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world. *Third, Meditation and Full Realization on the Evanescence or Impermanence of Mind and Thoughts:* Realization the impermanence of mind and thoughts means contemplating the impermanence of all thoughts. To view the mind is transient or impermanent. Most people think that their mind is not changed; therefore, they attach to whatever they think. They believe that what they think reflects the truth. Probably some of them would discover that their mind is changing, but they refuse to accept it. Buddhist practitioners should always contemplate their wholesome and unwholesome minds, they are all subject to rising and destroying. They have no real entity. In sitting meditation, one will have the chance to recognize the facts that the mind keeps jumping in a fast speed as pictures on a movie screen. The body, therefore, always feels restless and eager to react on the thinking pulses. That is why people are rarely calm down or experiencing true happiness. Earnest Buddhists should always remember that the mind does not have any "real entity" to itself. It changes from second to second. That's why the Buddha viewed the mind of an ordinary person is like a swinging monkey, the wind, lightning or a drop of morning dew. This contemplation helps the practitioners see that everything is changed so that the practitioners will have the ability to eliminate attachment to what they think.

Impermanence is the key nature of all things. From moment to moment, all things in this universe, including human's bodies and minds are in constant transformation. Everything passes through a period of birth, maturity, transformation and destruction. Mind as an abode of mindfulness, or mindfulness of the mind as impermanent, or to contemplate the mind as impermanent. Ordinary mind is impermanent, merely one sensation after another (mind is everchanging, consider the mind to be a constant state of flux). This negates the idea of "Permanence." Here a monk abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world. However, on what mind do we have to contemplate? According to the Siksasamuccaya Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Cultivator searches all around for this thought. But what thought? Is it the passionate, hateful or confused one? Or is it the past, future, or present one? The past one no longer exists, the future one has not yet arrived, and the present one has no stability. In the Satipatthana Sutta in the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha taught: "For thought, Kasyapa, cannot be apprehended, inside, or outside, or in between. For thought is immaterial, invisible, nonresisting, inconceivable, unsupported, and non-residing. Thought has never been seen by any of the Buddhas, nor do they see it, nor will they see it. And what the Buddhas never see, how can that be observable process, except in the sense that dharmas proceed by the way of mistaken perception? Thought is like a magical illusion; by an imagination of what is actually unreal it takes hold of a manifold variety of rebirths. A thought is like the stream of a river, without any staying power; as soon as it is produced it breaks up and disappears. A thought is like a flame of a lamp, and it proceeds through causes and conditions. A thought is like lightning, it breaks up in a moment and does not stay on... Searching thought all around, cultivator does not see it in the skandhas, or in the elements, or in the sense-fields. Unable to see thought, he seeks to find the trend of thought, and asks himself: "Whence is the genesis of thought?" And it occurs to him that "where is an object, there thought arises." Is then the thought one thing and the object another? No, what is the object that just is the thought. If the object were one thing and the thought another, then there would be a double state of thought. So the object itself is just thought. Can then thought

review thought? No, thought cannot review thought. As the blade of a sword cannot cut itself, so can a thought not see itself. Moreover, vexed and pressed hard on all sides, thought proceeds, without any staying power, like a monkey or like the wind. It ranges far, bodiless, easily changing, agitated by the objects of sense, with the six sense-fields for its sphere, connected with one thing after another. The stability of thought, its one-pointedness, its immobility, its undistraughtness, its one-pointed calm, its nondistractedness, that is on the other hand called mindfulness as to thought. In short, the contemplation of mind speaks to us of the importance of following and studying our own mind, of being aware of arising thoughts in our mind, including lust, hatred, and delusion which are the root causes of all wrong doing. In the contemplation of mind, we know through mindfulness both the wholesome and unwholesome states of mind. We see them without attachment or aversion. This will help us understand the real function of our mind. Therefore, those who practice contemplation of mind constantly will be able to learn how to control the mind. Contemplation of mind also helps us realize that the so-called "mind" is only an ever-changing process consisting of changing mental factors and that there is no abiding entity called "ego" or "self." According to the Satipatthana Sutta in the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha taught: "Bhikkhus, does a Bhikkhu abide contemplating mind as mind? Here a Bhikkhu understands mind affected by lust as mind affected by lust, and mind unaffected by lust as mind unaffected by lust. He understands mind affected by hate as mind affected by hate, and mind unaffected by hate as mind unaffected by hate. He understands mind affected by delusion as mind affected by delusion, and mind unaffected by delusion as mind unaffected by delusion. He understands contracted mind as contracted mind, and distracted mind as distracted mind. He understands exalted mind as exalted mind, and unexalted mind as unexalted mind. He understands surpassed mind as surpassed mind, and unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed mind. He understands concentrated mind as concentrated mind, and unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated mind. He understands liberated mind as liberated mind, and unliberated mind as unliberated mind. In this way he abides contemplating mind as mind internally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind externally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind both internally and externally. Or

else, he abides contemplating in mind its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in mind its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in mind both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that ‘there is mind’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind.” *Fourth, Contemplation of Mental Objects:* Contemplation of mental objects means contemplation of mind-objects, or meditation and full realization on the transiency selflessness of all elements (contemplating that all the dharmas are without their own nature). The contemplation of mental objects or mind contents means to be mindful on all essential dharmas. The contemplation of mental objects is not mere thinking or deliberation, it goes with mindfulness in discerning mind objects as when they arise and cease. For example, when there is a sense desire arising, we immediately know that a sense desire is arising in us; when a sense desire is present, we immediately know that a sense desire is present in us; when a sense desire is ceasing, we immediately know that a sense desire is ceasing. In other words, when there is sense desire in us, or when sense desire is absent, we immediately know or be mindful that there is sense desire or no sense desire in us. We should always be mindful with the same regard to the other hindrances, as well as the five aggregates of clinging (body or material form, feelings, perception, mental formation, and consciousness). We should also be mindful with the six internal and six external sense-bases. Through the contemplation of mental factors on the six internal and external sense-bases, we know well the eye, the visible form and the fetter that arises dependent on both the eye and the form. We also know well the ear, sounds, and related fetters; the nose, smells and related fetters; the tongue and tastes; the body and tactile objects; the mind and mind objects, and know well the fetter arising dependent on both. We also know the ceasing of the fetter. Similarly, we discern the seven factors of enlightenment, and the Four Noble Truths, and so on. Thus we live mindfully investigating and understanding the mental objects. We live independent, clinging to nothing in the world. Our live is totally free from any attachments. Practitioners must contemplate to see that everything is without-self and has no real nature. Everything in the

world, either physical or mental, is depend upon each other to function or survive. They are not free from one another or free to act on their own, on their own will. They do not have a "self." They are not capable of being self-existent. A human body is composed of billions of cells that depend on one another; one cell dies will effect so many other cells. Similarly, a house, a car, a road, a mountain, or a river all are compounded, not being self-existent. Everything, therefore, is a combination of other things. For instance, without nutritious foods, water, and fresh air, this body will certainly be reduced to a skeleton and eventually disintegrated. Thus the Buddha taught: "All existents are selfless, empty, and impermanent." Practitioners who always contemplate 'the dharma is without-self,' they should become more humble and likable. In fact, everything has no real nature, they are only a combination of the four elements, and each element is empty and without a self of itself, thus everything is without a self. Dharmas (real things and phenomena) as an abode of mindfulness, or mindfulness of dharmas as dependent, without self-entity, or to contemplate all things as being dependent, without self-nature or self-identity. All phenomena lack self-nature. There is no such thing as an ego. Things in general as being dependent and without a nature of their own (things are composed and egoless or consider everything in the world as being a consequence of causes and conditions and that nothing remains unchanged forever). This negates the idea of "Personality." Here a monk abides contemplating monf-objects as mind-objects, ardent, clearly aware and mindful, having put aside hankering and fretting for the world.

According to Majjhima Nikaya and Digha Nikaya, the Buddha taught: "Bhiksus! Whoever should be able to develop these Four Foundations of mindfulness for seven years, one of these two fruits may be expected by him: 'either Arahantship in this life or the state of Non-returning in the future. Bhiksus! Let alone 7 years. Should anyone be able to develop these Four Foundations of mindfulness for six years, five years, four years, three years, two years, one year... then one of the two above mentioned fruits may also be expected by him. Bhiksus! Let alone one year. Should anyone be able to develop these Four Foundations of mindfulness for seven months, six months... half a month, then one of the two above mentioned fruits may also be



expected by him. Bhiksus! Let alone half a month. Should anyone be able to develop these Four Foundations of mindfulness for a week, then one of the two above mentioned fruits may also be expected by him. This is the only way, Bhiksus, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for winning the right path, for realizing Nirvana, namely, the Four Foundations of mindfulness.”

***The Five Faculties:*** According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five roots or faculties (indriyani). These are the five roots that give rise to other wholesome dharma. The five sense-organs can be entrances to the hells; at the same time, they can be some of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with them, we create karmas and sins, but also with them, we can practise the right way. *First, Virtue of Belief:* Faith or Sense of belief in the Triple Gem and the Four Noble Truths. Sraddhendriya also means the mind of faith. Faith in a religion, unlike intellectual learning, does not enable a believer to have the power to save others as well as himself if he understands it only in theory. When he believe from the depths of his heart, his belief produces power. His faith cannot be said to be true until he attains such a mental state. *Second, Virtue of Active Vigor:* Energy (vigor) or Sense of endeavor or vigor to cultivate good deeds. The spirit endeavoring purely and incessantly. Faith alone is not enough. Our religious lives cannot be true unless we maintain our faith purely and constantly endeavor so that our religious spirit does not weaken or lose its power. *Third, Virtue of Mindfulness:* Memory or Mindfulness or Sense of memory or right memory. The mind that always focuses upon the Buddha. Practically speaking, of course, it is impossible for us to completely forget the Buddha for even a moment. When a student devotes himself to his studies or when an adult is entirely absorbed in his work, he must concentrate on one object. Doing so accords with the way to Buddhahood. While devoting ourselves to a particular object, we reflect, “I am caused to live by the Buddha.” When we complete a difficult task we feel relieved, we thank the Buddha, saying, “How lucky I am! I am protected by the Buddha.” When an evil thought flashes across our mind or we suddenly feel angry, we instantly examine ourselves, thinking, “Is this the way to Buddhahood?” The

mind that thus keeps the Buddha in mind at all times is “sense of memory.” *Fourth, Virtue of Concentration:* Sense of meditation or Visionary meditation, samadhi, or virtue of concentration. The sense of meditation implies a determined mind. Once we have faith in a religion, we are never agitated by anything, whatever may happen. We bear patiently all persecution and temptation, and we continue to believe only in one religion. We must constantly maintain such firm determination, never becoming discouraged. We cannot be said to be real people with a religious faith unless we have such a mental attitude. *Fifth, Virtue of Wisdom or Awareness:* Sense of wisdom or thinking of the truth. The wisdom that people of religion must maintain. This is not a self-centered wisdom but the true wisdom that we obtain when we perfectly free ourselves from ego and illusion. So long as we have this wisdom, we will not take the wrong way. We can say the same thing of our belief in religion itself, not to mention in our daily lives. If we are attached to a selfish, small desire, we are apt to stray toward a mistaken religion. However, earnestly we may believe in it, endeavoring to practice its teaching, keeping it in mind, and devoting ourselves to it, we cannot be saved because of its basically wrong teaching, and we sink farther and farther into the world of illusion. There are many instances around us of people following such a course. Although “sense of wisdom” is mentioned as the last of the five organs leading man to good conduct, it should be the first in the order in which we enter a religious life.

According to the Aditta-pariyaya Sutta, Samyutta Nikaya, Volume 5.48.2, the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus about the ‘Five Faculties’ thus: “Bhikkhus, there are these five faculties. What five? The faculty of faith, the faculty of energy, the faculty of mindfulness, the faculty of concentration, and the faculty of wisdom. And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of faith? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple is a person of faith, one who places faith in the enlightenment of the Tathagata thus: ‘The Blessed One is an Arahant, fully enlightened, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of the world, unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.’ And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of energy? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple dwells with energy aroused for the abandoning of unwholesome states and the

acquisition of wholesome states; he is strong, valiant, not shirking the responsibility of cultivating wholesome states. He generates desire for the non-arising of unarisen evil unwholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the abandoning of arisen evil unwholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the arising of unarisen wholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the maintenance of arisen wholesome states, for their non-decline, increase, expansion, and fulfilment by development; he makes an effort, arouses energy, exerts his mind, and strives. This is called the faculty of energy. And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of mindfulness? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple is mindful, possessing supreme mindfulness and discernment, one who remembers and recollects what was done long ago and said long ago. He dwells contemplating the body in the body ... feelings in feelings ... mind in mind ... mental phenomena in mental phenomena, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having put away covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. This is called the faculty of mindfulness. And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of concentration? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple, having made relinquishment the object, gains concentration, gains one-pointedness of mind. Secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, he enters and dwells in the first jhana, which is accompanied by thought and examination, with rapture and happiness born of seclusion. With the subsiding of thought and examination, he enters and dwells in the second jhana, which has internal confidence and unification of mind, is without thought and examination, and has rapture and happiness born of concentration. With the fading away as well of rapture, he dwells equanimous and, mindful and clearly comprehending, he experiences happiness with the body; he enters and dwells in the third jhana of which the noble ones declare: 'He is equanimous, mindful, one who dwells happily.' With the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous passing away of joy and displeasure, he enters and dwells in the fourth jhana, which is neither painful nor pleasant and includes the purification of mindfulness by equanimity. This is called the faculty of concentration. And what, bhikkhus, is the faculty of wisdom? Here, bhikkhus, the noble disciple

is wise; he possesses wisdom directed to arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering. He understands as it really is: 'This is suffering.' He understands as it really is: 'This is the origin of suffering.' He understands as it really is: 'This is the cessation of suffering.' He understands as it really is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' This is called the faculty of wisdom. These, bhikkhus, are the five faculties."

**The Five Powers:** The five powers or faculties for any cultivator or the powers of five spiritual faculties which are developed through strengthening the five roots. Thus in Buddhism, power or ability is always used as the sense organs to discern the truth. In Mahayana Buddhism, it is the eighth "perfection" (paramita) of the tenfold list of perfections that a Bodhisattva cultivates on the path to Buddhahood. It is developed on the eighth bodhisattva level (bhumi). *First, Power of Faith:* Also called force of belief which precludes all false belief or the faith to believe. *Second, Power of Zeal:* Also called force of active vigor which leads to overcoming all obstacles or the will to make the endeavor. *Third, Power of Memory:* Also called mindfulness, or force of mindfulness which is achieved through meditation or the faculty of alertness. *Fourth, Power of Meditation (Dhyana):* Also called force of concentration which leads to eliminate all passions and desires or the ability to concentrate one's mind. *Fifth, Power of Wisdom:* Also called force of wisdom which rests on insight into the four noble truths and leads to the knowledge that liberates the ability to maintain clear wisdom. Besides, there is also a tenfold list of qualities that in both Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana are said to be unique to fully awakened Buddhas (Samyak-Sambuddha): 1) power of knowledge of what is possible and what is impossible or the power to distinguish right from wrong (sthanasthana-jnana-bala); power of knowledge of retributions of actions or the power of knowing karmic retributions throughout the three periods of time (karma-vipaka-jnana-bala); 3) power of knowledge of the concentrations, eight stages of liberations, meditative absorptions, and attainments (dhyana-vimoksa-samadhi-samapatti-jnana-bala); 4) power of knowledge of the relative qualities of beings or the power of complete knowledge of the powers and faculties of all beings (indrya-parapara-jnana-bala); 5) power of

knowledge of the various intentions of beings or the power of complete knowledge of the desires or moral direction of every being (nanadhimukti-jnana-bala); 6) power of knowledge of the various states of beings or the power of knowing the states of others (nanadhātu-jnana-bala); 7) power of knowledge of the ways in which beings go everywhere within cyclic existence and nirvana (sarvatragamini-pratipajjnana-bala); 8) power of knowledge of former abodes (purva-nivasa-jnana-bala); 9) power of knowledge of death and rebirth (cyutyu-papada-jnana-bala); 10) power of knowledge that the defilements have been extinguished (asrava-jnana-bala). The five powers include the power of Faith or force of belief which precludes all false belief; power of Zeal or force of active vigor which leads to overcoming all obstacles; power of Memory, or mindfulness, or force of mindfulness which is achieved through meditation; power of Meditation (Dhyana) or force of concentration which leads to eliminate all passions and desires; and power of Wisdom (awareness) or force of wisdom which rests on insight into the four noble truths and leads to the knowledge that liberates.

**Seven Bodhi Shares:** In Buddhism, the seven Bodhi Shares are also called the seven limbs of enlightenment. The Buddha always told His disciples: “All of the factors of enlightenment bring extraordinary benefits. Once fully developed, they have the power to bring samsaric suffering to an end.” This means that the perpetual, cyclical birth and death of beings who are composed of mental and physical phenomena can come to a complete stop. Besides, these factors of enlightenment also have the capacity to pulverize mara’s armies, the destructive inner forces which keep us bound on the wheel of suffering and rebirth. The Buddha and enlightened ones develop the factors of enlightenment and are thus able to transcend all three realms of sensual pleasures, realm of subtle forms and formless realms. When fully developed, these factors of enlightenment bring practitioners to attain the peace and joy of Nirvana. In this they are comparable to strong and effective medicine. They confer the strength of mind necessary to withstand the ups and downs of life. Moreover, they often cause physical and mental illnesses. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are seven Limbs (factors) of Enlightenment, or the seven Bodhi shares. Practicing the seven awakening states will result in the

following achievements: Elimination of evil; development of virtue; feeling of cheerfulness versus suffering; final enlightenment.

Cultivators can not become enlightened by merely gazing into the sky or just look down on earth. Cultivators can not obtain the way by simply reading books or studying the scriptures, nor by thinking, nor by wishing for becoming Buddha. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are seven Limbs (factors) of Enlightenment, or the seven Bodhi shares. They are necessary conditions or prerequisites which cause enlightenment to arise. Practicing the seven awakening states will result in the following achievements: Elimination of evil; development of virtue; feeling of cheerfulness versus suffering; final enlightenment. The word “Bojjhanga” is a Pali term for “factors of enlightenment.” It is made up of “Bodhi,” which means enlightenment or an enlightened person, and “anga,” is a causative factor. Thus a “bojjhanga” is a causative factor of an enlightened being, or a cause for enlightenment. A second sense of the word “Bojjhanga” is based on alternative meanings of its two Pali roots. Thus the alternative meaning of bodhi is the knowledge that comprehends or sees the Four Noble Truths, and the Eightfold Noble Path. Sometimes, seven factors of enlightenment are known as ‘sambojjhanga’. The prefix ‘sam’ means ‘full’ or ‘complete’; however, the prefix does not change the meaning of the seven factors of enlightenment. All practitioners come to understand the Four Noble Truths to some extent, but according to Buddhism, true comprehension of them requires a particular, transforming moment of consciousness, known as path consciousness. This is one of the culminating insights of meditation practice for it includes the experience of Nirvana. Once a practitioner has experienced this, he or she is deeply knows the Four Noble Truths, and thus is considered to contain the “bojjhangas” inside him or herself. Such a person is called noble. Thus, “Bojjhangas” or enlightenment factors also are parts or qualities of a noble person. The seven factors of enlightenment include Selection of the proper dharma, Constant effort, Cheerfulness or high spirits, Peaceful mind, Remembrance of the Dharma, Concentration ability, and Non-attachment ability. Zen practitioners can find each one of the seven factors of enlightenment in all phases of meditation practices. Zen practitioners should always remember the Buddha’s reminder: “If the

four foundations of mindfulness are practiced persistently and repeatedly, the seven factors of enlightenment will be automatically and fully developed.” Thus, the Buddha Himself emphasized the relationships between Zen and the Seven Factors of Enlightenment very clearly. However, one does not become enlightened by merely gazing into the sky or looking around on the earth. One does not enlighten by reading or studying the scriptures, nor by thinking, nor by wishing for enlightened state to burst into one’s mind. There are certain necessary conditions or prerequisites which cause enlightenment to arise. How can one develop these factors in himself or herself? By means of cultivation of precepts, meditation, and wisdom. *First, Selection of the Proper Dharma:* Discrimination of true or false, or keen investigation of phenomena (dharma). It is the sharp analytical knowledge of understanding the true nature of all constituent things, animate or inanimate, human or divine. It is seeing things in their proper perspective. Only through meditation we can see all component things in their fundamental elements, right down to their ultimates. Through keen meditation and investigation, one understands that all compounded things pass through the inconceivably rapid moments of arising, reaching a peak and ceasing, just as a river in flood sweeps to climax and fades away; the whole universe is constantly changing, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments; all things in fact are subject to conditions, causes and effects; what is impermanent and not lasting producing painful or sorrow fruit; there doesn’t exist a so-called permanent and everlasting soul or self; the true nature of the three characteristics, or laws of transiency, sorrow, and non-self. *Second, Constant Effort:* Energy, zeal or undeflected progress. It is a mental property and the sixth limb of the Noble Eightfold Path, there called right effort. Effort is the energy expended to direct the mind persistently, continuously in meditation, and toward the object of observation. Zen practitioners should have courageous efforts in meditation practices. The Buddha has not proclaimed himself a saviour willing and able to take upon himself the evil of all sentient beings. He is only a Path-Revealer. Each one of us must put forth the necessary effort and work out his own deliverance with heedfulness. He cannot walk for anyone on this path. Thus he advised that each Buddhist should be sincerely zealous, strong and firm in the purpose of

reaching the final aim. He also advised: “Be islands unto yourselves, be your own refuge.” Thus did the Master exhort his followers to acquire self-reliance. A follower of the Buddha should not under any circumstances relinquish hope and effort; for the Buddha was one who never gave up courage and effort even as a bodhisattva. Zen practitioners should be patient and accept difficulties and challenges during practicing meditation; should leave behind habits and hobbies of ordinary life; and should try their best to practice meditation continually. One of the most difficult things for Zen practitioners is the wandering mind, it never wants to stay on the object you want to observe, but rather wandering around and around all day long. In our body, any time we cross our legs to practice meditation, we are likely to experience some level of pain in our body. Sometimes, we decide to try to sit still for an hour with our legs crossed, but only after ten minutes, we feel numb in our feet and stiff in our neck, and so on, and so on. Zen practitioners need courageous effort to face difficulties and challenges. Once we develop our courageous effort, the mind gains strength to bear with pain in a patient and courageous way. Effort has the power to freshen the mind and keep it strong in any difficult circumstances. Zen practitioners should always have the effort and energy to cultivate the following four things: effort to initiate virtues not yet arisen; effort to consolidate, increase, and not deteriorate virtues already arisen; effort not to initiate sins not yet arisen; effort to eliminate sins already arisen. In The Dhammapada Sutta, sentence 280, the Buddha taught: “The idler who does not strive, who, though, young and strong, is full of sloth, who is weak in resolution and thought, that lazy and idle man will never find the way to wisdom, the way to elightenment and deliverance.” *Third, Cheerfulness or High Spirits:* Rapture means joy, happiness, or delight; but a special characteristic of Rapture is that it can pervade associated mental states, making them delight and happy and bringing a sense of deep satisfaction. “Piti” is a mental property, and is a quality which deeply influences both the body and mind. A man lacking in this quality cannot advance along the path to enlightenment. In him there will always arise sullen indifference to the Dharma, an aversion to the practice of meditation, and morbid manifestations. Zen practitioners should always remember that Rapture only develops when the mind is relatively clean of afflictions. In order



for us to be clean of afflictions, we have no other choices but to be mindful from moment to moment so that concentration arises and the afflictions are eliminated. Therefore, we must be developing Rapture through mindfulness continuously, whether when we are walking, standing, lying down, sitting, or doing other tasks. To practice “piti” or joy, Buddhist cultivators should always remember that happiness is a matter of the mind and it should never be sought in external and material things, though they may be instrumental in any way. Only those who possess the quality of contentment can experience real happiness. Buddhist cultivators should always remember that there is a vast difference between pleasure and happiness. Pleasure, or pleasant feeling, is something very momentary and fleeting. Pleasant feeling may be an indicative sign of suffering, for what we hug in great glee this moment, may turn to be a source of suffering the next moment. Seeing a form, hearing a sound, perceiving an odour, tasting a flavour, feeling some tangible thing, cognizing an idea, we are usually moved, and from those sense objects and mental objects, we experience a certain degree of pleasure. However, they are all temporary; they are only a passing show of phenomena. Real happiness or rapture does not come through grasping or clinging to things, animate or inanimate, but from giving up. The Buddha left behind his glorious palace, beautiful wife, good son, as well as kingdom authority, and became a homeless monk. Eventually he attained enlightenment and deliverance, do we have any other choices if we wish to attain enlightenment and deliverance? *Fourth, Peaceful Mind:* Peaceful mind means ease, tranquility, riddance of all grossness or weight of body or mind so that they may be light, free and at ease. Many people’s minds are always in a state of agitation all the time. Their minds wandering here and there non-stop. When the mind is scattered, it is difficult for us to control our actions. On the contrary, we begin to act according to whims and fancies without considering properly whether an action is wholesome or not. There are two kinds of tranquility: the calm of the body means the calm of all mental properties rather than the only physical body. In other words, calm of the aggregates of form, feeling, perception, and the volitional activities or conformations; the calm of the mind, or the calm of the aggregate of consciousness. A man who cultivates calm of the mind does not get upset, confused or excited when confronted with

the eight vicissitudes (8 winds or influences) of the world. He is able to understand the rise and fall (come into being and pass away), as well as the momentary fragility of all things. It is hard to tranquilize the mind. It trembles and it is unsteady, difficult to guard and hold back. In the Dhammapada, from santece 33 to 36, the Buddha taught: "The mind quivers like a fish just taken from its watery home and thrown on the dry ground. It wanders at will." Calmness is not weakness. Only a person of culture is able to present the calm attitude at all times. It is not so difficult to be calm under favourable circumstances, but it is indeed difficult for a Buddhist to remain calm in the midst of unfavourable circumstances. Only the calm mind can help the aspirant to achieve enlightenment and deliverance. *Fifth, Remembrance of the Dharma:* Mindfulness, relinquishment, or power of remembering the various states passed through in contemplation. It is the instrument most efficacious in self-mastery. Besides, 'Sati' also means the power of observation, and the function of mindfulness is to keep the object always in view, neither forgetting it nor allowing it to disappear out of our contemplation. Remembrance of the Dharma includes meditation and full realization on the impurity of the body, when mindfulness is present, the object of observation will be noted without forgetfulness; contemplation of feeling or understanding that feeling is suffering; contemplation of mind, and Contemplation of thought; and contemplation of the no-self of mental objects. A person cannot be heedful unless he is fully controlling all his actions, whether they are mental, verbal or physical at every moment of his walking life. In other words, he must zealously observe all commandments required of him. In the Digha Nikaya Sutra, the Buddha's final admonition to his disciples before entering the Nirvana: "Transient are all component things. Work out your deliverance with mindfulness." Venerable Saripura also advised everybody with his last words: "Strive on with mindfulness to obtain your deliverance." In the Anguttara Nikaya Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Monks, I know not of any other single thing of such power to cause the arising of good thoughts if not yet arisen, or to cause the waning of evil thoughts if already arisen, as heedfulness. In him who is heedful, good thoughts not yet arisen, do arise, and evil thoughts, if arisen, do wane." *Sixth, Concentration Ability:* Concentration has the ability to keep the mind in Stability,

concentration; or power to keep the mind in a given realm undiverted. Concentration is a mental factor which lands on the object of observation. Concentration also pricks into, penetrates into, and stays in the object of observation. The nature of concentration is nondispersal, nondissipation, and nonscatteredness. A mind of concentration is a mind that sticks with the object of observation, sinks into it, and remains still and calm in it. During practicing of meditation, Zen practitioners should stick their mind to the object of observation or contemplate directly mental or physical phenomena without resorting to the thinking process at all. Although the moment of samadhi is momentary, such samadhi can arise from moment to moment without breaks in between if we try to practice continuously. Besides, concentration also has the ability to collect the mind together. It can keep all other mental factors in a group so that they do not scatter or disperse. Thus, the mind remains firmly embedded in the object. It is only the tranquilized mind that can easily concentrate on a subject of meditation. Once the mind is quiet and still, wisdom will arise and we can see things as they really are. Therefore, concentration is the most proximate cause for the unfolding of wisdom. The unified mind brings the five hindrances under subjugation (sensual desire, anger, stiffness and torpor, agitation and worry, and doubt hindrances), for step by step, wisdom will penetrate into more and more profound levels of truth. At that time, Zen practitioners will see clearly the natures of impermanence, suffering, and absence of self of all things, and therefore, no hindrance can dominate us anymore. Many are the impediments that confront a meditator, an aspirant for enlightenment, especially the five hindrances that hinder concentrative thoughts, and obstruct the way to deliverance. Concentration is the intensified steadiness of the mind comparable to an unflickering flame of a lamp in a windless place. Concentration has the ability to maintain the mind and the mental properties in a state of balance. It is concentration that fixes the mind aright and causes it to be unmoved; dispels passions and not only helps the mind undisturbed, but also helps bring purity and placidity of mind. One who is intent to practice “concentration” should always zealously observe Buddhist commandments, for it is virtue that nourishes mental life, and make it coherent and calm. *Seventh, Non-attachment Ability:* Equanimity means complete abandonment,

detachment, or indifferent to all disturbances of the sub-conscious or ecstatic mind. The Sanskrit word 'Upeksha' means equanimity, calmness, unbiased, unprejudice, and so on. In Zen, a mind of complete abandonment is a mind that remains unbiased and calm when confronting difficulties and challenges. A mind of equanimity is a state of balancing of energy, and it can be achieved in daily cultivation. According to The Abhidharma, "equanimity" means neutrality. It is mental equipoise and not hedonic indifference. Equanimity is the result of a calm concentrative mind. According to the Buddha, the best way to bring about equanimity is wise attention and continuous mindfulness. Once a mind of equanimity is developed, one moment of equanimity causes a succeeding moment of equanimity to arise, and so on. In our nowadays violent society, amidst the welter of experience, gain and loss, good repute and ill-repute, praise and blame, happiness and suffering, a man with the mind of equanimity will never waver. Zen practitioners have the mind of equanimity which understands that there is no one to own anything. In Dharmapada, sentence 83, the Buddha taught: "Truly the good give up longing for everything. The good sages not with thoughts of craving. Touched by happiness or by pain, the wise show neither elation nor depression." A man who has reached perfect neutrality through the cultivation of equanimity, always avoids the following four wrong paths: the path of greed, hate, cowardice, and delusion. A man who has reached perfect neutrality through cultivation of equanimity, always has his serene neutrality which enables him to see all beings impartially.

***The Eighthfold Noble Path:*** The Noble Eightfold Path is the fourth Noble Truth in the Four Noble Truths that can help us prevent problems or deal with any problems we may come across in our daily life. This is the path that leads to the end of sufferings and afflictions. If we follow it, we are on the way to less suffering and more happiness. The eight right (correct) ways. The path leading to release from suffering, the goal of the third in the four noble truths. These are eight in the 37 bodhi ways to enlightenment. Practicing the Noble Eight-fold Path can bring about real advantages such as improvement of personal conditions. It is due to the elimination of all evil thoughts, words, and actions that we may commit in our daily life, and to the continuing practice of charitable work; improvement of living conditions. If

everyone practiced this noble path, the world we are living now would be devoid of all miseries and sufferings caused by hatred, struggle, and war between men and men, countries and countries, or peoples and peoples. Peace would reign forever on earth. Besides, to cultivate the Eightfold Noble Path also means to practice meditation to attain of enlightenment or Bodhi Awareness. The Noble Eight-fold Path is the first basic condition for attaining Bodhi Consciousness that is untarnished while Alaya Consciousness is still defiled. *First, Right View*: Buddhist practitioners of mindfulness should try to understand the natural laws which govern our everyday life. Right understanding or right view is viewing things objectively; seeing them and reporting them exactly as they are without being influenced by prejudice or emotion. Right view helps differentiate the true from the false, and determines the true religious path for attaining liberation. Right understanding means to understand the natural laws which govern our everyday life. One of the most important of these is the law of karma, the law of cause and effect, every action brings a certain result, without any exception. There is no such 'no wholesome nor unwholesome' in Buddhism. Zen practitioners should always remember that whenever we act with greed, hatred, or delusion, pain and suffering come back to us. On the contrary, when our actions are motivated by generosity, love or wisdom, the results are happiness and peace. Devout Buddhists should always have a mindful mind to skilfully integrate the understanding of the law of karma into our lives. Right understanding also means profoundly and subtly understand our true nature. In Buddhism, right understanding means the understanding of suffering or the unsatisfactory nature of all phenomenal existence, its arising, its cessation and the path leading to its cessation. Right Understanding or Right View is one of the two trainings in Wisdom (the other training is Right Thought). Right understanding can be said to mean seeing things as they really are, or understanding the real truth about things, rather than simply seeing them as they appear to be. According to Buddhist point of view, it means insight, penetrative understanding, or seeing beneath the surface of things, etc., under the lens of the Four Noble Truths, Interdependent origination, impermanence, impersonality, and so forth. Right understanding can be acquired by ourselves or by acquiring the truths that are shown by others. The process of acquiring

right understanding must follow the following order: first we must observe objectively the facts which we are presented, then consider their significance. It is to say first to study and then to consider and examine them, and finally attaining right understanding through contemplation. At this point, the two types of understanding, either by ourselves or through others, become indistinguishable. To summarize, the process of acquiring right understanding are as follows: to observe and to study, to examine intellectually what we have observed and studied, to contemplate what we have examined. In short, Right Understanding means the understanding of the four noble truths: the truths of suffering and its causes perpetuate cyclic existence, the truths of cessation and the path are the way to liberation. The mind supported by wisdom will bring forth the Right Understanding which help us wholly and entirely free from the intoxication of sense desire (kama), from becoming (bhava), wrong views (ditthi) and ignorance (avijja). Buddhist practitioners should develop right understanding by seeing impermanence, suffering, and not-self in everything, which leads to detachment and loss infatuation. Detachment is not aversion. An aversion to something we once liked is temporary, and the craving for it will return. Practitioners do not seek for a life of pleasure, but to find peace. Peace is within oneself, to be found in the same place as agitation and suffering. It is not found in a forest or on a hilltop, nor is it given by a teacher. Practitioners meditate to investigate suffering, see its causes, and put an end to them right at the very moment, rather dealing with their effects later on. Right Understanding, in the ultimate sense, is to understand life as it really is. For this, one needs a clear comprehension of the Four Noble Truths, namely: the Truth of Suffering or Unsatisfactoriness, the Arising of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering, and the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering. Right understanding means to understand things as they really are and not as they appear to be. It is important to realize that right understanding in Buddhism has a special meaning which differs from that popularly attributed to it. In Buddhism, right understanding is the application of insight to the five aggregates of clinging, and understanding their true nature, that is understanding oneself. It is self-examination and self-observation. Right understanding is the understanding of suffering or the unsatisfactory nature of all phenomenal existence, its arising, its

cessation, and the path leading to its cessation. Right understanding is of the highest importance in the Eightfold Noble Path, for the remaining seven factors of the path are guided by it. It ensures that right thoughts are held and it co-operates ideas; when as a result thoughts and ideas become clear and wholesome, man's speech and action are also brought into proper relation. Moreover, it is through right understanding that one gives up harmful or profitless effort and cultivates right effort which aids the development of right mindfulness. Right effort and right mindfulness guided by right understanding bring about right concentration. Thus, right understanding, which is the main spring in Buddhism, causes the other limbs of the co-ordinate system to move in proper relation. There are two conditions that are conducive to right understanding: Hearing from others, that is hearing the Correct Law (Saddhamma), from others (Paratoghosa), and systematic attention or wise attention (Yoniso-manasikara). The first condition is external, that is, what we get from outside, while the second is internal, what we cultivate (manasikara literally means doing-in-the-mind). What we hear gives us food for thought and guides us in forming our own views. It is, therefore, necessary to listen, but only to that which is conducive to right understanding and to avoid all the harmful and unwholesome utterances of others which prevent straight thinking. The second condition, systematic attention, is more difficult to cultivate, because it entails constant awareness of the things that one meets with in everyday life. The word 'Yoniso-manasikara' which is often used in the discourses is most important, for it enables one to see things deeply. 'Yoniso' literally means by-way-of-womb instead of only on the surface. Metaphorically, therefore, it is 'radical' or 'reasoned attention'. These two conditions, learning and systematic attention, together help to develop right understanding. One who seeks truth is not satisfied with surface knowledge, with the mere external appearance of things, but wants to dig deep and see what is beyond the reach of naked eye. That is the sort of search encouraged in Buddhism, for it leads to right understanding. The man of analysis states a thing after resolving it into its various qualities, which he puts in proper order, making everything plain. He does not state things unitarily, looking at them as a whole, but divides them up according to their outstanding features so that the conventional and the highest truth can

be understood unmixed. The Buddha was discriminative and analytical to the highest degree. As a scientist resolves a limb into tissues and the tissues into cells, the Buddha analyzed all component and conditioned things into their fundamental elements, right down to their ultimates, and condemned shallow thinking, unsystematic attention, which tends to make man muddle-headed and hinders the investigation of the true nature of things. It is through right understanding that one sees cause and effect, the arising and ceasing of all conditioned things. The truth of the Dhamma can be only grasped in that way, and not through blind belief, wrong view, speculation or even by abstract philosophy. According to the Anguttara Nikaya, the Buddha says: "This Dhamma is for the wise and not for the unwise." The Nikaya also explains the ways and means of attaining wisdom by stages and avoiding false views. Right understanding permeates the entire teaching, pervades every part and aspect of the Dhamma and functions as the key-note of Buddhism. Due to lack of right understanding, the ordinary man is blind to the true nature of life and fails to see the universal fact of life, suffering or unsatisfactoriness. He does not even try to grasp these facts, but hastily considers the doctrine as pessimism. It is natural perhaps, for beings engrossed in mundane pleasures, beings who crave more and more for gratification of the senses and hate pain, to resent the very idea of suffering and turn their back on it. They do not, however, realize that even as they condemn the idea of suffering and adhere to their own convenient and optimistic view of things, they are still being oppressed by the ever recurring unsatisfactory nature of life.

*Second, Right Thought:* Buddhist practitioners should be free from sensual desire, ill-will, and cruelty. Right thought means thoughts that are free from sensual desire, ill-will, and cruelty. Thoughts free from ill-will means thoughts that are free from anger, for when anger is burning in the mind, both us and people around us will suffer. Right thoughts includes thoughts of renunciation, good will, and of compassion, or non-harm. These thoughts are to be cultivated and extended towards all living beings regardless of race, caste, clan, or creed. As they embrace all that breathes there are no compromising limitations. Right thought means that our reflection must be consistent with common sense, useful both to others and ourselves. We must strive to correct our faults, or change our wicked opinions. While



meditating on the noble formula of “Precept, Concentration, and Wisdom,” we must realize that ‘ignorance’ is the main cause of suffering, the root of all wicked acts; therefore, we must look for a way to get rid of suffering for us and for others. A mind free from sensual lust, ill-will and cruelty. Right thought means resolve in favour of renunciation, goodwill and nonharming of sentient beings. Through meditation, we can recognize anger and let it go. At that time, the mind becomes light and easy, expressing its natural loving-kindness. Also through meditation, we can recognize cruelty and let it go. At that time, we will have the mind of understanding the suffering of others and wanting to alleviate it. Right Thought is one of the two trainings in Wisdom (the other training is Right View or Right Understanding). Right thought or right thinking means avoiding attachment and aversion. According to Buddhism, the causes of suffering and afflictions are said to be ignorance, attachment, and aversion. When right understanding removes ignorance, right thought removes attachment and aversion; therefore, right understanding and right thought remove the causes of suffering. To remove attachment and greed we must cultivate renunciation, while to remove aversion and anger we must cultivate love and compassion. Renunciation is developed by contemplating the unsatisfactory nature of existence, especially the unsatisfactory nature of pleasures of the senses, for pleasures of the senses are likened to salt water, the more we drink, the more we feel thirsty. Through understanding the unsatisfactory nature of existence and recognizing the undesirable consequences of pleasures of the senses, we can easily cultivate renunciation and detachment. To develop love and compassion through recognizing the essential equality of all living beings. Like human beings, all other beings fear death and tremble at the idea of punishment. Understanding this, we should not kill other beings or cause them to be killed. Like human beings, all other beings desire life and happiness. Understanding this, we should not place ourselves above others or regard ourselves any differently from the way we regard others. Right thought means the thoughts of non-attachment, benevolence and non-harmfulness. On a deeper level, Right Thought refers to the mind that subtly analyzes Emptiness, thus leading us to perceive it directly.

*Third, Correct or Right Speech:* Buddhist practitioners of mindfulness

should not speak what is untrue. Right speech means not speaking what is untrue, or using slanderous, abusive or harsh language; rather, speaking words which are honest and helpful, creating a vibration of peace and harmony. Right speech implies sincere, sound, impartial, direct, not distorting, cautious, affable, harmless, useful words and discourses. Avoidance of lying, slander and gossip (false and idle talk), or abstaining from lying, tale-bearing, harsh words, and foolish babble. Right speech is one of the methods that can help us to live in harmony with other people and the world. Correct or Right Speech or Perfect Speech is one of the three higher trainings in Ethics (two other trainings are Right Action and Right Livelihood). Speech can influence millions of people. It is said that a harsh word can wound more deeply than a weapon, whereas a gentle word can change the heart and mind of even the most hardened criminal. Therefore, right speech implies respect for truth and respect for the well being of others. Right speech begins with avoiding four destructive actions of speech: lying, divisive words, harsh words and idle talk. Not only that, devout Buddhists should always try to communicate in a way pleasing to others. Rather than venting our anger or frustration onto another, devout Buddhists should think about effective ways to communicate our needs and feelings to them. Besides, Right Speech also means to sincerely make an effort to notice and comment upon others' good qualities and achievements, or to console people in time of grief, or to teach people Dharma. Speech is a powerful tool to influence others and if we use it wisely, many people will benefit. Speech can influence millions of people. It is said that a harsh word can wound more deeply than a weapon, whereas a gentle word can change the heart and mind of even the most hardened criminal. Therefore, right speech implies respect for truth and respect for the well being of others. It is to say right speech means the avoidance of lying, backbiting or slander, harsh speech and idle talk.

*Fourth, Correct Action:* Buddhist practitioners of mindfulness should choose a right way to do things for ourselves. Right action means to choose a right way to do things for ourselves, not killing, not inflicting pain and afflictions on others, not stealing, not taking what is not ours, not committing sexual misconduct, and not causing suffering to others out of greed or desire for pleasant sensations. Right action involves action beneficial to both others and ourselves. We must always act for

the happiness of the community, conforming to our sense of duty, without any ulterior motive for damaging others' interests, occupations, positions, honors, or lives. We must also keep strict control of our "action, speech, and mind," carrying out ten meritorious actions and avoiding ten evil ones. Right action also means to abstain from injuring living beings, from stealing and from unlawful sexual intercourse. No one among us can avoid our past karma; however, we have the right to choose the right way to do things for ourselves. To say this so we can understand that we have to reap what we sowed in the past; however, we have the right to try to cultivate to have a more peaceful life in the present time. Right action is one of the three higher trainings in Ethics (two other trainings are Right Speech and Right Livelihood). Right action implies respect for life, respect for property, and respect for personal relationships. Respect for life means not to kill or tell others to kill living beings, respect for property means not to steal or tell others to steal, respect for personal relationships means to avoid sexual misconduct (avoid adultery). Right action means acting properly. Right action can help us avoid creating the three destructive actions of the body (killing, stealing and unwise sexual behavior). Right action teaches us to be aware of the effects of our actions on others. Once we possess Right Action, instead of doing whatever pleases us at the moment, we'll be considerate of others, and of course, automatically our relationships will improve and others will be happier in our company. Right Action also includes giving old people a hand in their house work, helping storm and flood victims, and rescuing people from danger, and so on. *Fifth, Right Livelihood:* Practitioners of mindfulness should choose a right career for ourselves. Right livelihood means to choose a right career for ourselves, which is not harmful to others; not having work which involves killing, stealing or dishonesty. Right livelihood also involves action beneficial to both others and ourselves. We must always act for the happiness of the community, conforming to our sense of duty, without any ulterior motive for damaging others' interests, occupations, positions, honors, or lives. We must also keep strict control of our "action, speech, and mind," carrying out ten meritorious actions and avoiding ten evil ones. Perfect conduct also means avoidance of actions that conflict with moral discipline. Right livelihood means earning a living in a way that does not violate basic

moral values. Right livelihood is an extension of the rules of right action to our roles as breadwinners in society. Right Livelihood also means that to earn a living in an appropriate way. Devout Buddhists should not engage in any of the physical or verbal negative actions to earn a living, nor should we cause others to do so. Wisdom and understanding in Buddhism must be integrated into our lives, then Buddhism can be called a living Buddhism. No one among us can avoid our past karma; however, we have the right to choose a right career for ourselves because it is very much within our freedom. To say this so we can understand that we have to reap what we sowed in the past; however, we have the right to try to cultivate to have a more peaceful life in the present time. Right livelihood is one of the three higher trainings in Ethics (two other trainings are Right Speech and Right Action). Right livelihood means to have a right work or a right occupation that can help us avoid creating the three destructive actions of the body (killing, stealing and unwise sexual behavior). Right livelihood teaches us to be aware of the effects of our actions on others. Once we possess Right Action, instead of doing whatever pleases us at the moment, we'll be considerate of others. The Buddha taught: "There are five kinds of livelihood that are discouraged for Buddhists: trading in animals for food (selling animals for slaughter), slaves (dealing in slaves), arms (selling arms and lethal weapons), poisons, and intoxicants (drugs and alcohol, selling intoxicating and/or poisonous drinks). These five are not recommended because they contribute to the destroy of society and violate the values of respect for life and for the welfare of others." Right Livelihood is an extension of the rules of right action to our roles as breadwinners in society. In the contrary, Buddhists should live by an honest profession that is free from harm to self and others. According to the Adornment Sutra, right livelihood is a weapon of enlightening beings, leading away from all wrong livelihood. Zen practitioners who abide by these can annihilate the afflictions, bondage, and compulsion accumulated by all sentient beings in the long night of ignorance. *Sixth, Right Effort:* Buddhist practitioners of mindfulness should be always hard-working, helpful to others and ourselves. Right effort means we must be always hard-working, helpful to others and ourselves. Do not kill, cheat, or lead a wanton, gamble life. On the contrary, always try to perform good deeds

for having good karma. Correct (Right or Perfect) Zeal or Effort or Energy also means to try to avoid the arising of evil, demeritorious things have not yet arisen. Try to overcome the evil, demeritorious things that have already arisen. At the same time, try to produce meritorious things that have not yet arisen and try to maintain the meritorious things that have already arisen and not let them disappear, but to bring them to growth, to maturity and to the full perfection of development. Right effort also means cultivation of what is karmically wholesome and avoidance of what is karmically unwholesome. When developing right effort we must be sincere about our thoughts. If we analyze them we will find that our thoughts are not always good and wholesome. At times they are unwholesome and foolish, though we may not always express them in words and actions or both. Now if we allow such thoughts to rise repeatedly, it is a bad sign, for when an unhealthy thought is allowed to recur again and again, it tends to become a habit. It is, therefore, essential to make a real effort to keep unwholesome thoughts away from us. Until we succeed in stopping them to rise in our mind, unhealthy thoughts will always be taking possession of our mind. It is not only during the time of meditation that we need to cultivate our right effort. Right effort should be cultivated always whenever possible. In all our speech, actions and behavior, in our daily life, we need right effort to perform our duties wholeheartedly and successfully. If we lack right effort and give in to sloth and indolence, we can not proceed with our cultivation. Right effort is one of the three trainings in meditation (two other trainings are Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration). Right effort means cultivating a confident attitude toward our undertakings, taking up and pursuing our task with energy and a will to carry them through to the end. In Buddhism, right effort means cultivating a confident attitude of mind, being attentive and aware. To progress on the path, we need to put our energy into Dharma practice. With enthusiastic effort, we can purify negative actions already done to prevent doing new ones in the future. In addition, effort also is necessary to maintain the virtuous states we've already generated, as well as to induce new ones in the future. *Seventh, Right Remembrance:* Buddhist practitioners of mindfulness have correct memory which retains the true and excludes the false. Right remembrance, the seventh of the eightfold noble path,

means remembering correctly and thinking correctly. The looking or contemplating on the body and the spirit in such a way as to remain ardent, self-possessed and mindful. Right remembrance means looking on the body and spirit in such a way as to remain ardent, self-possessed and mindful, having overcome both hankering and dejection. Right mindfulness means to give heed to good deed for our own benefit and that of others. According to the eightfold noble path, right mindfulness means the one-pointedness of the mind, and Zen will help practitioner to have Right Remembrance. Through Zen we always have Right mindfulness. In fact, in our daily life activities, we should always be aware and attentive. We should always be aware of what we think, say and do. We must concentrate on everything we do before we can do it well. For instance, if we concentrate in class, we would not miss anything the teacher says. Right mindfulness also means remembrance including old mistakes to repent of and deep gratitude towards parents, country, humankind, and Buddhist Triple Gems. Right mindfulness also means the reflection on the present and future events or situations. We must meditate upon human sufferings that are caused by ignorance and decide to work for alleviating them, irrespective of possible difficulties and boredom. Correct Memory which retains the true and excludes the false. Dwell in contemplation of corporeality. Be mindful and putting away worldly greed and grief. Correct mindfulness also means ongoing mindfulness of body, feelings, thinking, and objects of thought. Mindfulness means being aware of what is happening in the present moment. It means noticing the flow of things, when walking, to be aware of the movement of the body; in observing the breath, to be aware of the sensations of the in-out or raising-falling; to notice thoughts or feelings as they arise or as they disappear. Mindfulness brings the quality of poise, equilibrium and balance to the mind. Mindfulness also keeps the mind sharply focused, with the attitude of sitting back and watching the passing show of our surroundings. The function of the right effort is to be vigilant and check all unhealthy thoughts, and to cultivate, promote and maintain wholesome and pure thoughts arising in a man's mind. Right Mindfulness is one of the three trainings in meditation (two others are Right Effort and Right Concentration). Mindfulness is awareness or attention, and as such it means avoiding a distracted or clouded state of mind. In the practice of

the Dharma, right mindfulness plays as a kind of rein upon our minds for our minds are never concentrated or still. The Buddha taught: “The practice of mindfulness means mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feelings, mindfulness of consciousness, and mindfulness of objects of the mind.” In short, right mindfulness means to watch our body and mind and to know what we are doing at all times. Right Mindfulness is an important mental factor that enables us to remember and keep our attention on what is beneficial. Right Mindfulness plays an important role in meditation, i.e., Right mindfulness can help us clear the flurry of thoughts from our minds, and eventually, we’ll be able to concentrate single-pointedly on our breath. Right mindfulness is the application or arousing of attention: be attentive to the activities of the body with the practice of concentration on breathing; be aware of all forms of feelings and sensations, pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral, by contemplating their appearance and disappearance within oneself; be aware whether one’s mind is lustful, hatred, deluded, distracted or concentrated; contemplate the impermanence of all things from arise, stay, change and decay to eliminate attachment. *Eight, Right Concentration: Right Concentration or Correct Concentration.* Detached from sensual objects, detached from unwholesome things, and enters into the first, second, third and fourth absorption. Right concentration means a strong concentration of our thoughts on a certain subject in order to set it clearly, consistent with Buddhist doctrine and for the benefit of others and ourselves. Right meditation means to keep the mind steady and calm in order to see clearly the true nature of things. This type of mental practice can make us become more understanding and a happier person. “Correct concentration” requires the previous steps. Unless one has a concentrated mind that can fix itself calmly and one-pointedly on a single object without being distracted by laxity or excitement, one cannot properly enter into meditation, which requires intense concentration. Cultivating concentration in meditation means to learn to concentrate. In our meditation, we think that noises, cars, voices, sights, and so forth, are distractions that come and bother us when we want to be quiet. But who is bothering whom? Actually, we are the ones who go and bother them. The car, the sound, the noise, the sight, and so forth, are just following their own nature. We bother things through some false idea

that they are outside of us and cling to the ideal of remaining quiet, undisturbed. We should learn to see that it is not things that bother us, that we go out to bother them. We should see the world as a mirror. It is all a reflection of mind. When we know this, we can grow in every moment, and every experience reveals truth and brings understanding. Normally, the untrained mind is full of worries and anxieties, so when a bit of tranquility arises from practicing meditation, we easily become attached to it, mistaking states of tranquility for the end of meditation. Sometimes we may even think we have put an end to lust or greed or hatred, only to be overwhelmed by them later on. Actually, it is worse to be caught in calmness than to be stuck in agitation, because at least we will want to escape from agitation, whereas we are content to remain in calmness and not go any further. Thus, when extraordinarily blissful, clear states arise from insight meditation practice, do not cling to them. Although this tranquility has a sweet taste, it too, must be seen as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and empty. Practicing meditation without thought of attaining absorption or any special state. Just know whether the mind is calm or not and, if so, whether a little or a lot. In this way it will develop on its own. Concentration must be firmly established for wisdom to arise. To concentrate the mind is like turning on the switch, there is no light, but we should not waste our time playing with the switch. Likewise, concentration is the empty bowl and wisdom is the food that fills it and makes the meal. Do not be attached to the object of meditation such as a mantra. Know its purpose. If we succeed in concentrating our mind using the Buddha Recitation, let the Buddha recitation go, but it is a mistake to think that Buddha recitation is the end of our cultivation. Right concentration is the intensified steadiness of the mind comparable to the unflickering flame of a lamp in a windless place. It is concentration that fixes the mind right and causes it to be unmoved and undisturbed. The correct practice of “samadhi” maintains the mind and the mental properties in a state of balance. Many are the mental impediments that confront a practitioner, a meditator, but with support of Right Effort and Right Mindfulness the fully concentrated mind is capable of dispelling the impediments, the passions that disturb man. The perfect concentrated mind is not distracted by sense objects, for it sees things as they are, in their proper perspective. Right Concentration is one of the three trainings in



Samadhi (two other trainings are Right Effort and Right Mindfulness). Right concentration means to concentrate the mind single-pointedly on an object. Our concentration or single-pointedness slowly improves through effort and mindfulness, until we attain calm abiding. Right Concentration may also help us progress to deeper states of concentration, the actual meditative stabilizations (form and formless realms).



## *Chapter Five*

### *A Summary of the Four Noble Truths*

A fundamental doctrine of Buddhism which clarifies the cause of suffering and the way to emancipation. Sakyamuni Buddha is said to have expounded the Four Noble Truths in the Deer Park in Sarnath during his first sermon after attaining Buddhahood. The Buddha organized these ideas into the Fourfold Truth as follows: “Life consists entirely of suffering; suffering has causes; the causes of suffering can be extinguished; and there exists a way to extinguish the cause.” Four Noble Truths are four of the most fundamental Buddhist theories. According to Most Venerable Piyadassi in “The Buddha’s Ancient Path,” in Buddhism, awakening from ignorance to full knowledge always implies the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths. The Enlightened One is called the Buddha simply because he understood the Truths in their fullness. The whole of his first sermon is devoted to the formulation of these Truths; for they are the essence of the Buddha’s teaching. “As the footprint of every creature that walks the earth can be contained in an elephant’s footprint, which is pre-eminent for size, so does the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths embrace all skilful Dhamma, or the entire teaching of the Buddha. In the original Pali texts, specifically in the discourses, these Four Noble Truths are made clear in detail and in diverse ways. Without a clear idea of the Truths, one can not know what the Buddha taught for forty-five years. To the Buddha the entire teaching is just the understanding of Dukkha, the unsatisfactory nature of all phenomenal existence, and the understanding of the way out of this unsatisfactoriness. The entire teaching of the Buddha is nothing other than the application of this one principle. Thus, we clearly see that the Buddha discovered the Four Noble Truths, and the rest are logical developments and more detailed explanations of the Four Noble Truths. This is the typical teaching of the Buddhas of all ages. The supremacy of the Four Noble Truths in the teaching of the Buddha is extremely clear from the message of the Simsapa Grove as from the message of the Deer Park. At the time of the Buddha, He always stressed that failing to comprehend and practice

the Four Noble Truths have caused us to run on so long in the cycle of birth and death. Zen practitioners should always remember that the Four Noble Truths are seen at any time when mindfulness and wisdom are present.

***The Truth of Suffering:*** There is no equivalent translation in English for the word “Dukkha” in both Pali and Sanskrit. So the word “Dukkha” is often translated as “Suffering”. However, this English word is sometimes misleading because it connotes extreme pain. When the Buddha described our lives as “Dukkha”, he was referring to any and all unsatisfactory conditions. These range from minor disappointments, problems and difficulties to intense pain and misery. Therefore, Dukkha should be used to describe the fact that things are not completely right in our lives and could be better. In one word, all existence entails suffering. All existence is characterized by suffering and does not bring satisfaction. Through meditation, Zen practitioners may see directly that all physical and mental phenomena share the characteristic of suffering. ***Truth of the Causes of Suffering:*** According to Buddhist tenets, craving or desire is the cause of suffering. It creates dissension in the family and society that degenerates into war between races, nations, and groups of nations in the world. The truth of the origin of suffering or causes of suffering, or its location. All sufferings are caused by ignorance, which gives rise to craving and illusions (craving or grasping the wrong things), i.e. craving for life, for pleasure, for power, for wealth; the more he earns, the more he wants. ***The Truth of an End to Suffering:*** There is an end to suffering, and this state of no suffering is called Nirvana. Through meditation, mindfulness and wisdom are present, Zen practitioners see clearly suffering will be ceased when ignorance and other afflictions fall away and cease. ***The Truth of the Path Leading to the End of Suffering:*** Regarding the practicing of the Eight-fold Noble Truths, the Buddha taught: “Whoever accepts the four dogmas, and practises the Eightfold Noble Path will put an end to births and deaths.

## *Chapter Six*

### *A Summary of Four Boundless Minds*

The immeasurable mind is the mind which is inconceivably immeasurable. In fact, there are a lot of small virtues that Buddhist practitioners need to prepare before and during practicing. Buddhist practitioners should cultivate to a point that they would be happy with other's success and sympathy with other's miseries. They would keep themselves modest when achieving success. However, the Buddha pointed out four immeasurable minds. These four immeasurable minds are not only benefit immeasurable living beings, bringing immeasurable blessings to them, and producing immeasurable highly spiritual attainments in a world, in one life, but also spreads all over immeasurable worlds, in immeasurable future lives, shaping up immeasurable Buddha. The four immeasurables or infinite Buddha-states of mind (four immeasurable minds or the four virtues of infinite greatness). The four kinds of boundless mind, or four divine abodes. These states are called illimitables because they are to be radiated towards all living beings without limit or obstruction. They are also called brahmaviharas or divine abodes, or sublime states, because they are the mental dwellings of the brahma divinities in the Brahma-world.

It was the spirit of love and compassion taught by the Buddha that touched the heart of King Asoka, the great Buddhist Emperor of India in the third century B.C. Before he became a Buddhist he was a warlike monarch like his father, King Bimbisara, and his grandfather, King Candragupta. Wishing to extend his territories he invaded and conquered Kalinga. In this war thousands were slain, while many more were wounded and taken captive. Later, however, when he followed the Buddha's creed of compassion he realized the folly of killing. He felt very sad when he thought of the great slaughter, and gave up warfare. He is the only military monarch on record who after victory gave up conquest by war and inaugurated conquest by righteousness. As his Rock Edict XIII says, 'he sheathed the sword never to unsheath it, and wish no harm to living beings.' The spread of the Buddha's creed of compassion throughout the Eastern world was largely due to

the enterprise and tireless efforts of Asoka the Great. The Buddha-law made Asia mild and non-aggressive. However, modern civilization is pressing hard on Asian lands. It is known that with the rise and development of the so-called civilization, man's culture deteriorates and he changes for the worse. With the march of modern science very many changes have taken place, and all these changes and improvements, being material and external, tend to make modern man more and more worldly minded and sensuous with the result that he neglects the qualities of the mind, and becomes self-interested and heartless. The waves of materialism seem to influence mankind and affect their way of thinking and living. People are so bound by their senses, they live so exclusively in the material world that they fail to contact the good within. Only the love and compassion taught by the Buddha can establish complete mental harmony and well-being.

Buddhist practitioners should always observe these four immeasurable minds, for they are four excellent virtues conducive to noble living. They banish selfishness and disharmony and promote altruism with other beings, unity in the family, and good brotherhood in communities. In meditation practice, they are four minds of deliverance, for through them we can recognize the good of others. Therefore, the four immeasurable minds can also be considered as excellent subjects of meditation, through them practitioners can develop more sublime states. By cultivating these noble virtues, practitioners can maintain a calm and pure mind. The Buddhist method of self-analysis, self-reflection, and self-discovery should never be taken to imply that we are to shut ourselves off from communion with our fellow men. To follow the way of cultivation in Buddhism is not to become isolated in a cage or cell, but to become free and open in our relations with our fellow beings. The search for self-realization always has its counterpart the development of a new way of relating to others, a way imbued with compassion, love and sympathy with all that live.

***Mind of Immeasurable Loving Kindness:*** Kindness, benevolence, one of the principal Buddhist virtues. Maitri is a benevolence toward all beings that is free from attachment. Maitri can be developed gradually through meditation, first toward persons who are close to us, then to others, and at last to those who are indifferent and ill-disposed to us, for the mind of loving-kindness is the wish for the welfare and

happiness of all beings. In the Dhammapada Sutta, the Buddha taught: “Hatred does not cease by hatred, hatred ceases only by love.” In fact, compassion and loving-kindness are the utmost importance for human beings, for despite our strivings towards self-sufficiency, it remains a fact that people need one another. No man is an island at all. An island can exist alone in the sea, but a man cannot live alone. We need each other, and we must come to regard one another as friends and helpers whom we can look toward for mutual support. All men, as the doctrine of rebirth implies, are really brothers to each other, literally members of the big family, for in the repeated round of rebirth there is not one man or woman who has not at some time in the past been our father or mother, our sister or brother. Therefore we must learn to love each other, to respect each other, to protect each other, and to give to the other what we would have for ourselves. To practice in Buddhism is to train oneself to eliminate hatred, anger, and selfishness and to develop loving-kindness toward all. We have our physical bodies and our own lives, but still we can live in harmony with each other and help each other to the best of our ability. In Buddhism, loving kindness is the greatest love toward all sentient beings. Immeasurable loving kindness is the greatest love dedicated to all sentient beings, together with the desire to bring them joy and happiness. Buddhist practitioners should be on permanent guard against the so-called ‘carnal love disguised as loving-kindness’, it is only one of the human joys. Human joy is totally impermanent; it is governed by misery, that is, when our passions such as greed, anger, and ignorance are satisfied, we feel pleased; but when they are not satisfied, we feel sad. To have a permanent joy, we must first sever all sufferings. Loving kindness generally goes together with pity whose role is to help the subjects sever his sufferings, while the role of loving kindness is to save sentient beings from sufferings and to bring them joy. However, loving-kindness is not an inborn characteristic. If we really want to develop our loving-kindness, we have to devote more time to practice. Sitting in meditation alone cannot bring us the so-called “loving-kindness.” In order to achieve the loving-kindness, we must put loving-kindness in actions in our daily life. In our daily activities, we must develop empathy and closeness to others by reflecting on their sufferings. For example, when we know someone suffering, we should try our best to console them by kind

words or to help them with our worldly possessions if needed. To respond to immeasurable human sufferings, we should have immeasurable loving kindness. To accomplish the heart of immeasurable loving kindness, Buddhist practitioners have developed their immeasurable loving kindness by using all means to save mankind. They act so according to two factors, specific case and specific time. Specific case, like the physician who gives a prescription according to the specific disease, the Bodhisattva shows us how to put an end to our sufferings. Specific time means the teachings must always be relevant to the era, period and situation of the sufferers and their needs. The Contemplation of the Mind Sutra teaches that we must avoid four opportune cases: What we say is not at the right place, what we say is not in the right time, what we say is not relevant to the spiritual level of the subject, and what we say is not the right Buddhist Dharma. Meditation on the “Loving-kindness” is cultivating to attain a mind that bestows joy or happiness. Immeasurable Love, a mind of great kindness, or infinite loving-kindness. Boundless kindness (tenderness), or bestowing of joy or happiness. Here, a Buddhist practitioner, with a heart filled with loving-kindness. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of loving-kindness above, below, and across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with loving-kindness, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. The loving-kindness is also the wish for the welfare and happiness of all living beings. It helps to eliminate ill-will. The powers of Loving-kindness is the Temporal Happiness and the Energy for Meditation Practices. Love has the power of bestowing temporal happiness upon us in this lifetime. Without love, people in this world will encounter a lot of problems (anger, hatred, jealousy, envy, arrogance, etc). A Buddhist should develop love for all sentient beings and to cherish others more than oneself. Love should be given equally to everyone including relatives or strangers, friends or foes, given without any conditions, without self-interests or attachment.

***Mind of Immeasurable Compassion:*** Immeasurable Compassion means sympathy, or pity (compassion) for another in distress and desire to help him or to deliver others from suffering out of pity. The compassion is selfless, non-egoistic and based on the principle of universal equality. ‘Karuna’ means pity or compassion. In Pali and



Sanskrit, 'Karuna' is defined as 'the quality which makes the heart of the good man tremble and quiver at the distress of others.' The quality that rouses tender feelings in the good man at the sight of others' suffering. Cruelty, violence is the direct enemy of 'karuna'. Though the latter may appear in the guise of a friend, it is not true 'karuna', but falsely sympathy; such sympathy is deceitful and one must try to distinguish true from false compassion. The compassionate man who refrains from harming and oppressing others and endeavors to relieve them of their distress, gives the gift of security to one and all, making no distinction whatsoever. To be kind does not mean to be passive. "Karuna" in Buddhism means compassionate, and compassionate does not mean to allow others to walk all over you, to allow yourself to be destroyed. We must be kind to everybody, but we have to protect ourselves and protect others. If we need to lock someone up because he is dangerous, then we have to do that. But we have to do it with compassion. Our motivation is to prevent that person from continuing his course of destruction and from feeding his anger. For Buddhist practitioners, Compassion can help refraining from pride and selfishness. Immeasurable Compassion, a mind of great pity, or infinite compassion. Boundless pity, to save from suffering. Here a Buddhist practitioner, with a heart filled with compassion. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of compassion, above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with compassion, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Compassion also makes the heart quiver when other are subject to suffering. It is the wish to remove the suffering of others, and it is opposed to cruelty. Once we have fully developed compassion, our mind will be full with altruistic thoughts, and we automatically pledge to devote ourselves to freeing others from the the suffering. In addition, compassion also enables us to refrain from pride and selfishness. Compassion means wishing others be freed from problems and pain that they have undergone or are undergoing. Compassion is different from pity and other condescending attitudes. Compassion recognizes ourselves and others as equal in terms of wanting happiness and wanting to be free from misery, and enables us to help them with as much ease as we now help ourselves. "Active Compassion," one of the most important and the outstanding quality of all buddhas and bodhisattvas; it is also the

motivation behind their pursuit of awakening. Compassion extends itself without distinction to all sentient beings. “Karuna” refers to an attitude of active concern for the sufferings of other sentient beings. Practitioners must cultivate or increase compassion via wisdom (prajna). In Theravada, it is one of the four “immeasurables.” It involves developing a feeling of sympathy for countless sentient beings. According to the Mahayana Buddhism, compassion itself is insufficient, and it is said to be inferior to the “great compassion” of Bodhisattvas, which extends to all sentient beings, and this must be accompanied by wisdom to approach enlightenment. Thus, practitioners must train both “karuna” and “prajna,” with each balancing and enhancing the other. Karuna or compassion is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we do not kill or harm living beings.

Compassion means wishing others be freed from problems and pain that they have undergone or are undergoing. Compassion is different from pity and other condescending attitudes. Compassion recognizes ourselves and others as equal in terms of wanting happiness and wanting to be free from misery, and enables us to help them with as much ease as we now help ourselves. Immeasurable Compassion, a mind of great pity, or infinite compassion. Here a monk, with a heart filled with compassion. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of compassion, above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with compassion, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Compassion also makes the heart quiver when others are subject to suffering. It is the wish to remove the suffering of others, and it is opposed to cruelty. Bodhisattvas’ compassion is inconceivable. Bodhisattvas are enlightenment-beings, Buddhas-to-be, however, they vow to continue stay in this world for a long period of time. Why? For the good of others, because they want to become capable of pulling others out of this great flood of sufferings and afflictions. But what personal benefit do they find in the benefit of others? To Bodhisattvas, the benefit of others is their own benefit, because they desire it that way. However, in saying so, who could believe that? It is true that some people devoid of pity and think only of themselves, find it hard to believe in the altruism of the Bodhisattvas. But compassionate people do so easily. Do we not see that certain people, confirmed in the

absence of pity, find pleasure in the suffering of others, even when it is not useful to them? And we must admit that the Bodhisattvas, confirmed in pity, find pleasure in doing good to others without any egoistic preoccupation. Do we not see that certain, ignorant of the true nature of the conditioned Dharma which constitute their so-called “Self”, attach themselves to these dharmas, as a result, they suffer pains and afflictions because of this attachment. While we must admit that the Bodhisattvas, detach themselves from the conditioned Dharma, no longer consider these Dharma as “I” or “Mine”, growing in pitying solicitude for others, and are ready to suffer pains for this solitude? Compassion is surely not a flabby state of mind. It is a strong enduring thing. When a person is in distress, it is truly compassionate man’s heart that trembles. This, however, is not sadness; it is this quacking of the heart that spurs him to action and incites him to rescue the distressed. And this needs strength of mind, much tolerance and equanimity. So, it is totally wrong to come to a hurry conclusion that compassion to be an expression of feebleness, because it has the quality of tenderness. The Buddhist conception of “Karuna” has no compromising limitations. All beings include even the tiniest creature that crawls at our feet. The Buddhist view of life is such that no living being is considered as outside the circle of “Metta and Karuna” which make no distinction between man, animal and insect, or between man and man, as, high and low, rich and poor, strong and weak, wise and unwise, dark and fair, Brahmin and Candala, and so forth; for “Metta and Karuna” are boundless and no sooner do we try to keep men apart on the false basis mentioned above, than the feeling of separateness creeps in and these boundless qualities become limited which is contrary to the teaching of the Buddha. We must be careful not to confuse compassion with morbid manifestations of sadness, with feelings of mental pain and with sentimentality. At the loss of a dear one, man weeps, but that is not compassion. If we analyze such feelings carefully we will conclude that they are outward manifestations of our inner thoughts of self affection. Why do we feel sad? Because our loved one has passed away. He who was our kin is now no more. We feel that we have lost the happiness and all else that we derived from him and so we are sad. Do we not see that all these feelings revolve round the ‘I’ and ‘Mine’? Whether we like it or not,

self interest was responsible for it all. Can we call this 'karuna', pity or compassion? Why do we not feel equally sad when others who are not our kin pass away before our eyes? Because we were not familiar with them, they were not ours, we have not lost anything and are not denied the pleasures and comforts we already enjoy.

According to Most Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh in "Anger," understanding and compassion are very powerful sources of energy. They are the opposite of stupidity and passivity. If you think that compassion is passive, weak, or cowardly, then you don't know what real understanding or compassion is. If you think that compassionate people do not resist and challenge injustice, you are wrong. They are warriors, heroes, and heroines who have gained many victories. When you act with compassion, with non-violence, when you act on the basis of non-duality, you have to be very strong. You no longer act out of anger, you do not punish or blame. Compassion grows constantly inside of you, and you can succeed in your fight against injustice. Being compassion doesn't mean suffering unnecessarily or losing your common sense. Suppose you are leading a group of people doing walking meditation, moving slowly and beautifully. The walking meditation generates a lot of energy; it embraces everyone with calm, solidity, and peace. But suddenly it begins to rain. Would you continue to walk slowly, letting yourself and everyone else get soaked? That's not intelligent. If you are a good leader of the walking meditation, you will break into a jogging meditation. You still maintain the joy of the walking meditation. You can laugh and smile, and thus you prove that the practice is not stupid. You can also be mindful while running and avoid getting soaked. We have to practice in an intelligent way. Meditation is not a stupid act. Meditation is not just blindly following whatever the person next to you does. To meditate you have to be skillful and make good use of your intelligence. Zen practitioners should always remember that human beings are not our enemy. Our enemy is not the other person. Our enemy is the violence, ignorance, and injustice in us and in the other person. When we are armed with compassion and understanding, we fight not against other people, but against the tendency to invade, to dominate, and to exploit. We don't want to kill others, but we will not let them dominate and exploit us or other people. We have to protect ourselves. We are not stupid. We are

very intelligent, and we have insight. Being compassionate does not mean allowing other people to do violence to themselves or to us. Being compassionate means being intelligent. Non-violent action that springs from love can only be intelligent action. When we talk about compassion, altruism and about others' well-being, we should not misunderstand that this means totally rejecting our own self-interest. Compassion and altruism is a result of a very strong state of mind, so strong that that person is capable of challenging the self-cherishing that loves only the self generation after generation. Compassion and altruism or working for the sake of others is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we do not blame others.

***Mind of Immeasurable Joy:*** Extreme joy in meditation. Joy is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we renounce all unpleasant things and sorrows in our daily life, and for with it, we attain many kinds of balanced state. This is the third bodhyanga, the stage of joy on attaining the truth. Joyous mind is also a heart of joy in progress toward salvation of others. Joy for others' success or welfare and happiness. Sympathetic Joy, joy in the happiness of other beings. The practice of Mudita helps overcome taking pleasure in others' misfortunes and to eliminate the sense of separating between self and other. Immeasurable Joy, a mind of great joy, or infinite joy. Boundless joy (gladness), on seeing others rescued from suffering. Here a cultivator, with a heart filled with sympathetic joy. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of sympathetic joy above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with sympathetic joy, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Appreciative joy is the quality of rejoicing at the success and prosperity of others. It is the congratulatory attitude, and helps to eliminate envy and discontent over the success of others. Immeasurable inner joy also means to rejoice in all good, to rejoice in the welfare of others, or to do that which one enjoys, or to follow one's inclination. This is the fifth of the ten conducts and vows of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. Rejoice at others' merits and virtues means from the time of our initial resolve for all wisdom, we should diligently cultivate accumulation of blessings without regard for their bodies and lives, cultivate all the difficult ascetic practices and perfect the gates of various paramitas, enter

bodhisattva grounds of wisdom and accomplish the unsurpassed Bodhi of all Buddhas. We should completely follow along with and rejoice in all of their good roots (big as well as small merits). Through meditation and study of the vicissitudes of life, practitioners can cultivate this sublime virtue of appreciating others' happiness, welfare and progress. As a matter of fact, when we can rejoice with the joy of others, our minds get purified, serene and noble.

***Mind of Immeasurable Equanimity:*** One of the chief Buddhist virtues, that of renunciation, leading to a state of indifference without pleasure or pain, or independence of both. It is defined as the mind in equilibrium, i.e. above the distinction of things or persons, of self or others; indifferent, having abandoned the world and all things, and having no affections or desires. Upeksha is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught: "If one wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, Buddhists must first be able to let go of all of the five desires of ordinary people." According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva called on to enquire after Upasaka Vimalakirti's health, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti about "Upeksha". Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "What should be relinquish (upeksha) of a Bodhisattva?" Vimalakirti replied: "In his work of salvation, a Bodhisattva should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return." Detachment is the attitude of those who give up, forget, do not attach any importance for what they have done for the benefit of others. In general, we feel proud, self-aggrandized when we do something to help other people. Quarrels, conflicts, or clashes between men or groups of men are due to passions such as greed or anger whose source can be appraised as self-attachment or dharma-attachment. The Buddha taught that if there is someone who misjudges us, we must feel pity for him; we must forgive him in order to have peace in our mind. The Bodhisattvas have totally liberated themselves from both self-attachment and dharma-attachment. When people enjoy material or spiritual pleasures, the Bodhisattvas also rejoice, from their sense of compassion, pity, and inner joy. They always consider human beings as their benefactors who have created the opportunities for them to practice the Four Immeasurable Minds on their way to Enlightenment. In terms of the Immeasurable Detachment, the Bodhisattvas consider all men equal, the clever as the stupid,

themselves as others, they do everything as they have done nothing, say everything as they have said nothing, attain all spiritual levels as they have attained nothing. Immeasurable Equanimity, a mind of great detachment, or infinite equanimity. Limitless indifference, such as rising above all emotions, or giving up all things. Here a practitioner, with a heart filled with equanimity. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of equanimity above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with equanimity, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Equanimity is also considered as a divine abode. It is the state of mind that regards others with impartiality, free from attachment and aversion. An impartial attitude is its chief characteristic, and it is opposed to favouritism and resentment. Mind of Equanimity helps Zen practitioners to put aside two extremes of attachment and resentment. Through the mind of equanimity, Zen practitioners always follow the Middle Path, neither attached to the pleasant nor repelled by the unpleasant. Also through the mind of equanimity, Zen practitioners' mind can remain balanced without any temper, depression or anxiety. Equanimity plays a tremendous role for both in practice and in everyday life. Generally we get either swept away by pleasant and enticing objects, or worked up into a great state of agitation when confronted by unpleasant, undesirable objects. These hindrances are common among ordinary people. When we lack the ability to stay balanced and unfaltering, we are easily swept into extremes of craving or aversion. According to Zen Master U. Pandita in "In This Very Life", there are five ways to develop Equanimity: Balanced emotion toward all living beings. The first and foremost is to have an equanimity attitude toward all living beings. These are your loved ones, including animals. We can have a lot of attachment and desire associated with people we love, and also with our pets. To prepare the ground for equanimity to arise, we should try to cultivate an attitude of nonattachment and equanimity toward the people and animals we love. As worldly people, it may be necessary to have a certain amount of attachment in relationships, but excessive attachments is destructive to us as well as to loved ones. Balanced emotion toward inanimate things. To prepare the ground for equanimity to arise, we should also try to adopt an attitude of balance toward inanimate things, such as property, clothing. All of them will decay and

perish because everything in this world must be subject to the law of impermanence. Avoiding people who are so attached to people and things. These people have a deep possessiveness, clinging to what they think belongs to them, both people and things. Some people find it is difficult to see another person enjoying or using their property. Choosing friends who do not have many attachments or possessions. Inclining the mind toward the state of equanimity. When the mind is focusing in the development of equanimity, it will not have time to wander off to thoughts of worldly business any more.



## ***Chapter Seven***

### ***A Summary of the Law of Cause and Effect & Karmas and Retributions In Buddhist Point of View***

#### ***I. A Summary of the Law of Cause and Effect In Buddhist Point of View:***

Cause is a primary force that produces an effect; effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. Law of cause and effect or the relation between cause and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of “Karma”. The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases “happiness” is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one’s having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one. Causality is a natural law, mentioning the relationship between cause and effect. All things come into being not without cause, since if there is no cause, there is no effect and vice-versa. As so sow, so shall you reap. Cause and effect never conflict with each other. In other words, cause and effect are always consistent with each other. If we want to have beans, we must sow bean seeds. If we want to have oranges, we must sow orange seeds. If wild weeds are planted, then it’s unreasonable for one to hope to harvest edible fruits. One cause cannot have any effect. To produce an effect, it is necessary to have some specific conditions. For instance, a grain of rice cannot produce a rice plant without the presence of sunlight, soil, water, and care. In the cause there is the

effect; in the effect there is the cause. From the current cause, we can see the future effect and from the present effect we discerned the past cause. The development process from cause to effect is sometimes quick, sometimes slow. Sometimes cause and effect are simultaneous like that of beating a drum and hearing its sound. Sometimes cause and effect are three or four months away like that of the grain of rice. It takes about three to four, or five to six months from a rice seed to a young rice plant, then to a rice plant that can produce rice. Sometimes it takes about ten years for a cause to turn into an effect. For instance, from the time the schoolboy enters the elementary school to the time he graduates a four-year college, it takes him at least 14 years. Other causes may involve more time to produce effects, may be the whole life or two lives. By understanding and believing in the law of causality, Buddhists will not become superstitious, or alarmed, and rely passively on heaven authority. He knows that his life depends on his karmas. If he truly believes in such a causal mechanism, he strives to accomplish good deeds, which can reduce and alleviate the effect of his bad karmas. If he continues to live a good life, devoting his time and effort to practicing Buddhist teachings, he can eliminate all of his bad karmas. He knows that he is the only driving force of his success or failure, so he will be discouraged, put the blame on others, or rely on them. He will put more effort into performing his duties satisfactorily. Realizing the value of the law of causality, he always cares for what he thinks, tells or does in order to avoid bad karma.

Some people believe in Christianity, and according to the Christian, the theistic position that man's destiny is basically determined for him by God. God determines if a man deserves heaven or hell; he may even decide each man's earthly destiny. Some other people believe in fatalism that each of us has a fate which we cannot change and about which we can do nothing. They believe that 'Whatever will be will be.' In this philosophy the agent that determines destiny is not a God, but rather a mysterious impersonal power called 'Fate' which transcend our understanding. Still some other people believe the exact opposite, they believe in indeterminism: everything happens by accident. They believe that if man is lucky, he will achieve happiness or success; if he is unlucky, he will suffer or fail, but whatever he receives, he receives not through any process of

determination but by accident, by sheer coincidence. In Christianity, the Christian worships God and prays to Him in order to obtain forgiveness from the results his evil actions hold out for him. Buddhism differs from Christianity in that it sees the root cause of all evil in “ignorance” and not in “sin”, in an act of intellectual misapprehension and not in an act of volition and rebellion. As a practical definition of ignorance, we are offered the four perverted views which make us seek for permanence in what is inherently impermanent, ease in what is inseparable from suffering, selfhood in what is not linked to any self, and delight in what is essentially repulsive and disgusting. According to the Karma Law in Buddhism, the present is a shadow of the past, the future a shadow of the present. Hence our action in the present is most important, for what we do in the present determines the course of our future development. For this reason, Zen practitioners should always apply their minds to the present so that they may advance on the way. According to the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth, the causal relation between action and its results holds not only with regard to the present life but also with regard to past and future lives. This universal law of cause and effect is non-negotiable. Just as we cannot run away from our own shadows, so we cannot run away from the results of our actions. They will pursue us no matter where we hide. Besides, the Buddha also taught that negative or unwholesome mind creates negative or unwholesome thoughts (anger, hatred, harmful thoughts, wrong views, etc), speech (lying, harsh speech, double-tongued, etc), as well as deeds which are the causes of our sufferings, confusion and misery. Unwholesome or negative mind will destroy our inner peace and tranquility.

Catholicism contradicts itself with the words in the Bible: “Ye shall reap what ye shall sow” and the theory of forgiveness through the grace of Christ or God. The sentence “Reap what you sow” is precisely in accordance with the natural law of karma, while the grace of forgiveness completely denies this law. But in Buddhism, no one can forgive a person for his transgression. If he commits an evil deed, he has to reap the bad consequences, for all is governed by universal law and not by any arbitrary creator. According to Buddhism, the pain or pleasure resulting in this life from the practices or causes and retributions of a previous life. Therefore, ancient virtues said: “If we

wish to know what our lives were like in the past, just look at the retributions we are experiencing currently in this life. If we wish to know what retributions will happen to us in the future, just look and examine the actions we have created or are creating in this life.” If we understand clearly this theory, then in our daily activities, sincere Buddhists are able to avoid unwholesome deeds and practice wholesome deeds. Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise, every resultant action has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situation. Buddhists believe in a just rational of karma that operates automatically and speak in terms of cause and effect instead of rewards and punishments. Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise every resultant action has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situation. Buddhists believe in a just rational of karma that operates automatically and speak in terms of cause and effect instead of rewards and punishments. It’s a fundamental principle for all living beings and all things that if one sows good deeds, he will surely reap a good harvest; if he sows bad deeds, he must inevitably reap a bad harvest. Though the results may appear quickly or slowly, everyone will be sure to receive the results that accord with their actions. Anyone who has deeply understood this principle will never do evil.

According to Buddhism, every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases “happiness” is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one’s having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one. Causality is a natural law, mentioning the relationship between cause and effect. All things come into being not without cause, since if there is no cause, there is no effect and vice-versa. As so sow, so shall you

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## ***II. A Summary of Karmas and Retributions In Buddhist Point of View:***

From morning to night, we create karma with our body, with our mouth, and with our mind. In our thoughts, we always think that people are bad. In our mouth, we always talk about other people's rights and wrongs, tell lies, say indecent things, scold people, backbite, and so on. Karma is one of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. Everything that we encounter in this life, good or bad, sweet or bitter, is a result of what we did in the past or from what we have done recently in this life. Good karma produces happiness; bad karma produces pain and suffering. So, what is karma? Karma is a Sanskrit word, literally means a deed or an action and a reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect. Moral or any good or bad action (however, the word 'karma' is usually used in the sense of evil bent or mind resulting from past wrongful actions) taken while living which causes corresponding future

retribution, either good or evil transmigration (action and reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect). Karma is neither fatalism nor a doctrine of predetermination. Our present life is formed and created through our actions and thoughts in our previous lives. Our present life and circumstances are the product of our past thoughts and actions, and in the same way our deeds in this life will fashion our future mode of existence. According to the definition of the karma, the past influences the present but does not dominate it, for karma is past as well as present. However, both past and present influence the future. The past is a background against which life goes on from moment to moment. The future is yet to be. Only the present moment exists and the responsibility of using the present moment for good or bad lies with each individual. A karma can be created by body, speech, or mind. There are good karma, evil karma, and indifferent karma. All kinds of karma are accumulated by the Alayavijnana and Manas. Karma can be cultivated through religious practice (good), and uncultivated. For Sentient being has lived through innumerable reincarnations, each has boundless karma. Whatever kind of karma is, a result would be followed accordingly, sooner or later. No one can escape the result of his own karma.

“Karma” is a Sanskrit term which means “Action, good or bad,” including attachments, aversions, defilements, anger, jealousy, etc. Karma is created (formed) by that being’s conceptions (samskara). This potential directs one behavior and steers the motives for all present and future deeds. In Buddhism, karma arises from three factors: body, speech and mind. For instance, when you are speaking, you create a verbal act. When you do something, you create a physical act. And when you are thinking, you may create some mental actions. Mental actions are actions that have no physical or verbal manifestations. Buddhist ethical theory is primarily with volitional actions, that is, those actions that result from deliberate choice for such actions set in motion a series of events that inevitably produce concordant results. These results may be either pleasant or unpleasant, depending on the original votion. In some cases the results of actions are experienced immediately, and in others they are only manifested at a later time. Some karmic results do not accrue (dồn lại) until a future life. Karmas are actions that lead to both immediate and long range results. All good

and evil actions taken while living. Action and appropriate result of action. Karma is not limited by time or space. An individual is coming into physical life with a karma (character and environment resulting from his action in the past). Briefly, “karma” means “deed.” It is produced by all deeds we do. Any deed is invariably accompanied by a result. All that we are at the present moment is the result of the karma that we have produced in the past. Karma is complex and serious. Our deeds, however trifling, leave traces physically, mentally, and environmentally. The traces left in our minds include memory, knowledge, habit, intelligence, and character. They are produced by the accumulation of our experiences and deeds over a long period of time. The traces that our deeds leave on our body can be seen easily, but only part of traces in our minds remain on the surface of our mind, the rest of them are hidden depths of our minds, or sunk in the subconscious mind. This is the complexity and seriousness of the Karma.

According to Buddhism, a “karma” is not a fate or a destiny; neither is it a simple, unconscious, and involuntary action. On the contrary, it is an intentional, conscious, deliberate, and willful action. Also according to Buddhism, any actions will lead to similar results without any exception. It is to say, “As one sows, so shall one reap.” According to one’s action, so shall be the fruit. If we do a wholesome action, we will get a wholesome fruit. If we do an unwholesome action, we will get an unwholesome result. Devout Buddhists should try to understand the law of karma. Once we understand that in our own life every action will have a similar and equal reaction, and once we understand that we will experience the effect of that action, we will refrain from committing unwholesome deeds. Karma is a product of body, speech and mind; while recompense is a product or result of karma. Karma is like a seed sown, and recompense is like a tree grown with fruits. When the body does good things, the mouth speaks good words, the mind thinks of good ideas, then the karma is a good seed. In the contrary, the karma is an evil seed. According to the Buddhist doctrines, every action produces an effect and it is a cause first and effect afterwards. We therefore speak of “Karma” as the “Law of Cause and Effect.” There is no end to the result of an action if there is no end to the Karma. Life in nowadays society, it is extremely difficult

for us not to create any karma; however, we should be very careful about our actions, so that their effect will be only good. Thus the Buddha taught: “To lead a good life, you Buddhists should make every effort to control the activities of your body, speech, and mind. Do not let these activities hurt you and others.” Recompense corresponds Karma without any exception. Naturally, good seed will produce a healthy tree and delicious fruits, while bad seed gives worse tree and fruits. Therefore, unless we clearly understand and diligently cultivate the laws of cause and effect, or karma and result, we cannot control our lives and experience a life the way we wish to. According to the Buddha-Dharma, no gods, nor heavenly deities, nor demons can assert their powers on us, we are totally free to build our lives the way we wish. According to Buddhist doctrines, karma is always just. It neither loves nor hates, neither rewards nor punishes. Karma and Recompense is simply the Law of Cause and Effect. If we accumulate good karma, the result will surely be happy and joyous. No demons can harm us. In the contrary, if we create evil karma, no matter how much and earnestly we pray for help, the result will surely be bitter and painful, no gods can save us.

According to Buddhism, man is the creator of his own life and his own destiny. All the good and bad that comes our way in life is the result of our own actions reacting upon us. Our joys and sorrows are the effects of which our actions, both in the distant and the immediate past, are the causes. And what we do in the present will determine what we become in the future. Since man is the creator of his own life, to enjoy a happy and peaceful life he must be a good creator, that is, he must create good karma. Good karma comes ultimately from a good mind, from a pure and calm mind. The law of karma binds together the past, present, and future lives of an individual through the course of his transmigration. To understand how such a connection is possible between the experiences and actions of an individual in successive lives, we must take a brief look at the Buddhist analysis of consciousness. According to the Buddhist philosophy of consciousness, the Vijnanavada school, there are eight kinds of consciousness. The first five are the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body consciousnesses. These make possible the awareness of the five kinds of external sense data through the five sense-organs. The sixth consciousness is the



intellectual consciousness, the faculty of judgment which discerns, compares, and distinguishes the sense-data and ideas. The seventh consciousness, called the manas, is the ego-consciousness, the inward awareness of oneself as an ego and the clinging to discrimination between oneself and others. Even when the first six kinds of consciousness are not functioning, for example, in deep sleep, the seventh consciousness is still present, and if threatened, this consciousness, through the impulse of self-protection, will cause us to awaken. The eighth consciousness is called Alaya-vijnana, the storehouse-consciousness. Because this consciousness is so deep, it is very difficult to understand. The alaya-vijnana is a repository which stores all the impressions of our deeds and experiences. Everything we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and do deposits, so to speak, a seed is a nucleus of karmic energy. Since the alaya hoards all the seeds of our past actions, it is the architect of our destiny. Our life and character reflect the seeds in our store-consciousness. If we deposit bad seeds, i.e., perform more evil actions, we will become bad persons. Since Buddhism places ultimate responsibility for our life in our own hands, if we want our hands to mold our life in a better way, we must launch our minds in a better direction, for it is the mind which controls the hands which mold our life. However, sometimes we know someone who is virtuous, gentle, kind, loving and wise, and yet his life is filled with troubles from morning to night. Why is this? What happens to our theory that good acts lead to happiness and bad acts to suffering? To understand this, we must realize that the fruits of karma do not necessarily mature in the same lifetime in which the karma is originally accumulated. Karma may bring about its consequences in the next life or in succeeding lives. If a person was good in a previous life, he may enjoy happiness and prosperity in this life even though his conduct now is bad. And a person who is very virtuous now may still meet a lot of trouble because of bad karma from a past life. It is like planting different kinds of seeds; some will come to flower very fast, others will take a long time, maybe years. The law of cause and effect does not come about at different times, in different forms and at different locations. While some of our experiences are due to karma in the present life, others may be due to karma from previous lives. In the present life, we receive the results of our actions done in past lives as

well as in the present. And what we reap in the future will be the result of what we do in the present. The doctrine of karma is not merely a doctrine of cause and effect, but of action and reaction. The doctrine holds that every action willfully performed by an agent, be it of thought, word, or deed, tends to react upon that agent. The law of karma is a natural law, and its operation cannot be suspended by any power of a deity. Our action brings about their natural results. Recognizing this, Buddhists do not pray to a god for mercy but rather regulate their actions to bring them into harmony with the universal law. If they do evil, they try to discover their mistakes and rectify their ways; and if they do good, they try to maintain and develop that good. Buddhists should not worry about the past, but rather be concerned about what we are doing in the present. Instead of running around seeking salvation, we should try to sow good seeds in the present and leave the results to the law of karma. The theory of karma in Buddhism makes man and no one else the architect of his own destiny. From moment to moment we are producing and creating our own destiny through our thought, our speech and our deeds. **Thus the ancient said: “Sow a thought and reap an act; sow an act and reap a habit; sow a habit and reap a character; sow a character and reap a destiny.”**

The karma that we have now is very deep-rooted and complex, and includes the former karma that human beings have accumulated since their beginning. We also possess the “former karma” that we have produced ourselves in previous existences and to some extent the “former karma” that our ancestors have produced (for those who were born in the same family, from generation to generation, or in the same country, would bear the same kinds of karma to some extent). And of course we possess the “present karma” that we have produced ourselves in this life. Is it possible for an ordinary person to become free from these karmas and enter the mental state of perfect freedom, escape from the world of illusion, by means of his own wisdom? This is clearly out of the question. What then, if anything, can we do about it? All that one has experienced, thought and felt in the past remains in the depths of one’s subconscious mind. Psychologists recognize that the subconscious mind not only exerts a great influence on man’s character and his mental functions but even causes various disorders. because it

is normally beyond our reach, we cannot control the subconscious mind by mere reflection and meditation.

When we plant a black-pepper seed, black-pepper plant grows and we will reap black-pepper, not oranges. Similarly, when we act positively, happiness follows, not suffering. When we act destructively, misery comes, not happiness. Just as small seed can grow into a huge tree with much fruit, small actions can bring large result. Therefore, we should try to avoid even small negative actions and to create small negative ones. If the cause isn't created, the result does not occur. If no seed is planted, nothing grows. The person who hasn't created the cause to be killed, won't be even if he or she is in a car crash. According to the Buddha, man makes his own destiny. He should not blame anyone for his troubles since he alone is responsible for his own life, for either better or worse. Your difficulties and troubles are actually self-caused. They arise from actions rooted in greed, hatred and delusion. In fact, suffering is the price you pay for craving for existence and sensual pleasures. The price which comes as physical pain and mental agony is a heavy one to pay. It is like paying monthly payment for the brand new Chevrolet Corvette you own. The payment is the physical pain and mental agony you undergo, while the Corvette is your physical body through which you experience the worldly pleasures of the senses. You have to pay the price for the enjoyment: nothing is really free of charge unfortunately. If we act positively, the happy result will eventually occur. When we do negative actions, the imprints aren't lost even though they may not bring their results immediately. **Devout Buddhists should always remember that, "the river's and ocean's water may dry up, mountain may waste away, the actions done in former lives are never lost; on the contrary, they come to fruit though aeons after aeons pass, until at last the debt is paid."** Body, speech, and mind all make karma when we cling. We create habits that can make us suffer in the future. This is the fruit of our attachment, of our past defilement. Remember, not only body but also speech and mental action can make conditions for future results. If we did some act of kindness in the past and remember it today, we will be happy, and this happy state of mind is the result of past karma. In other words, all things conditioned by cause, both long-term and moment-to-moment.

According to Buddhist tradition, there are two kinds of karma: intentional karma and unintentional karma. Intentional karma which bears much heavier karma vipaka (phala). Unintentional karma which bears lighter karma vipaka. There are also two other kinds of karma: the wholesome and the unwholesome. Wholesome (good) karma such as giving charity, kind speech, helping others, etc. Unwholesome (bad) karma such as killing, stealing, lying and slandering. According to Prof. Junjiro Takakusu in the *Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, there are two kinds of action and action-influence. The first type of karma is the drawing action. Drawing action causes a being to be born as a man, as a deva, or as an animal; no other force can draw a living being into a particular form of life. The second type of karma is the fulfilling action. After the kind of life has been determined, the fulfilling action completes the formal quality of the living being so that it will be a thorough specimen of the kind. There are two kinds of action-influence. The first kind of action-influence is individual action-influence which creates the individual being. Individual action-influence or individual karmas are those actions that sentient beings act individually. The second kind of action-influence is common action-influence creates the universe itself. The common-action-influence karma involved in this world system is not just that of human beings, but of every type of sentient being in the system. Also according to the Buddhist tradition, there are three kinds of karma: action (behavior) of the body, behavior of the speech, and behavior of the mind. There are three other kinds of karma: present life happy karma, present life unhappy karma, and karma of an imperturbable nature. There are still three other kinds of karma: karma of ordinary rebirth, karma of Hinayana Nirvana, and karma of Mahayana Nirvana. There are still three other kinds of karma: good karmas, bad karmas, and neutral karmas. There are still three other kinds of karma, which also called three stages of karma. The first stage of karma is the past karma. Past karma is the cause for some results (effects) reaped in the present life. The second stage of karma is the present karma with present results. Present karma is the cause for some results (effects) reaped in the present life (present deeds and their consequences in this life). The second stage of karma is the present karma with future results. Present karma (deed) is the cause for some or all results reaped in the next or

future lives. Present deeds and their next life consequences (present deeds and consequences after next life).

According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are four kinds of kamma. The first kind of karma is the black kamma, or evil deeds with black results. The second kind of karma is the bright kamma with bright result. The third kind of karma is the black-and-bright kamma with black-and-bright result. The fourth kind of karma is the kamma that is neither black nor bright, with neither black nor bright result, leading to the destruction of kamma. According to Mahayana Buddhism, there are four kinds of karmas. The first kind of karma is the accumulated karma, which results from many former lives. The second kind of karma is the repeated karma, which forms during the present life. The third kind of karma is the most dominant karma which is able to subjugate other karmas. The fourth kind of karma is the Near-Death Karma which is very strong. According to the Abhidharma, there are four types of kamma (karma): good karmas, bad karmas, neutral karmas, and karmas in the state of cessation. Especially, karmas in the state of cessation is the state of the activity's having ceased, and this remains in the mental continuum. This state of cessation is an affirming negative, an absence which includes something positive. It is a potency which is not just the mere cessation of the action, but has the capacity of producing an effect in the future. These states of cessation are capable of regenerating moment by moment until an effect is produced. No matter how much time passes, when it meets with the proper conditions, it fructifies or matures. If one has not engaged in a means to cause the potency to be reduced, such as confession and intention of restraint in committing these bad actions again, then these karmas will just remain. There are still four other kinds of karma: productive kamma, supportive kamma, obstructive kamma, and destructive kamma.

When a disciple came to the Buddha penitent over past misdeeds, the Buddha did not promise any forgiveness, for He knew that each must reap the results of the seeds that he had sown. Instead He explained: "If you know that what you have done is wrong and harmful, from now on do not do it again. If you know that what you have done is right and profitable, continue to do it. Destroy bad karma and cultivate good karma. You should realize that what you are in the

present is a shadow of what you were in the past, and what you will be in the future is a shadow of what you are now in the present. You should always apply your mind to the present so that you may advance on the way.” In the Anguttara Nikaya Sutra, the Buddha taught: “Oh Bhikkhus! Mental volition is what I call action or karma. Having volition one acts by body, speech and thought.” In the Dhammapada Sutta, the Buddha taught: “Of all dharmas, mind is the forerunner, mind is chief. We are what we think, we have become what we thought (what we are today came from our thoughts of yesterday). If we speak or act with a deluded mind or evil thoughts, suffering or pain follows us, as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox (Dhammapada 1). Of all dharmas, mind is the forerunner, mind is chief. We are what we think, we have become what we thought. If we speak or act with a pure mind or thought, happiness and joy follows us, as our own shadow that never leaves (Dhammapada 2). The deed is not well done of which a man must repent, and the reward of which he receives, weeping, with tearful face; one reaps the fruit thereof (Dhammapada 67). The deed is well done when, after having done it, one repents not, and when, with joy and pleasure, one reaps the fruit thereof (Dhammapada 68). As long as the evil deed done does not bear fruit, the fool thinks it is as sweet as honey; but when it ripens, then he comes to grief (Dhammapada 69). Those Arhats whose mind is calm, whose speech and deed are calm. They have also obtained right knowing, they have thus become quiet men (Dhammapada 96). Let’s hasten up to do good. Let’s restrain our minds from evil thoughts, for the minds of those who are slow in doing good actions delight in evil (Dhammapada 116). If a person commits evil, let him not do it again and again; he should not rejoice therein, sorrow is the outcome of evil (Dhammapada 117). If a person does a meritorious deed, he should do it habitually, he should find pleasures therein, happiness is the outcome of merit (Dhammapada 118). Even an evil-doer sees good as long as evil deed has not yet ripened; but when his evil deed has ripened, then he sees the evil results (Dhammapada 119). Even a good person sees evil as long as his good deed has not yet ripened; but when his good deed has ripened, then he sees the good results (Dhammapada 120). Do not disregard (underestimate) small evil, saying, “it will not matter to me.” By the falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the fool

becomes full of evil, even if he gathers it little by little (Dhammapada 121). Do not disregard small good, saying, “it will not matter to me.” Even by the falling of drop by drop, a water-jar is filled; likewise, the wise man, gathers his merit little by little (Dhammapada 122). An evil deed is better not done, a misdeed will bring future suffering. A good deed is better done now, for after doing it one does not grieve (Dhammapada 314). All conditioned things are without a real self. One who perceives this with wisdom, ceases grief and achieves liberation. This is the path of purity.” (Dhammapada 279).”

According to the Earth-Store Bodhisattva Sutra, the Earth-Store Bodhisattva advises sentient beings based on their circumstances: “If Earth Store Bodhisattva meets those who take life, he speaks of a retribution of a short lifespan. If he meets robbers and petty thieves, he speaks of a retribution of poverty and acute suffering. If he meets those who commit sexual misconduct, he speaks of the retribution of being born as pigeons and as mandarin ducks and drakes. If he meets those of harsh speech, he speaks of the retribution of a quarreling family. If he meets slanderers, he speaks of the retribution of a tongueless and cankerous mouth. If he meets those with anger and hatred, he speaks of being ugly and crippled. If he meets those who are stingy, he speaks of frustrated desires. If he meets gluttons, he speaks of the retribution of hunger, thirst and sicknesses (illnesses) of the throat. If he meets those who enjoy hunting, he speaks of a frightening insanity and disastrous fate. If he meets those who rebel against their parents, he speaks of the retribution of being killed in natural disasters. If he meets those who set fire to mountains or forests, he speaks of the retribution of seeking to commit suicide in the confusion of insanity. If he meets malicious parents or step-parents, he speaks of the retribution of being flogged in future lives. If he meets those who net and trap young animals, he speaks of the retribution of being separated from their own children. If he meets those who slander the Triple Jewel, he speaks of the retribution of being blind, deaf or mute. If he meets those who slight the Dharma and regard the teachings with arrogance, he speaks of the retribution of dwelling in the evil paths forever. If he meets those who destroy or misuse possessions of the permanently dwelling, he speaks of the retribution of revolving in the hells for millions of kalpas. If he meets those who defile the pure conduct of others and falsely accuse the

Sangha, he speaks of the retribution of an eternity in the animal realm. If he meets those who scald, burn, behead, chop up or otherwise harm living beings, he speaks of the retribution of repayment in kind. If he meets those who violate precepts and the regulations of pure eating, he speaks of the retribution of being born as birds and beasts suffering from hunger and thirst. If he meets those who are arrogant and haughty, he speaks of the retribution of being servile and of low classes. If he meets those whose double-tongued behavior causes dissension and discord, he speaks of retribution of tonguelessness (being mute) and speech impediments. If he meets those of deviant view, he speaks of the retribution of rebirth in the frontier regions.



## *Chapter Eight*

### *A Summary of the Theory of Causation & the Twelve Conditions of Cause-and-Effect*

#### *I. A Summary of the Theory of Causation:*

***An Overview of the Theory of Causation:*** Just consider that billions of years ago, the earth had no life; volcanoes poured forth torrents of lava, and vapor and gas filled the sky. However, when the earth cooled about two billions years ago, microscopic one-celled living creatures were produced. It goes without saying that they were produced through the working of the Law. They were born when the energy of “sunyata” forming the foundation of lava, gas, and vapor came into contact with appropriate conditions or a secondary cause. It is the Law that provided the conditions for the generation of life. Therefore, we realize that the Law is not cold, a mere abstract rule, but is full of vivid power causing everything to exist and live. Conversely, everything has the power of desiring to exist and to live. During the first two billions years of the development of the earth, even lava, gas, and vapor possessed the urge to live. That is why one-celled living creatures were generated from them when the conditions were right. These infinitesimal creatures endured all kinds of trials, including extreme heat and cold, tremendous floods, and torrential rains, for about two billions years, and continued to live. Moreover, they gradually evolved into more sophisticated forms, culminating in man. This evolution was caused by the urge to live of these first microscopic creatures. Life had mind, through which it desired to live, from the time even before it existed on earth. Such a will exists in everything in the universe. This will exists in man today. From the scientific point of view, man is formed by a combination of elementary particles; and if we analyze this still more deeply, we see that man is an accumulation of energy. Therefore, the mind desiring to live must surely exist in man.

We all know what dependent means, and what origination or arising means. However, according to the Buddha, the theory of independent origination was very deep. Many people believe that the theory of independent origination is one of the most difficult subjects in

Buddhism. As a matter of fact, on one occasion Ananda remarked that despite its apparent difficulty, the teaching of independent origination was actually quite simple; and the Buddha rebuked Ananda saying that in fact the teaching of independent origination was very deep, not that simple. However, the theory of independent origination in Buddhism is very clear and easy to understand. The Buddha gave two examples to make it clear for the Assembly. The Buddha has said the flame in an oil lamp burns dependent upon the oil and the wick. When the oil and the wick are present, the flame in an oil lamp burns. Besides, the wind factor is also important, if the wind blows strongly, the oil lamp cannot continue to burn. The second example on the sprout. The sprout is not only dependent on the seed, but also dependent on earth, water, air and sunlight. Therefore, there is no existing phenomenon that is not effect of dependent origination. All these phenomena cannot arise without a cause and one or more conditions. All things in the phenomenal world are brought into being by the combination of various cause and conditions (Twelve links of Dependent Origination), they are relative and without substantially or self-entity. The Buddha always expressed that his experience of enlightenment in one of two ways: either in terms of having understood the Four Noble Truths, or in terms of having understood interdependent origination. Buddhist practitioners who want to attain enlightenment, must understand the meaning of these truths.

According to Buddhism, whoever perceives the interdependent nature of reality sees the Dharma, and whoever sees the Dharma sees the Buddha. The principle of interdependent origination means that all conditioned things, phenomena, or events in the universe come into being only as a result of the interaction of various causes and conditions. Buddhism does not accept the argument that things can arise from nowhere, with no cause and conditions; nor does it accept another argument that things can arise on account of an almighty creator. According to Buddhism, all material objects are composed by parts to make the whole, and the whole depends upon the existence of part to exist. In other words, all things and events (everything) arise solely as a result of the mere coming together of the many factors which make them up. Therefore, there is nothing that has any independent or intrinsic identity of its own in this universe. However,

this is not to say that things do not exist; things do exist, but they do not have an independent or autonomous reality. When we understand the principle of interdependent origination or the fundamental insight into the nature of reality, we will realize that everything we perceive and experience arises as a result of the interaction and coming together of causes and conditions. In other words, when we thoroughly understand the principle of interdependent origination, we also understand the law of cause and effect.

Dependent Arising is an essential corollary to the second and third of the Four Noble Truths, and is not, as some are inclined to think, a later addition to the teaching of the Buddha. This Dependent Arising, this doctrine of conditionality, is often explained in severely practical terms, but it is not a mere pragmatical teaching, though it may appear to be so, owing to the shortness of the explanations. Those conversant with the Buddhist Canon know that in the doctrine of Dependent Arising is found that which brings out the basic principles of knowledge and wisdom in the Dhamma. In this teaching of the conditionality of everything in the world, can be realized the essence of the Buddha's outlook on life. This conditionality goes on uninterrupted and uncontrolled by self-agency or external agency of any sort. The doctrine of conditionality can not be labelled as determinism, because in this teaching both the physical environment and the moral causation (psychological causation) of the individual function together. The physical world influences man's mind, and mind, on the other hand, influences the physical world, obviously in a higher degree, for as the Buddha taught in the Samyutta-Nikaya: "The world is led by the mind." If we fail to understand the real significance and application to life of the Dependent Arising, we mistake it for a mechanical law of causality or even a simple simultaneous arising, a first beginning of all things, animate and inanimate. As there is no origination out of nothing in Buddhist thought, Dependent Arising shows the impossibility of a first cause. The first beginning of existence, of the life stream of living beings is inconceivable and as the Buddha says in the Samyutta-Nikaya: "Notions and speculations concerning the world may lead to mental derangement. O Monks! This wheel of existence, this cycle of continuity is without a visible end, and the first beginning of beings wandering and hurrying round, wrapt in ignorance and fettered by

craving is not to be perceived.” In fact, it is impossible to conceive of a first beginning. None can trace the ultimate origin of anything, not even of a grain of sand, let alone of human beings. It is useless and meaningless to seek a beginning in a beginningless past. Life is not an identity, it is a becoming. It is a flux of physiological and psychological changes.

Twenty centuries ago, the Buddha said: “Humanity and the world are the cause and conditions to be linked and to become.” His words have denied the presence of a Creator or God. They give us a scientific and objective outlook of the present world, related to the law of Conditioning. It means that everything is dependent upon conditions to come into being or survive. In other words, there is nothing that can be self-creating and self-existing, independent from others. All sentient beings, objects, elements, etc., in this world are determined by the law of conditioning, under the form of formation, stabilization, deterioration, and annihilation. Man is a small cosmos. He comes into being not by himself but by the activation of the law of transformation. The meaning of the Twelve Conditions of Cause-and-Effect are extremely deep and profound. They are important doors for cultivators to step into the realm of enlightenment, liberation from the cycle of birth, death, bondage, sufferings, and afflictions from the three worlds and six paths, and to attain Pratyeka-Buddhahood.

Buddhism does not agree with the existence of a so-called “self,” nor a so-called Creator. But this doesn’t mean that all beings and things do not exist. They do not exist with a substratum or a permanent essence in them, as people often think, but according to Buddhism beings and things do exist as causal relatives or combinations. All becomings, either personal or universal, originate from the principle of causation, and exist in causal combinations. The center of causation is one’s own action, and the action will leave its latent energy which decides the ensuing existence. Accordingly, our past forms our present, and the present forms the future. In this world, we are continuously creating and changing ourselves as a whole. According to the Madhyamaka philosophy, the doctrine of causal law (Pratityasamutpada) is exceedingly important in Buddhism. It is the causal law both of the universe and the lives of individuals. It is important from two points of view. Firstly, it gives a very clear idea of

the impermanent and conditioned nature of all phenomena. Secondly, it shows how birth, old age, death and all the miseries of phenomenal existence arise in dependence upon conditions, and how all the miseries cease in the absence of these conditions. The rise and subsidence of the elements of existence is not the correct interpretation of the causal law.

These definitions on the principle of causation are based on the interpretation of Prof. Junjiro Takakusu in *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*. Conditioned things arise from the secondary causes, in contrast with arising from the primal nature or *bhutatatha* (Tánh giác). Second, everything arises from conditions and not being spontaneous and self-contained has no separate and independent nature. Third, Buddhism does not give importance to the idea of the Root-Principle or the First Cause as other systems of philosophy often do; nor does it discuss the idea of cosmology. Naturally such a branch of philosophy as theology did not have grounds to develop in Buddhism. One should not expect any discussion of theology from a Buddhist philosopher. As for the problem of creation, Buddhism is ready to accept any theory that science may advance, for Buddhism does not recognize any conflict between religion and science. Fourth, according to Buddhism, human beings and all living things are self-created or self-creating. The universe is not homocentric; it is a co-creation of all beings. Naturally such a branch of philosophy as theology did not have grounds to develop in Buddhism. One should not expect any discussion of theology from a Buddhist philosopher. As for the problem of creation, Buddhism is ready to accept any theory that science may advance, for Buddhism does not recognize any conflict between religion and science. According to Buddhism, human beings and all living things are self-created or self-creating. The universe is not homocentric; it is a co-creation of all beings. Buddhism does not believe that all things came from one cause, but holds that everything is inevitably created out of more than two causes. The creations or becomings of the antecedent causes continue in time-series, past, present and future, like a chain. This chain is divided into twelve divisions and is called the Twelve Divisioned Cycle of Causation and Becomings. Since these divisions are interdependent, the process is called Dependent Production or Chain of causation. The formula of this theory is as follows: From the

existence of this, that becomes; from the happening of this, that happens. From the non-existence of this, that does not become; from the non-happening of this, that does not happen.

According to the Madhyamaka philosophy, the doctrine of causal law (Pratityasamutpada) is exceedingly important in Buddhism. It is the causal law both of the universe and the lives of individuals. It is important from two points of view. Firstly, it gives a very clear idea of the impermanent and conditioned nature of all phenomena. Secondly, it shows how birth, old age, death and all the miseries of phenomenal existence arise in dependence upon conditions, and how all the miseries cease in the absence of these conditions. The rise and subsidence of the elements of existence is not the correct interpretation of the causal law. According to the Madhyamaka philosophy, the causal law (pratityasamutpada) does not mean the principle of temporal sequence, but the principle of essential dependence of things on each other. In one word, it is the principle of relativity. Relativity is the most important discovery of modern science. What science has discovered today, the Buddha had discovered more than two thousand five hundred years before. In interpreting the causal law as essential dependence of things on each other or relativity of things, the Madhyamaka means to controvert another doctrine of the Hinayanists. The Hinayanists had analyzed all phenomena into elements (dharmas) and believed that these elements had a separate reality of their own. The Madhyamika says that the very doctrine of the causal law declares that all the dharmas are relative, they have no separate reality of their own. Without a separate reality is synonymous with devoid of real (sunyata), or independent existence. Phenomena are devoid of independent reality. The most importance of the causal law lies in its teaching that all phenomenal existence, all entities in the world are conditioned, are devoid of real (sunya), independent existence (svabhava). There is no real, dependent existence of entities. All the concrete content belongs to the interplay of countless conditions. Nagarjuna sums up his teaching about the causal law in the following words: "Since there is no elements of existence (dharma) which comes into manifestation without conditions, therefore there is no dharma which is not 'sunya,' or devoid of real independent existence."

***Four Typical Types of Causation:*** According to Prof. Junjiro Takakusu in *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, all schools of Mahayana believe in the Principle of Causation. The theory of causation by Dharmadhatu is the climax of all the causation theories; it is actually the conclusion of the theory of causation origination, as it is the universal causation and is already within the theory of universal immanence, pansophism, cosmotheism, or whatever it may be called. The causation theory was explained first by action-influence, but as action originates in ideation, we had, secondly, the theory of causation by ideation-store. Since the ideation-store as the repository of seed-energy must originate from something else, we had, thirdly, the causation theory explained by the expression “Matrix of the Thus-come” (Tathagata-garbha) or Thusness. This curious term means that which conceals the Buddha. Because of concealment it has an impure side, but because of Buddhahood it has a pure side as well. It is a synonym of Thusness (Tathatva or Tathata, not Tattva=Thisness or Thatness) which has in its broadest sense both pure and impure nature. Through the energy of pure and impure causes it manifests the specific character of becoming as birth and death, or as good and evil. Thusness pervades all beings, or better, all beings are in the state of Thusness. Here, as the fourth stage, the causation theory by Dharmadhatu (universe) is set forth. It is the causation by all beings themselves and is the creation of the universe itself, or we can call it the causation by the common action-influence of all beings. Intensively considered the universe will be a manifestation of Thusness or the Matrix of Tathagata (Thus-come). But extensively considered it is the causation of the universe by the universe itself and nothing more. There are many different kinds of Categories of Causation. Belows are four typical ones: *The First Category Is the “Causation by Action-Influence”*: Causation by action-influence is depicted in the Wheel of Life. There is law and order in the progress of cause and effect. This is the theory of causal Sequence. In the Twelve Divisioned Cycle of Causations and Becomings, it is impossible to point out which one is the first cause, because the twelve make a continuous circle which is called the Wheel of Life. People are accustomed to regard time as progressing in a straight line from the infinite past through present to infinite future. Buddhism, however, regards time as a circle with no beginning or end.

Time is relative. The death of a living being is not the end; at once another life begins to go through a similar process of birth and death, and thus repeats the round of life over and over again. In this way a living being, when considered in relation to time, forms an endless continuum. It is impossible to define what a living being is, for it is always changing and progressing through the Divisions or Stages of Life. The whole series of stages must be taken in their entirety as representing the one individual being. Thus, a living being, when regarded in relation to space, forms a complex of five elements. The Wheel of Life is a clever representation of the Buddhist conception of a living being in relation to both space and time. The Wheel of Life is a circle with no beginning, but it is customary to begin its exposition at Blindness (unconscious state). Blindness is only a continuation of Death. At death the body is abandoned, but Blindness remains as the crystallization of the effects of the actions performed during life. This Blindness is often termed Ignorance; but this ignorance should not be thought of as the antonym of knowing; it must include in its meaning both knowing and not knowing, blindness or blind mind, unconsciousness. Blindness leads to blind activity. The energy or the effect of this blind activity is the next stage, Motive or Will to Live. This Will to Live is not the kind of will which is used in the term "free will;" it is rather a blind motive toward life or the blind desire to live. Blindness and Will to Live are called the Two Causes of the past. They are causes when regarded subjectively from the present; but objectively regarded, the life in the past is a whole life just as much as is the life of the present. *The Second Category Is the "Causation by the Ideation-Store"*: Causation by the Ideation-store is used to explain the origin of action. Actions or karma are divided into three groups, i.e., those by the body, those by speech and those by volition. When one makes up one's mind to do something, one is responsible for it and is liable to retribution, because volition is a mind-action even if it is not expressed in speech or manifested in physical action. But the mind being the inmost recess of all actions, the causation ought to be attributed to the mind-store or Ideation-store. The Buddhist ideation theory divides the mind into eight faculties, i.e., the eye-sense, the ear-sense, the nose-sense, the tongue-sense, the body-sense, the co-ordinating sense-center or the sixth mano-vijnana, the individualizing



thought-center of egotism or the seventh manas-vijnana, and the storing-center of ideation or the eighth alaya-vjnana, or Ideation-store. Of these eight faculties, the seventh and the eighth require explanation. The seventh, the Individualizing Center of Egotism is the center where all the selfish ideas, egotistic, opinions, arrogance, self-love, illusions, and delusions arise. The eighth, the Storing Center of Ideation, is where the 'seeds' of all manifestations are deposited and later expressed in manifestations. Buddhism holds that the origin of all things and events is the effect of ideation. Every seed lies in the Storing Center and when it sprouts out into the object-world a reflection returns as a new seed. That is, the mind reaches out into the outer world and, perceiving objects, puts new ideas into the mind-store. Again, this new seed sprouts out to reflect back a still newer seed. Thus the seeds accumulate and all are stored there together. When they are latent, we call them seeds, but when active we call them manifestations. The old seeds, the manifestations and the new seeds are mutually dependent upon each other, forming a cycle which forever repeats the same process. This is called the Chain of Causation by Ideation. That which makes the seed or subconscious thought sprout out into actual manifestation, that is, the motive force which makes the chain of causation move, is nothing but ideation. It is easy to see from this theory of Causation by Ideation that Delusion, Action and Suffering originate from mind-action, or ideation. The Storing Center of Ideation is carried across rebirth to determine what the next form of life will be. This Storing Center might be regarded as similar to the soul in other forms of religion. According to the Buddhist doctrine, however, what is reborn is not the soul, but is the result of the actions performed in the preceding life. In Buddhism the existence of the soul is denied. *The Third Category Is the "Causation By Thusness"*: Causation by Thusness is used to explain the origin of the ideation-store. The ideation-store of a human being is determined by his nature as a human being and this nature is a particular dynamic form of Thusness. One should not ask where Thusness or Matrix of Thus-come originates, because it is the noumenon, the ultimate indescribable Thusness. Thusness or suchness, is the only term which can be used to express the ultimate indefinable reality. It is otherwise called the Matrix of Thus-come. Thus-come is Buddha-nature hidden in ordinary

human nature. “Thus-come” is a designation of the Buddha employed by himself instead of “I” or “we,” but not without special meaning. After he had attained Enlightenment, he met the five ascetics with whom he had formerly shared his forest life. These five ascetics addressed him saying “Friend Gotama.” The Buddha admonished them, saying that they ought not treat the Thus-come (thus enlightened I come) as their friend and their equal, because he was now the Enlightened One, the Victorious, All-wise One. When he had ‘thus come’ in his present position as the instructor of all men and even of devas, they should treat him as the Blessed One and not as an old friend. Again, when the Buddha went back to Kapilavastu, his former home, he did not go to the palace of his father, but lived in the banyan grove outside the town, and as usual went out to beg daily. Siddhodana, his king-father, could not bear the idea of his own son, the prince, begging on the streets of Kapilavastu. At once, the king visited the Buddha in the grove and entreated him to return to the palace. The Buddha answered him in the following words: “If I were still your heir, I should return to the palace to share the comfort with you, but my lineage has changed. I am now a successor to the Buddhas of the past, all of whom have ‘thus gone’ (Tathagata) as I am doing at present, living in the woods and begging. So your Majesty must excuse me.” The king understood the words perfectly and became a pupil of the Buddha at once. Thus come and thus gone have practically the same meaning. The Buddha used them both and usually in their plural forms. Sometimes the words were used for a sentient being who thus come, i.e., comes in the contrary way. Thus-come and Thus-gone can therefore be used in two senses: ‘The one who is enlightened but comes in an ordinary way’ or ‘The one who comes in an ordinary way simply.’ Now, Thusness or the Matrix of Thus-come or Thus-gone means the true state of all things in the universe, the source of an Enlightened One, the basis of enlightenment. When static, it is Enlightenment itself, with no relation to time or space; but, when dynamic, it is in human form assuming an ordinary way and feature of life. Thusness and the Matrix of Thus-come are practically one and the same, the ultimate truth. In Mahayana the ultimate truth is called Suchness or Thusness. We are now in a position to explain the Theory of Causation by Thusness. Thusness in its static sense is spaceless,

timeless, all-equal, without beginning or end, formless, colorless, because the thing itself without its manifestation cannot be sensed or described. Thusness in its dynamic sense can assume any form ; when driven by a pure cause it takes a lofty form; when driven by a tainted cause it takes a depraved form. Thusness, therefore, is of two states. The one is the Thusness itself; the other is its manifestation, its state of life and death. *The Fourth Category Is the "Causation by the Universal Principle"*: Dharmadhatu means the elements of the principle and has two aspects: the state of Thusness or noumenon and the world of phenomenal manifestation. In this causation theory it is usually used in the latter sense, but in speaking of the ideal world as realized, the former sense is to be applied. Buddhism holds that nothing was created singly or individually. All things in the universe, matter and mind, arose simultaneously, all things in it depending upon one another, the influence of each mutually permeating and thereby making a universal symphony of harmonious totality. If one item were lacking, the universe would not be complete; without the rest, one item cannot be. When the whole cosmos arrives at a harmony of perfection, it is called the 'Universe One and True,' or the 'Lotus Store.' In this ideal universe all beings will be in perfect harmony, each finding no obstruction in the existence and activity of another. Although the idea of the interdependence and simultaneous rise of all things is called the Theory of Universal Causation, the nature of the rise being universal, it is rather a philosophy of the totality of all existence than a philosophy of origination.

## ***II. A Summary of the Twelve Conditions of Cause-and-Effect:***

According to the Buddha, a cause refers to the cause you have planted, from which you reap a corresponding result without any exception. If you plant a good cause, you will get a good result. And if you plant a bad cause, you will obtain a bad result. So if you plant a certain cause with other conditions assemble, a certain retribution or result is brought about without any exception. The Buddha taught: "Because of a concatenation of causal chains there is birth, there is disappearance." Cause and effect in Buddhism are not a matter of belief or disbelief. Even though you don't believe in "cause and effect," they just operate the way they are suppose to operate. The

cause is the seed, what contributes to its growth is the conditions. Planting a seed in the ground is a cause. Conditions are aiding factors which contribute to the growth such as soil, water, sunlight, fertilizer, and the care of the gardener, etc. According to Buddhism, human beings and all living things are self-created or self-creating. The universe is not homocentric; it is a co-creation of all beings. Buddhism does not believe that all things came from one cause, but holds that everything is inevitably created out of more than two causes. The creations or becomings of the antecedent causes continue in time-series, past, present and future, like a chain. This chain is divided into twelve divisions and is called the Twelve Divisioned Cycle of Causation and Becomings. Since these divisions are interdependent, the process is called Dependent Production or Chain of causation. The formula of this theory is as follows: From the existence of this, that becomes; from the happening of this, that happens. From the non-existence of this, that does not become; from the non-happening of this, that does not happen. Thus, the term “Causation” indicates the following: a thing arises from or is produced through the agency of a condition or a secondary cause. A thing does not take form unless there is an appropriate condition. This truth applies to all existence and all phenomena in the universe. The Buddha intuitively perceived this so profoundly that even modern science cannot probe further. When we look carefully at things around us, we find that water, stone, and even human beings are produced each according to a certain pattern with its own individual character. Through what power or direction are the conditions generated that produce various things in perfect order from such an amorphous energy as “sunyata?” When we consider this regularity and order, we cannot help admitting that some rule exists. It is the rule that causes all things exist. This indeed is the Law taught by the Buddha.

According to the Majjhima Nikaya Sutra, the Buddha taught: “Depending on the oil and wick does the light of the lamp burn; it is neither in the one, nor in the other, nor anything in itself; phenomena are, likewise, nothing in themselves. So do we, we do not exist accidentally, but exist and live by means of this Law. As soon as we realize this fact, we become aware of our firm foundation and set our minds at ease. Far from being capricious, this foundation rests on the

Law, with which nothing can compare firmness. This assurance is the source of the great peace of mind that is not agitated by anything. It is the Law that imparts life of all of us. The Law is not something cold but is full of vigor and vivid with life. All things are unreal; they are deceptions; Nirvana is the only truth.” Dependent origination means that all phenomena are produced and annihilated by causation. This term indicates the following: a thing arises from or is produced through the agency of a condition or a secondary cause. A thing does not take form unless there is an appropriate condition. This truth applies to all existence and all phenomena in the universe. The Buddha intuitively perceived this so profoundly that even modern science cannot probe further. When we look carefully at things around us, we find that water, stone, and even human beings are produced each according to a certain pattern with its own individual character. Through what power or direction are the conditions generated that produce various things in perfect order from such an amorphous energy as “sunyata?” When we consider this regularity and order, we cannot help admitting that some rule exists. It is the rule that causes all things exist. This indeed is the Law taught by the Buddha. We do not exist accidentally, but exist and live by means of this Law. As soon as we realize this fact, we become aware of our firm foundation and set our minds at ease. Far from being capricious, this foundation rests on the Law, with which nothing can compare firmness. This assurance is the source of the great peace of mind that is not agitated by anything. It is the Law that imparts life of all of us. The Law is not something cold but is full of vigor and vivid with life. All things in the phenomenal world are brought into being by the combination of various causes and conditions (twelve links of Dependent Origination), they are relative and without substantiality or self-entity.

***The First Link Is Ignorance:*** The Sanskrit term Avidya means ignorance, stupidity, or unenlightenment. Avidya also means misunderstanding, being dull-witted ignorant, not conforming to the truth, not bright, dubious, blind, dark. Avidya also means being dull-witted ignorant not knowing the four noble truths, not knowing sufferings, the causes of sufferings, the mental state after severing sufferings, and the way to sever sufferings. ***The Second Link Is Volitional Actions:*** Through ignorance are conditioned volitional

actions. Ignorance which mistakes the illusory phenomena of this world for realities. With ignorance, there is activity, and then there is manifestation. With manifestation, there is consciousness. Acting from ignorance would result in bad or favorable karma which is conducive to reincarnation or liberation. ***The Third Link Is Consciousness:*** Through volitional actions is conditioned consciousness. Consciousness refers to discrimination. Activity refers to conditioned dharmas. When conditioned dharmas arise, thoughts of discrimination arise. With thoughts of discrimination, lots of troubles also arise. Vijnana means consciousness. If not liberated yet, after death, the body decays, but the subject's knowledge commonly called soul follows its reincarnation course in accordance with the three karmas of body, speech and mind. Only when his knowledge gains the status of purification, then he would be liberated from reincarnation. ***The Fourth Link Is Name and Form:*** Through consciousness are conditioned name and form. After birth, thanks to his consciousness, the subject recognizes that he now has a name and a form (body). Through name and form are conditioned the six senses-organs. Name and form are the trouble in life. Name brings the trouble of name, and form brings the trouble of form. In this life, name and form are the trouble, and the trouble is name and form. ***The Fifth Link Is the Six Entrances:*** The six sense organs (eye with form, ear with sound, nose with scent, tongue with taste, body with texture, mind with mental object). He is now has five senses and mind to get in touch with respective counterparts. Through the six senses-organs is conditioned contact. The six sense organs come about because we wish to understand things; that is why the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind arise. Why do the six sense organs come into being? Because of the desire to understand. However, who would have known that the more we try to understand, the more muddled we get. The more muddled we become, the less we understand. ***The Sixth Link Is Contact:*** Contact develops after the six senses-organs are made. Through contact is conditioned feeling. Contact refers to touching or encountering. When we do not understand, we go seeking everywhere just like a fly that keeps bumping into the wall. Why do we seek encounters? Because of our desire to understand. ***The Seventh Link Is Feeling:*** Contact provokes all kinds of feelings, feelings of joy, sadness, pleasure or pain. Through feeling is conditioned craving. After

we touch something, there is feeling. Before we run into difficulties, we feel very comfortable. Once we encounter difficulties, we feel very uncomfortable. When no one criticizes us, we feel very happy. But if anyone says something bad about us, we get upset. That is feeling. ***The Eighth Link Is Love:*** From the feeling of joy and pleasure, the subject tends to prolong it as much as possible. Through craving conditioned clinging. When we have feelings, love and attachment arise. Why do people feel insecure? It is because of love. Once there is love, there is also hatred, or detestation. We like and cling to favorable situations, but detest adverse states. Why do we feel happy? And why do we feel unhappy? It is because we have feelings of love and hate. Hate refers to dislike and loathing. Because of these, our troubles increase day after day. ***The Ninth Link Is Clinging:*** He becomes attached to what he likes or desires. Through clinging is conditioned the process of becoming. When we see something we like, we want to grasp it. What is grasping? It is the action motivated by the wish to obtain something. Because you are fond of something, you wish to obtain it. Once we obtain something, we have satisfied our desire. Why do we want to fulfill our desire? It is because we want to possess things. ***The Tenth Link Is Possession:*** With that wish for possession, “becoming” occurs. Driven by his desires, the subject tries to take in possession of what he wants such as money, houses, fame, honor, etc. Through the process of becoming is conditioned birth. Because of becoming, we want to possess things. ***The Eleventh Link Is Birth:*** Once we want to possess things, there is birth into the next life. Thus, craving, clinging and becoming make up the present causes which will accompany the subject in his birth. ***The Twelfth Link Is Old Age and Death:*** Through birth are conditioned decay, sorrow and death. In his new life, he will become old and die as every being does.





## *Chapter Nine*

### *An Overview of Prajna & Emptiness*

#### *I. An Overview of Prajna:*

It should be remembered that the Prajnaparamita Period or the Lotus period was one of the five periods of the Buddha's teachings. The period of Prajnaparamita-Sutra or Lotus-Sutra. The Time of Wisdom mainly teaches the Round Doctrine and yet is linked with the Common and Distinct Doctrines. Therefore, it is not quite perfect or complete. This phase lasted twenty-two years, in which the Buddha expounded a higher level of provisional Mahayana and refuted his disciples' attachment to the distinction between Theravada and Mahayana by teaching the doctrine non-substantiality or emptiness. He taught the teachings of shunyata in the Prajnaparamita-sutra. Prajna is ordinarily translated as "knowledge" in English, but to be exact "intuition" may be better. It is sometimes translated as "transcendental wisdom." The fact is even when we have an intuition, the object is still in front of us and we sense it, or perceive it, or see it. Here is a dichotomy of subject and object. In prajna this dichotomy no longer exists. Prajna is not concerned with finite objects as such; it is the totality of things becoming conscious of itself as such. And this totality is not at all limited. An infinite totality is beyond our ordinary human comprehension. But the prajna-intuition is this "incomprehensible" totalistic intuition of the infinite, which is something that can never take place in our daily experience limited to finite objects or events. The prajna, therefore, can take place, in other words, only when finite objects of sense and intellect are identified with the infinite itself. Instead of saying that the infinite sees itself, it is much closer to our human experience to say that an object regarded as finite, as belonging in the dichotomous world of subject and object, is perceived by prajna from the point of view of infinity. Symbolically, the finite then sees itself reflected in the mirror of infinity. The intellect informs us that the object is finite, but prajna contradicts, declaring it to be the infinite beyond the realm of relativity. Ontologically, this means that all finite objects or beings are possible because of the infinite underlying them,

or that the objects are relatively and therefore limitedly laid out in the field of infinity without which they have no moorings.

According to the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Treasure, the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-Neng, taught: "Good Knowing Advisors, Maha Prajna Paramita is a Sanskrit word which means 'great wisdom which has arrived at the other shore.' It must be practiced in the mind, and not just recited in words. When the mouth recites and the mind does not practice, it is like an illusion, a transformation, dew drops, or lightning. However, when the mouth recites and the mind practices, then mind and mouth are in mutual accord. One's own original nature is Buddha; apart from the nature there is no other Buddha. Good Knowing Advisors, what is meant by 'Prajna?' Prajna in our language means wisdom. Everywhere and at all times, in thought after thought, remain undeluded and practice wisdom constantly; that is Prajna conduct. Prajna is cut off by a single deluded thought. By one wise thought, Prajna is produced. Worldly men, deluded and confused, do not see Prajna. They speak of it with their mouths, but their minds are always deluded. They constantly say of themselves, 'I cultivate Prajna!' And though they continually speak of emptiness, they are unaware of true emptiness. Prajna, without form or mark, is just the wisdom of the mind. If thus explained, this is Prajna wisdom. Prajna is a Sanskrit term which means wisdom. There are three kinds of prajna: real mark prajna, contemplative prajna, and literary prajna. Prajna also means the real power to discern things and their underlying principles and to decide the doubtful. The Prajna-paramita-sutra describes "prajna" as supreme, highest, incomparable, unequalled, unsurpassed. Prajna means real wisdom or transcendental wisdom. According to the Mahayana Buddhism, only an immediate experienced intuitive wisdom, not intelligence can help man reach enlightenment. Therefore, to achieve prajna is synonymous with to reach enlightenment. One of the two perfections required for Buddhahood, the wisdom which enables us to transcend desire, attachment and anger so that we will be emancipated (not through the mercy of any body, but rather through our own power of will and wisdom) and so that we will not be reborn again and again in "samsara" or transmigration.

At anywhere and at all time, Devout Buddhists' actions must be in accordance with "Prajna" at all time. Worldly people always brag with

their mouths, but their minds are always deluded. This is one of the three kinds of Prajna, the prajna or wisdom of meditative enlightenment on reality, for prajna is wisdom for salvation, and through wisdom is the mother or source of all Buddhas. Prajna is the spear of wisdom, which is able to cut off illusion and evil. Prajna is the intuitive understanding. In general, this refers to the development of intuitive understanding of key Buddhist concepts. According to the Mahayana Buddhism, the “prajna paramita” or the “perfection of wisdom” is the sixth of the perfections that a Bodhisattva cultivates on the path to Buddhahood, and only an immediate experienced intuitive wisdom, not intelligence can help man reach enlightenment. Therefore, to achieve prajna is synonymous with to reach enlightenment. One of the two perfections required for Buddhahood. The wisdom which enables us to transcend desire, attachment and anger so that we will be emancipated (not through the mercy of any body, but rather through our own power of will and wisdom) and so that we will not be reborn again and again in “samsara” or transmigration. Prajna is abruptly seeing. Prajna is really a dialectical term denoting that this special process of knowing, known as “abruptly seeing,” or “seeing at once,” does not follow general laws of logic; for when prajna functions one finds oneself all of a sudden, as if by a miracle, facing Sunyata, the emptiness of all things. This does not take place as the result of reasoning, but when reasoning has been abandoned as futile, and psychologically when the will-power is brought to a finish. The use of prajna contradicts everything that we may conceive of things worldly; it is altogether of another order than our usual life. But this does not mean that Prajna is something altogether disconnected with our life and thought, something that is to be given to us by a miracle from some unknown and unknowable source. If this were the case, prajna would be of no possible use to us. It is true that the functioning of Prajna is discrete, and interrupting to the progress of logical reasoning, but all the time it underlies it, and without Prajna we cannot have any reasoning whatever. Prajna is at once above and in the process of reasoning. This is a contradiction, formally considered, but in truth this contradiction itself is made possible because of Prajna.

That most of religious literature is filled with contradictions, absurdities, paradoxes, and impossibilities, and demands to believe

them, to accept them, as revealed truths, is due to the fact that religious knowledge is based on the working of Prajna. Once this viewpoint of Prajna is gained, all the essential irrationalities found in religion become intelligible. It is like appreciating a fine piece of brocade. On the surface there is an almost bewildering confusion of beauty, and the professional fails to trace the intricacies of the threads. But as soon as it is turned over all the intricate beauty and skill is revealed. Prajna consists in this turning-over. The eye has hitherto followed the surface of the cloth, which is indeed the only side ordinarily allows us to survey. Now the cloth is abruptly turned over; the course of the eyesight is suddenly interrupted; no continuous gazing is possible. Yet by this interruption, or rather disruption, the whole scheme of life is suddenly grasped; there is the "seeing into one's self-nature." It is Prajna which lays its hands on Emptiness, or Suchness, or self-nature. And this laying-hands-on is not what it seems. This is self-evident from what has already been said concerning things relative. Because the self-nature is beyond the realm of relativity, its being grasped by Prajna cannot mean a grasping in its ordinary sense. The grasping must be no-grasping, a paradoxical statement which is inevitable. To use Buddhist terminology, this grasping is accomplished by non-discrimination; that is, by discrete, an act of the conscious; not an unconscious act but an act rising from self-nature itself, which is the unconscious.

Prajna must once be awakened in self-nature; for unless this is experienced we shall never have a chance of knowing the Buddha not only in ourselves but in others. But this awakening is no particular deed performed in the realm of empirical consciousness, and for this reason it is like a lunar reflection in the stream; it is neither continuous nor discrete; it is beyond birth and death; even when it is said to be born, it knows no birth; even when it is said to have passed away, it knows no passing away; it is only when no-mind-ness or the Unconscious is seen that there are discourses never discoursed, that there are acts that never acted. According to the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng in the Platform Sutra, Prajna is awakened in self-nature abruptly, and the term "abrupt" not only means 'instantaneously', 'unexpectedly' or 'suddenly', but signifies the idea that the act of awakening which is seeing is not a conscious deed on the part of self-nature. In other

words, Prajna flashes from the Unconscious and yet never leaves it; it remains unconscious of it. This is the sense of saying that “seeing is no-seeing, and no-seeing is seeing,” and that the Unconscious or self-nature becomes conscious of itself by means of Prajna, and yet in this consciousness there is no separation of subject and object. Therefore, Hui-Neng says: “One who understands this truth is without thought, without memory, and without attachment.” But we must remember that Hui-Neng never advocated the doctrine of mere nothingness, or mere-doing-nothing-ness, nor assumed an unknown quantity in the solution of life. Also according to Hui-Neng, Prajna is the name given to self-nature, or the Unconscious, as we call it, when it becomes conscious of itself, or rather to the act itself of becoming conscious. Prajna therefore points in two directions to the Unconscious and to the world of consciousness which is now unfolded. The one is call the Prajna of non-discrimination and the other the Prajna of discrimination. When we are so deeply involved in the outgoing direction of consciousness and discrimination as to forget the other direction of Prajna pointing to the Unconscious, we have what is technically known as “Prapanca,” imagination. Or we may state this conversely: when imagination asserts itself, Prajna is hidden, and discrimination has its own sway, and the pure, undefiled surface of the Unconscious or self-nature is now dimmed. The advocates of “no-thought” or “no-mind” want us to preserve Prajna from going astray in the direction of discrimination, and to have our eyes looking steadily in the other direction. To attain “no-mind” means to recover, objectively speaking, the Prajna or non-discrimination. When this idea is developed in more detail we shall comprehend the significance of “no-mind” in Zen thought.

After the period of the Sixth Patriarch Hui-nêng (638-713), Zen gradually became an "Art", a unique art for transmitting the Prajna-Truth, refusing, as all great arts do, to follow any set form, pattern, or system in expressing itself. This exceptionally liberal attitude gave birth to those radical and sometimes "wild" Zen expressions, which also contribute so greatly to the complexity and incomprehensibility of the subject. Zen practitioners should always remember that the ultimate Prajna-Truth that Zen tries to convey cannot be a thing that is narrow, finite, or exclusive; it must be something vast, universal, and infinite; all-inclusive and all-embracing; defying definition and designation.

That's why the ultimate Prajna-Truth cannot be defined and grasped by ordinary intellect. This indefinable and ungraspable nature of Zen-truth is well illustrated in the following koans. According to the Platform Sutra, Chapter Seven, Nan-Yueh came to Tsao-Xi to study with Hui-Neng. Hui-Neng said to Nan-Yueh: "Where did you come from?" Nan-Yueh said: "From Mount Song." Hui-Neng said: "What is it that thus come?" Nan-Yueh couldn't answer. After eight years, Nan-Yueh suddenly attained enlightenment. He informed the Sixth Patriarch of this, saying: "I have an understanding." The Sixth Patriarch said: "What is it?" Nan-Yueh said: "To say it's a thing misses the mark." The Sixth Patriarch said: "Then can it be made evident or not?" Nan-Yueh said: "I don't say it can't be made evident, but it can't be defiled." The Sixth Patriarch said: "Just this that is undefiled is what is upheld and sustained all Buddhas. You are thus. I am also thus. "Prajñadhara has foretold that from beneath your feet will come a horse which will trample to death everyone in the world. Bear this in mind but don't soon repeat it." And here is another koan: Fu Ta Shih said in his famous stanza:

"Empty-handed I go,  
but a spade is in my hand;  
I walk on my feet,  
yet I am riding on the back of a bull;  
When I pass over the bridge,  
The bridge, but not the water, flows!"

As a matter of fact, according to Chang Chen-Chi in the "Practice of Zen (p.17)," the very word "defining" suggests a finger pointing to a particular object, and the word "grasping", a hand holding something tightly and not letting it go. These two pictures vividly portray the narrow, tight, and clinging nature of the human mind. With this deplorable limitation and tightness deeply rooted in the human way of thinking, no wonder the free and all-inclusive Prajna-Truth becomes an evasive shadow forever eluding one's grasp.

## ***II. Emptiness in Buddhist Point of View:***

The term "Sunyata" terminologically compounded of "Sunya" meaning empty, void, or hollow, and an abstract suffix "ta" meaning "ness". The term was extremely difficult to be translated into Chinese;

however, we can translate into English as “Emptiness,” “Voidness,” or “Vacuity.” The concept of this term was essentially both logical and dialectical. The difficulty in understanding this concept is due to its transcendental meaning in relation to the logico-linguistic meaning, especially because the etymological tracing of its meaning (sunyata meaning vacuous or hollow within a shape of thing) provides no theoretical or practical addition to one’s understanding of the concept. According to Dr. Harsh Narayan, Sunyavada is complete and pure Nihilism. Sunyata is a negativism which radically empties existence up to the last consequences of Negation. The thinkers of Yogacara school describe “Sunyata” as total Nihilism. Dr. Radhakrishnan says that absolute seems to be immobile in its absoluteness. Dr. Murti views Prajna-paramita as absolute itself and said: “The absolute is very often termed sunya, as it is devoid of all predicates.” According to Chinese-English Buddhist Dictionary, “the nature void, i.e., the immateriality of the nature of all things” is the basic meaning of “Sunyata”.

According to other Mahayana sutras, “Sunyata” means the true nature of empirical Reality. It is considered as beyond the Negation or Indescribable. The Buddha used a number of similes in the Nikayas to point out the unreality of dharmas of every kind and it is these similes that have been later used with great effectiveness in Mahayana philosophical schools, especially of Chinese Buddhist thinkers. Emptiness implies non-obstruction... like space or the Void, it exists within many things but never hinders or obstructs anything. Emptiness implies omnipresence... like the Void, it is ubiquitous; it embraces everything everywhere. Emptiness implies equality... like the Void, it is equal to all; it makes no discrimination anywhere. Emptiness implies vastness... like the Void, it is vast, broad and infinite. Emptiness implies formlessness or shapelessness... like the Void, it is without form or mark. Emptiness implies purity... like the Void, it is always pure without defilement. Emptiness implies motionlessness... like the Void, it is always at rest, rising above the processes of construction and destruction. Emptiness implies the positive negation... it negates all that which has limits or ends. Emptiness implies the negation of negation... it negates all Selfhood and destroys the clinging of Emptiness. Emptiness implies unobtainability or ungraspability... space or the Void, it is not obtainable or graspable.

At the beginning of *Madhyamika Sastra*, Nagarjuna gives the fundamentals of his philosophy by means of eight negations. There is neither origination, nor cessation, neither permanence nor impermanence, neither unity nor diversity, neither coming-in nor going-out, in the law of *Pratityasamutpada* (Dependent Origination). Essentially, there is only non-origination which is equated with *Sunyata*. Elsewhere he also states that *Pratityasamutpada* is called *Sunyata*. Here *Sunyata* referring as it does to non-origination, is in reality the Middle path which avoids the two basic views of existence and non-existence. *Sunyata* is the relative existence of things, or a kind of relativity. So, according to the *Madhyamika*, *sunyata* does not mean absolute non-being, but relative being. Emptiness implies the true nature of empirical Reality or what is the same, the form of true nature of all phenomena. This subject matter of *sunyata* will cover all the questions concerning the Buddhist outlooks on life and world. Nagarjuna claimed *Sunyata* as the true nature of empirical Reality: "With *sunyata*, all is possible; without it, all is impossible". In the *Prajna-Paramita Sutra*, *Sunyata* refers to the world of enlightenment, but it also stated that this world of enlightenment is not separate from the world of delusion: "The world of illusion is identical with the world of enlightenment (form is identical with void), and the world of enlightenment is identical with the world of illusion (void is identical with form)."

According to the *Culla Sunnata Sutta*, the Buddha affirmed Ananda: "Ananda, through abiding in the 'emptiness', I am now abiding in the complete abode or the fullness of transcendence." So, what is the emptiness from that the Buddha abides in the fullness of transcendence? It is nothing else but "Nirvana". It is empty of cankers of sense-pleasure, becoming and ignorance. Therefore, in meditation, practitioners try to reduce or eliminate the amount of conscious contents until the mind is completely motionless and empty. The highest level of meditation, the ceasing of ideation and feeling, is often used as a stepping stone to realization of Nirvana. The Buddha told Sariputra about Emptiness as follows: "In Emptiness there are no form, no feelings, no perceptions, no actions, no consciousnesses; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, and no mind; no form, sound, odour, taste, touch or mind object; no eye-elements until we come to no



elements of consciousness; no ignorance and no extinction of ignorance; no old age and death, and no extinction of old age and death; no truth of sufferings, no truth of cause of sufferings, of the cessation of sufferings or of the path. There is no knowledge and no attainment whatsoever. By reason of non-attachment, the Bodhisattva dwelling in Prajnaparamita has no obstacles in his mind. Because there is no obstacle in his mind, he has no fear, and going far beyond all perverted view, all confusions and imaginations... This is a real Nirvana!"

From the standpoint of the Absolute, Sunyata means "Devoid of, or completely free of thought construct, devoid of plurality." In other words, sunyata as applied to tattva signifies that: it is inexpressible in human language; that 'is', 'not is', 'both is', and 'not is', 'neither is' nor 'not is', no thought, category or predicative can be applied to it. It is transcendental to thought; it is free of plurality, that it is a Whole which can not be sundered into parts. The most striking feature of Madhyamaka philosophy is its ever, recurring use of "sunya" and "sunyata." So central is this idea to the system that it is generally known as "Sunyavada," i.e., the philosophy that asserts "Sunya" as the characterization of Reality. Sunya is a most perplexing word in Buddhist philosophy. Non-Buddhists have interpreted it only as nihilism. But that is not what it means. Etymonogically it is derived from the root "svi" which means "to swell" or "to expand." Curiously enough, the word Brahman is derived from the root "brh" or "brhm" which also means "to swell" or "to expand." According to the Buddha's teaching on Sunya tattva and the 'sunya principle', the word sunya seems to have been used in an ontological sense in most of Buddhist contexts. The implication of the etymological signification of the word does not seem to have been fully worked out. According to some scholars the word "sunya" has no ontological signification. It has only a soteriological suggestion. But the word "sunya" has obviously been used also in an ontological sense with an axiological overtone and soteriological background. In the ontological sense, "sunya" is the void which is also fullness. Because it is nothing in particular, it has the possibility of everything. It has been identified with Nirvana, with the Absolute, with Supreme Reality or Paramartha, with Reality or Tattva.

Sunyata is an abstract noun derived from “sunya.” It means deprivation and suggests fulfillment. The word “sunya” and “sunyata” will best be understood in connexion with “svabhava.” Svabhava literally means ‘own being.’ Candrakirti says that this word has been used in Buddhist philosophy in two ways: the essence or special property of a thing, e.g., ‘heat is the svabhava or special property of fire.’ In this world an attribute which always accompanies an object, never parts from it, that, not being indissolubly connected with any thing else, is known as the svabhava, i.e., special property of that object; svabhava (own-being) as the contrary of parabhava (other-being). Candrakirti says, “Svabhava is the own being, the very nature of a thing.” While Nagarjuna says: “That is really svabhava which is not brought about by anything else, unproduced (akrtrimah), that which is not dependent on, not relative to anything other than itself, non-contingent, unconditioned.” The word “sunya” has to be understood from two points of view. First, from the point of view of phenomena or empirical reality, it means “svabhava-sunya,” i.e. devoid of svabhava or independent, substantial reality of its own. Second, from the point of view of the Absolute, it means “prapanca-sunya,” i.e. devoid of prapanca or verbalization, thought construct and plurality. According to Buddhism, there is not a thing in the world which is unconditionally, absolutely real. Everything is related to, contingent upon, conditioned by something else.

In reference to “vyavahara” or empirical reality, sunyata means devoidness of self-being, of unconditioned nature (naihsvabhava). In other words, it connotes conditioned co-production or thorough going relativity (pratīyasamutpada). This idea is conveyed in another way by the term, “derived name” (upadaya-prajñapti) which means that the presence of a name does not mean the reality of the named. Candrakirti says “A chariot is so named by taking into account its parts like wheel, etc; it does not mean that the chariot is something different in its own right apart from its constituent parts.” This is another instant of relativity. As relativity, sunyata also connotes the relative, non-absolute nature of specific views. Sunyata exposes the folly of accepting any absolute beginning or total cessation and thus connotes taking things as they are and avoiding the extremes ‘is’ and ‘is not’ (madhyamapratipat). Over and above these views, there are other

senses in which the word sunyata has been used in Madhyamaka philosophy. In reference to “ultimate reality” (paramartha), sunyata connotes the non-conceptual nature of the absolute. In reference to the practitioner, sunyata implies his attitude of skillfulness of non-clinging to the relative as the absolute or to the absolute as something specific (aunpalambha). The Mahaprajna-paramita Sastra brings out another implication of the sunyata principle, the irrepressible longing for the Real, beyond the passing show of mundane life.

Sunyata is not merely a word of ontological signification. It has also an axiological implication. Since all empirical things are devoid of substantial reality, therefore they are ‘worthless’. It is because of our ignorance that we attach so much value to worldly things. Once sunyata is properly understood, the inordinate craving for such things will automatically disappear. Sunyata is not merely an intellectual concept. Its realization is a means in salvation. When rightly grasped, it leads to the negation of the multiplicity of the dharmas and of detachment from the ‘passing show’ of the tempting things of life. Meditation on sunyata leads to transcendental wisdom (prajna) which brings about the emancipation of the practitioner from spiritual darkness. Nagarjuna puts the quintessence of his teachings about sunyata in the following verse: “Emancipation is obtained by the dissolution of selfish deeds and passions. All selfish deeds and passions are by imaginative constructs which value worthless things as full of worth. The imaginative constructs (vikalpas) are born of activity of the mind ceases when Sunyata, emptiness or hollowness of things is realized.” Sunyata is used in Madhyamaka philosophy as a symbol of the inexpressible. In calling Reality sunya, the Madhyamika only means to say that it is inexpressible (avacya, anabhilapya). In the very first verse of Madhyamaka Karika, Nagarjuna makes the standpoint of Sunyavada luminously Prominent. The standpoint consists of the eight notions: Beyond destruction, beyond production, beyond dissolution, beyond eternity, beyond oneness, beyond plurality, beyond ingress, beyond egress.

Falsely understood Emptiness is the misunderstanding of the teaching of emptiness arises from the concept that understanding of emptiness can be acquired from learning, not necessarily from the experience of enlightenment. In this misunderstanding, emptiness is

understood as mere nothingness, as a negation of all existence. In the contrary, emptiness, as it is spoken of in Zen, had nothing to do with this purely philosophical concept of nothingness. It is an emptiness that is not the opposite of the existence of all things and their properties but rather the basis of this existence, and bears it and, from the standpoint of complete enlightenment, is absolutely identical with it. Thus, the Mahaprajnaparamita-hridaya-sutra emphasizes, “Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness is no other than form.”

### ***III. Prajna and Sunyata In Zen Schools:***

***Roles of Prajna and Sunyata In Zen Schools:*** In Buddhism, emptiness implies the unreality of things or all things (phenomena) lack inherent existence, having no essence or permanent aspect whatsoever. All phenomena are empty. All phenomena exist are conditioned and, relative to other factors. In the Madhyamaka Sastra, Nagarjuna said: “One who is in harmony with emptiness is in harmony with all things.” The word “emptiness” is different from everyday term. It transcends the usual concepts of emptiness and form. To be empty is not to be non-existent. It is to be devoid of a permanent identity. To avoid confusion, Buddhists often use the term “true emptiness” to refer to things that devoid of a permanent identity. In fact, the meaning of “emptiness” in Buddhism is very profound and sublime and it is rather difficult to recognize because “emptiness” is not only neither something, nor figure, nor sound, nor taste, nor touch, nor dharma, but all sentient beings and phenomena come to existence by the rule of “Causation” or “dependent co-arising.” The Buddha emphasized on “emptiness” as an “elimination” of false thoughts and wrong beliefs. As mentioned above, Prajna is a Sanskrit term which means wisdom. Prajna also means the real power to discern things and their underlying principles and to decide the doubtful. Prajna means a transcendental knowledge. The Prajna-paramita-sutra describes “prajna” as supreme, highest, incomparable, unequalled, unsurpassed. There are three prajnas or perfect enlightenments: The first part of the prajnaparamita. The wisdom achieved once crossed the shore. The second part of the prajnaparamita. The necessary wisdom for actual crossing the shore of births and deaths. The wisdom of knowing things in their temporary and changing condition. The necessary wisdom for vowing to cross the

shore of births and deaths. It is Prajna which lays its hands on Emptiness, or Suchness, or self-nature. And this laying-hands-on is not what it seems. This is self-evident from what has already been said concerning things relative. Because the self-nature is beyond the realm of relativity, its being grasped by Prajna cannot mean a grasping in its ordinary sense. The grasping must be no-grasping, a paradoxical statement which is inevitable. To use Buddhist terminology, this grasping is accomplished by non-discrimination; that is, by discrete, an act of the conscious; not an unconscious act but an act rising from self-nature itself, which is the unconscious. Meanwhile, the Sanskrit root for "Emptiness" is "sunnyata". The Sanskrit word "sunya" is derived from the root "svi," to swell. Sunya literally means: "relating to the swollen." Unreality of things or all things (phenomena) lack inherent existence, having no essence or permanent aspect whatsoever, nothing has a nature of its own. All phenomena are empty. All phenomena exist are conditioned and, relative to other factors. According to the Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Treasure, the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-Neng, taught: "Good Knowing Advisor, when you contemplate and illuminate with the wisdom, which brightly penetrates within and without, you recognize your original mind. The recognition of your original mind is the original liberation. The attainment of liberation is the Prajna Samadhi, thus no-thought. What is meant by 'no-thought?' No-thought means to view all dharmas with a mind undefiled by attachment. The function of the mind pervades all places but is nowhere attached. Merely purify your original mind to cause the six consciousnesses to go out the six gates, to be undefiled and unmixed among the six objects, to come and go freely and to penetrate without obstruction. That is the Prajna Samadhi, freedom and liberation, and it is called the practice of no-thought. Not thinking of the hundred things and constantly causing your thought to be cut off is called Dharma-bondage and is an extremist view. According to the Records of the Transmission of the Lamp (Ch'uan-Teng-Lu), Volume IX: One day, Chao-chou came and asked Ta-Tzu, "What is the body of the Prajna?" Ta-Tzu repeated: "What is the body of the Prajna?" Thereupon, Chao-chou gave a hearty laugh and went off. On the day following Ta-tzu saw Chao-chou sweeping the ground. Ta-Tzu asked, "What is the body of the Prajna?" Chao-chou threw up his broom and

with a hearty laugh went away. Ta-Tzu then returned to his quarters. Zen practitioners should always remember that Prajna is the ultimate truth which is to be experienced and not to be made a mere subject of intellectual analysis or from individual's extremist view.

***Zen Practitioners and the Contemplation on the Prajna:*** After reading and understanding the Buddhadharma in sutras, one then contemplates and illuminates their meanings through actual practice. Wisdom acquired from cultivation or contemplation, the second part of the Prajnaparamita. This type of contemplation will lead to the real mark prajna. This is one of several kinds of Contemplation of the Prajna, the prajna or wisdom of meditative enlightenment on reality. *First, to Reflect on Suffering:* Reflection on suffering is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we are able to end all attachments, aspirations and desires. Buddhist cultivators should understand that when the Buddha described our lives as “Dukkha”, he was referring to any and all unsatisfactory conditions. These range from minor disappointments, problems and difficulties to intense pain and misery. Therefore, Dukkha should be used to describe the fact that things are not completely right in our lives and could be better. “Suffering” means “unsatisfactoriness.” This is the first of the four noble truths of Buddhism, which holds that cyclic existence is characterized by unsatisfactoriness or suffering. This is related to the idea that since the things of the world are transitory, beings are inevitably separated from what they desire and forced to endure what is unpleasant. The main stated goal of Buddhism from its inception is overcoming “dukkha.” There are three main types of dukkha: 1) the suffering of misery (dukkha-dukkhata), which includes physical and mental sufferings; 2) the suffering of change (viparinama-dukkhata), which includes all contaminated feelings of happiness. These are called sufferings because they are subject to change at any time, which leads to unhappiness; and 3) compositional suffering (samskara-dukkhata), the suffering endemic to cyclic existence, in which sentient beings are prone to the dissatisfaction due to being under the influence of contaminated actions and afflictions. The Buddha teaches that suffering is everywhere, suffering is already enclosed in the cause, suffering from the effect, suffering throughout time, suffering pervades space, and suffering governs both philistine and saint. *Second,*

*Reflection on Calmness or Tranquility:* Reflection on calmness is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we do not disturb our mind. People are so used to noise and talk, that they feel lonely and out of place if they do not speak. But if we train ourselves in the art of cultivating silence, we will learn to enjoy it. Tranquility means retreating in search of the inner silence. Go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember that there is peace in silence. We must take time off to go into retreat in search of silence. We must, now and then, break away from motion to remain motionless, even though this is only a temporary period. It is a peaceful form of existence. In lonely retreat, we experience the value of silent contemplation. We make an inward journey. When we withdraw into silence, we are absolutely alone to see ourselves as we really are, and then we can learn to overcome the weaknesses and limitations in ordinary experience. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that only meditation and contemplation can help us make an inward journey. Time spent in secluded contemplation is not wasted; it goes a long way to strengthen a man's character. It is an asset to our daily work and progress if we can find the time to cut ourselves off from routine and spend a day or two in quiet contemplation. This is surely not escapism or living in idleness, but the best way to strengthen our mind and mental qualities. It is a beneficial introspection; it is by examining one's thoughts and feelings that one can probe into the inner meaning of things, and discover the power within. *Third, Reflection on No-Self:* Reflection on "No-self" is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we do not mistakenly attach to an illusive self. No-self is the nature of our bodies. Buddhism teaches that human beings' bodies are composed of five aggregates, called skandhas in Sanskrit. If the form created by the four elements is empty and without self, then human beings' bodies, created by the unification of the five skandhas, must also be empty and without self. Human beings' bodies are involved in a transformation process from second to second, minute to minute, continually experiencing impermanence in each moment. By looking very deeply into the five skandhas, we can experience the selfless nature of our bodies, our passage through birth and death, and emptiness, thereby destroying the illusion that our bodies are permanent. In Buddhism, no-self is the most important

subject for meditation. By meditating no-self, we can break through the barrier between self and other. When we no longer are separate from the universe, a completely harmonious existence with the universe is created. We see that all other human beings exist in us and that we exist in all other human beings. We see that the past and the future are contained in the present moment, and we can penetrate and be completely liberated from the cycle of birth and death. Impersonal Tone is one of the eight chief characteristics of 'satori.' In Zen. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Zen experience is that it has no personal note in it as is observable in Christian mystic experiences. There is no reference whatever in Buddhist satori to such personal feelings. We may say that all the terms are interpretations based on a definite system of thought and really have nothing to do with the experience itself. In anywhere satori has remained thoroughly impersonal, or rather highly intellectual. Not only satori itself is such a prosaic and non-glorious event, but the occasion that inspires it also seems to be unromantic and altogether lacking in super-sensuality. Satori is experienced in connection with any ordinary occurrence in one's daily life. It does not appear to be an extraordinary phenomenon as is recorded in Christian books of mysticism. Sometimes takes hold of you, or slaps you, or brings you a cup of tea, or makes some most commonplace remark, or recites some passage from a sutra or from a book of poetry, and when your mind is ripe for its outburst, you come at once to satori. There is no voice of the Holy Ghost, no plenitude of Divine Grace, no glorification of any sort. Here is nothing painted in high colors, all is grey and extremely unobtrusive and unattractive.

*Fourth, to Reflect on Impermanence:* Reflection on impermanence is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we are able to reflect and see the real face of all the desires of the triple world burning house. Anitya is the state of not being permanent, of lasting or existing only for a short time, of changing continually. Physical changes operating from the state of formation, to that of development, decay and disintegration are exact manifestations of the law of transformation. All things in the universe, from the small grain of sand, the human body, to the big one such as the earth, moon and sun are governed by the aove law, and as such, must come through these four periods. This process of changes characterizes



impermanence. Anitya is one of the three fundamental of everything existing: Impermanence (Anitya), Suffering (Duhkha) and Non-ego (Anatman). According to Jisho Warner in Stone Creek Zendo, we usually think that things are changing around us, rushing by at a mad pace and making us feel unstable, so we try to slow them down. We try to establish a firm footing on what is really shifting ground, which only makes us more uneasy. We act as though we are solid unchanging things that changes happen to, but that is impossible. If we carry the idea through that things are changing, we see for ourselves that we are changing, that what is at the heart of things is changingness. What the Buddha said is that it is because we don't see that truth of the nature of things that we suffer. We feel at sea, and we're seasick because we think things should hold still. The Buddha's prescription could be said to be: learn to swim. Impermanence is a great river of phenomena, of beings, things, and events, coming to be and passing away in dependence on each other. This natural order of things includes us, and its laws are our laws. We are an endless moving stream in an endless moving stream. *Fifth, to Contemplate on Living Beings:* The term "Living beings" refer to all creatures that possess life-force. Each individual living being comes into being as the result of a variety of different causes and conditions. The smallest living beings as ants, mosquitoes, or even the most tiniest parasites are living beings. Every being is a combination of five elements: rupa, vedana, sanna, sankhara, and vinnana. Hence, one being is not essentially different from another, an ordinary man is not different from a perfect saint. But is the nature and proportion of each of the five constituents existing in an individual be taken into account, then one being is different from another, an ordinary man is different from a perfect saint. The combination of elements is the outcome of Karma and is happening every moment, implying that the disintegration of elements always precedes it. The elements in a combined state pass as an individual, and from time immemorial he works under misconception of a self and of things relating to a self. His vision being distorted or obscured by ignorance of the truth he can not perceive the momentary combination and disintegration of elements. On the other hand, he is subject to an inclination for them. A perfect man with his vision cleared by the Buddhist practices and culture realizes the real state of empirical things

that an individual consists of the five elements and does not possess a permanent and unchanging entity called soul. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Manjusri Bodhisattva obeyed the Buddha's command to call on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health. Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "How should a Bodhisattva look at living beings?" Vimalakirti replied: "A Bodhisattva should look at living beings like an illusionist does at the illusory men (he has created); and like a wise man looking at the moon's reflection in water; at his own face in a mirror; at the flame of a burning fire; at the echo of a calling voice; at flying clouds in the sky; at foam in a liquid; at bubbles on water; at the (empty) core of a banana tree; at a flash of lightning; at the (non-existent) fifth element (beside the four that make the human body); at the sixth aggregate (beside the five that make a sentient being); at the seventh sense datum (beside the six objects of sense); at the thirteenth entrance (ayatana-beside the twelve involving the six organs and six sense data); at the nineteenth realm of sense (beside the eighteen dhatus or fields of sense); at form in the formless world; at the (non-existent) sprout of a charred grain of rice; at a body seen by a srotapanna (who has wiped out the illusory body to enter the holy stream); at the entry of an anagamin (or a non-returning sravaka) into the womb of a woman (for rebirth); at an arhat still preserving the three poisons (of desire, anger and stupidity which he has eliminated for ever); at a Bodhisattva realizing the patient endurance of the uncreated who is still greedy, resentful and breaking the prohibitions; at a Buddha still suffering from klesa (troubles); at a blind man seeing things; at an adept who still breathes air in and out while in the state of nirvanic imperturbability; at the tracks of birds flying in the air; at the progeny of a barren woman; at the suffering of an illusory man; at a sleeping man seeing he is awake in a dream; at a devout man realizing nirvana who takes a bodily form for (another) reincarnation; and at a smokeless fire. This is how a Bodhisattva should look at living beings."

***Zen Practitioners and Meditation on Emptiness:*** Zen practitioner should always practice meditation on the emptiness of all things. Contemplation the nature of emptiness in the assembly of the five aggregates: bodily form, feeling, perception, mind functionings, and consciousnesses. Pass from considering one aggregate to another. See that all transform, are impermanent and without self. The assembly of

the five aggregates is like the assembly of all phenomena: all obey the law of interdependence. Their coming together and disbanding from one another resembles the gathering and vanishing of clouds around the peaks of mountains. We should practice the contemplation on Emptiness so that we will have the ability to neither cling to nor reject the five aggregates. To contemplate on emptiness to know that like and dislike are only phenomena which belong to the assemblage of the five aggregates. To contemplate on emptiness so that we are able to see clearly that the five aggregates are without self and are empty, but that they are also wondrous, wondrous as is each phenomenon in the universe, wondrous as the life which is present everywhere. To contemplate on emptiness so that we are able to see that the five aggregates do not really undergo creation and destruction for they themselves are ultimate reality. By this contemplation we can see that impermanence is a concept, non-self is a concept, and emptiness is also a concept, so that we will not become imprisoned in the concepts of impermanence, non-self, and emptiness. We will see that emptiness is also empty, and that the ultimate reality of emptiness is no different from the ultimate reality of the five aggregates. *First, Let Go Habitual Ways of Thinking:* The goal of meditation is to realize that everything is 'empty'. But this realization must be experiential, not merely intellectual. It is not enough to assert that everything is empty; one must see into the fact of emptiness in all one's daily activities. In meditation on true emptiness, practitioners let go habitual ways of thinking about being and non-being by realizing that these concepts were formed by incorrectly perceiving things as independent and permanent. Eventually, Zen realization brings us from the void back into the world of actuality. Even though we realize that everything is empty, still things are what they are. In this state, the mind clings neither to nothingness nor to actuality. It is the truth which lies beyond, and yet within, the realm of relativity, the unutterable, inexpressible truth transcendent over all dichotomies posited by the conditioned mind. This is the profound 'Middle Way', for this not a philosophical concept, but a practical one as well. In terms of practices the Middle Way teaches us to avoid all extremes of thought and action, to hold fast to the golden mean between excess and deficiency. *Second, See the Entire Universe in Interwoven and Interdependent Relations in All*

*Things:* When we look at a chair, we see the wood, but we fail to observe the tree, the forest, the carpenter, or our own mind. When we meditate on it, we can see the entire universe in all its inter-woven and interdependent relations in the chair. The presence of the wood reveals the presence of the tree. The presence of the leaf reveals the presence of the sun. Meditator can see the one in the many, and the many in the one. Even before they see the chair, they can see its presence in the heart of living reality. The chair is not separate. It exists only in its interdependent relations with everything else in the universe. It is because all other things are. If it is not, then all other things are not either. Every time we use the word “chair” or the concept “chair” forms in our mind, reality severed in half. There is “chair” and there is everything which is “not chair.” This kind of separation is both violent and absurd. The sword of conceptualization functions this way because we do not realize that the chair is made entirely from non-chair elements. Since all non-chair elements are present in the chair, how can we separate them? An awakened individual vividly sees the non-chair elements when looking at the chair, and realizes that the chair has no boundaries, no beginning, and no end. *Third, to Deny Existence of Anything Is to Deny the Presence of the Whole Universe:* For example, from what moment in time can we say that a particular bicycle has come into existence and from what moment is it no longer existent? If we say that it begins to exist the moment the last part is assembled, does that mean we cannot say, “This bicycle needs just one more part,” the prior moment? And when it is broken and cannot be ridden, why do we call it “a broken bicycle?” If we meditate on the moment the bicycle is and the moment it is no longer, we will notice that the bicycle cannot be placed in the categories “being and non-being” or “beginning and end.” To deny the existence of a chair is to deny the presence of the whole universe. A chair which exists cannot become non-existent, even if we chop it up into small pieces or burn it. If we could succeed in destroying one chair, we could destroy the entire universe. The concept of “beginning and end” is closely linked with the concept of “being and non-being.” When we look at a chair, we see the wood, but we fail to observe the tree, the forest, the carpenter, or our own mind. When we meditate on it, we can see the entire universe in all its inter-woven and interdependent relations in the chair. The

presence of the wood reveals the presence of the tree. The presence of the leaf reveals the presence of the sun. Meditator can see the one in the many, and the many in the one. Even before they see the chair, they can see its presence in the heart of living reality. The chair is not separate. It exists only in its interdependent relations with everything else in the universe. It is because all other things are. If it is not, then all other things are not either. Every time we use the word "chair" or the concept "chair" forms in our mind, reality severed in half. There is "chair" and there is everything which is "not chair." This kind of separation is both violent and absurd. The sword of conceptualization functions this way because we do not realize that the chair is made entirely from non-chair elements. Since all non-chair elements are present in the chair, how can we separate them? An awakened individual vividly sees the non-chair elements when looking at the chair, and realizes that the chair has no boundaries, no beginning, and no end. Furthermore, Zen practitioners should always contemplate to see the entire universe in interwoven and interdependent relations in all things.



***Part Two***  
***Summaries of the Vimalakirti Sutra &***  
***Methods of Cultivation***  
***In This Sutra***





## *Chapter Ten*

### *Lay Man Vimalakirti*

Vimalakirti, also called Pure Name, a native of Vaisali, capital city of Licchavi (name of the tribe and republican state in northern India) and a disciple of sakyamuni, said to have been a contemporary of Sakyamuni, and to have visited China. A layman of Buddha's time who was excellent in Buddhist philosophy. Many questions and answers between Vimalakirti and the Buddha are recorded in the Vimalakirti-nirdesa. At the time of the Buddha, in the great town of Vaisali there was an elder called Vimalakirti who had made offerings to countless Buddhas and had deeply planted all good roots, thereby achieving the patient endurance of the uncreate. His Unhindered power of speech enabled him to roam everywhere using his supernatural powers to teach others. He had achieved absolute control over good and evil influences (dharani) thereby realizing fearlessness. So he overcame all passions and demons, entered all profound Dharma-doors to enlightenment, excelled in Wisdom perfection (prajna-paramita) and was well versed in all expedient methods (upaya) of teaching, thereby fulfilling all great Bodhisatva vows. He knew very well the mental propensities of living beings and could distinguish their various (spiritual) roots. For along time he had trodden the Buddha-path and his mind was spotless. Since he understood Mahayana, all his actions were based on right thinking. While dwelling in the Buddha's awe-inspiring majesty, his mind was extensive like the great ocean. He was praised by all Buddhas and revered by Indra, Brahma, and worldly kings.

As he was set on saving men, he expediently stayed at Vaisali for this purpose. He used his unlimited wealth to aid the poor; he kept all the rules of morality and discipline to correct those breaking the precepts; he used his great patience to teach those giving rise to anger and hate; he taught zeal and devotion to those who were remiss; he used serenity to check stirring thoughts; and employed decisive wisdom to defeat ignorance. Although wearing white clothes (of the laity) he observed all the rules of the Sangha. Although a layman, he was free

from all attachments to the three worlds (of desire, form and beyond form). Although he was married and had children, he was diligent in his practice of pure living. Although a householder, he delighted in keeping from domestic establishments. Although he ate and drank (like others), he delighted in tasting the flavour of meditation. When entering a gambling house he always tried to teach and deliver people there. He received heretics but never strayed from the right faith. Though he knew worldly classics, he always took joy in the Buddha Dharma. He was revered by all who met him. He upheld the right Dharma and taught it to old and young people. Although occasionally he realized some profit in his worldly activities, he was not happy about these earnings. While walking in the street he never failed to convert others (to the Dharma). When he entered a government office, he always protected others (from injustice). When joining a symposium he led others to the Mahayana. When visiting a school he enlightened the students. When entering a house of prostitution he revealed the sin of sexual intercourse. When going to a tavern, he stuck to his determination (to abstain from drinking). When amongst elders he was the most revered for he taught them the exalted Dharma. When amongst upasakas he was the most respected for he taught them how to wipe out all desires and attachments. When amongst those of the ruling class, he was the most revered for he taught them forbearance. When amongst Brahmins, he was the most revered for he taught them how to conquer pride and prejudice. When amongst government officials he was the most revered for he taught them correct law. When amongst princes, he was the most revered for he taught them loyalty and filial piety. When in the inner palaces, he was the most revered for he converted all maids of honour there. When amongst common people, he was the most revered for he urged them to cultivate all meritorious virtues. When amongst Brahma-devas, he was the most revered for he urged the gods to realize the Buddha wisdom. When amongst Sakras and Indras, he was the most revered for he revealed to them the impermanence (of all things). When amongst lokapalas, he was the most revered for he protected all living beings. Thus Vimalakirti used countless expedient methods (upaya) to teach for the benefit of living beings.

## *Chapter Twelve*

### *A Summary of the Zen Methods In the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. An Overview of the Vimalakirtinirdesa-Sutra:*

Vimalakirti Sutra, also called Vimalakirti-nirdesa. These are discourses of Vimalakirti, important work of Mahayana Buddhism, composed about the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Vimalakirti, a rich adherent of the Buddha, who lived in the midst of worldly life yet treads the path of the Bodhisattva. The popularity of this sutra is due to its stress on the equal value of the lay life and the monastic life. The Vimalakirti Sutra is a philosophic dramatic discourse written in India about the first century A.D. which contains conversations between famous Buddhist figures and the humble householder Vimalakirti. Some said this sutra is an apocryphal account of conversations between Sakyamuni and some residents of Vaisali. It was first translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva, and later by Hsuan-Tsang. This is one of the most popular Mahayana sutras, particularly in East Asia. Its core is a dharma discourse between the lay Bodhisattva Vimalakirti and Manjusri, which focuses on the “perfection of wisdom.” The sutra begins when the Buddha perceives that Vimalakirti is pretending to be sick, and so he asks a number of his disciples to go and inquire after his health. However, one by one the confession that they are intimidated by Vimalakirti’s great wisdom. Finally Manjusri agrees to pay a visit, and all of other disciples follow along in participation in a dharma dialogue between the two great Bodhisattvas. The climax of the sutra comes when thirty-one Bodhisattvas give their respective answers to the question of how a Bodhisattva enters “the dharma-door of non-duality.” Each successive answer is more sophisticated than the one preceeding it, but each exhibits some lingering attachment to duality. Finally Manjusri enunciates what appears to be the last word, but when he turns to Vimalakirti for his response, he answers by saying nothing. The sutra is particularly popular because its central character is a layman with a family who manages to surpass all of the other characters in his grasp of the perfection of wisdom. The Vimalakirti Sutra, a key Mahayana

Sutra particularly with Zen and with some Pure Land followers. The main protagonist is a layman named Vimalakirti who is equal of many Bodhisattvas in wisdom and eloquence. He explained the teaching of “Emptiness” in terms of non-duality. When asked by Manjusri to define the non-dual truth, Vimalakirti simply remained silent. The sutra emphasized on real practice “The true nature of things is beyond the limiting concepts imposed by words.” The sutra was translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva.

## ***II. The Purposes of Meditation Practices in the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

The primary aim of meditation is to stop the flow of thoughts and to clear the mind. To sit in dhyana (abstract meditation, fixed abstraction, contemplation). Its introduction to China is attributed to Bodhidharma, though it came earlier, and its extension to T'ien-T'ai. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Vimalakirti reminded Sariputra about meditation, saying: “Sariputra, meditation is not necessarily sitting. For meditation means the non-appearance of body and mind in the three worlds (of desire, form and no form); giving no thought to inactivity when in nirvana while appearing (in the world) with respect-inspiring deportment; not straying from the Truth while attending to worldly affairs; the mind abiding neither within nor without; being imperturbable to wrong views during the practice of the thirty-seven contributory stages leading to enlightenment; and not wiping out troubles (klesa) while entering the state of nirvana. If you can thus sit in meditation, you will win the Buddha's seal.” To practice meditation daily will help purify both the body and the mind at this very moment of life as the Buddha taught: “Pure Minds-Pure Lands.” To practice meditation daily will help tame the deluded mind at this very moment of life. According to the Buddhist Zen, to tame the deluded mind we must not have any thing in it (take the mind of non-existence or the empty mind). According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, the Buddha reminded Ratna-rasi Bodhisattva: “Ratna-rasi! Because of his straightforward mind, a Bodhisattva can act straightforwardly; because of his straightforward deeds he realizes the profound mind; because of his profound mind his thoughts are kept under control; because of his controlled thoughts his acts accord with the Dharma (he has heard);

because of his deeds in accord with the Dharma he can dedicate his merits to the benefit of others; because of this dedication he can make use of expedient methods (upaya); because of his expedient methods he can bring living beings to perfection; because he can bring them to perfection his Buddha land is pure; because of his pure Buddha land his preaching of the Dharma is pure; because of his pure preaching his wisdom is pure; because of his pure wisdom his mind is pure, and because of his pure mind all his merits are pure. Therefore, Ratna-rasi, if a Bodhisattva wants to win the pure land he should purify his mind, and because of his pure mind the Buddha land is pure.”



## *Chapter Twelve*

### *Excellent Cultivative Deeds in the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. An Overview of Cultivation In Buddhist Point of View:*

To lead a religious life. Cultivation in Buddhism is to put the Buddha's teachings into practice on a continued and regular basis. Cultivation in Buddhism also means to nourish the seeds of Bodhi by practicing and developing precepts, dhyana, and wisdom. Thus, cultivation in Buddhism is not only practicing Buddha recitation or sitting meditation, it also includes cultivation of six paramitas, ten paramitas, thirty-seven aids to Enlightenment, etc. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that time is extremely precious. An inch of time is an inch of life, so do not let the time pass in vain. Someone is thinking, "I will not cultivate today. I will put it off until tomorrow." But when tomorrow comes, he will put it off to the next day. He keeps putting it off until his hair turns white, his teeth fall out, his eyes become blurry, and his ears go deaf. At that point in time, he wants to cultivate, but his body no longer obeys him. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that living in this world, we all are like fish in a pond that is evaporating. We do not have much time left. Thus ancient virtues taught: "One day has passed, our lives are that much less. We are like fish in a shrinking pond. What joy is there in this? We should be diligently and vigorously cultivating as if our own heads were at stake. Only be mindful of impermanence, and be careful not to be lax." From beginningless eons in the past until now, we have not had good opportunity to know Buddhism, so we have not known how to cultivate. Therefore, we undergo birth and death, and after death, birth again. Oh, how pitiful! Today we have good opportunity to know Buddhism, why do we still want to put off cultivating? Sincere Buddhists! Time does not wait anybody. In the twinkling of an eye, we will be old and our life will be over!

There are as many as eighty-four thousand Dharma-doors for cultivating the Path. For the sake of understanding, we should be familiar with each one of these Dharma-doors. You should not limit

yourself in just a single method of cultivation. However, for the sake of practicing, we should focus on the dharma-door that is the most appropriate for us. “Tu” means correct our characters and obey the Buddha’s teachings. “Tu” means to study the law by reciting sutras in the morning and evening, being on strict vegetarian diet and studying all the scriptures of the Buddha, keep all the precepts; however, the most important factors in real “Tu” are to correct your character, to eliminate bad habits, to be joyful and compassionate, to build virtue. In reciting sutras, one must thoroughly understand the meaning. Furthermore, one should also practise meditation on a daily basis to get insight. For laypeople, “Tu” means to mend your ways, from evil to wholesome (ceasing transgressions and performing good deeds). According to the first patriarch Bodhidharma, “Requite hatred” is one of the four disciplinary processes. What is meant by ‘How to requite hatred?’ Those who discipline themselves in the Path should think thus when they have to struggle with adverse conditions: “During the innumerable past eons I have wandered through multiplicity of existences, never thought of cultivation, and thus creating infinite occasions for hate, ill-will, and wrong-doing. Even though in this life I have committed no violations, the fruits of evil deeds in the past are to be gathered now. Neither gods nor men can fortell what is coming upon me. I will submit myself willingly and patiently to all the ills that befall me, and I will never bemoan or complain. In the sutra it is said not to worry over ills that may happen to you, because I thoroughly understand the law of cause and effect. This is called the conduct of making the best use of hatred and turned it into the service in one’s advance towards the Path.

Some people believe that they should wait until after their retirement to cultivate because after retirement they will have more free time. Those people may not understand the real meaning of the word “cultivation”, that is the reason why they want to wait until after retirement to cultivate. According to Buddhism, cultivation means to turn bad things into good things, or to improve your body and mind. So, when can we turn bad things into good things, or when can we improve our body and mind? Ancient virtues taught: “Do not wait until your are thirsty to dig a well, or don’t wait until the horse is on the edge of the cliff to draw in the reins for it’s too late; or don’t wait until the boat is



in the middle of the river to patch the leaks for it's too late, and so on". Most of us have the same problem of waiting and delaying of doing things. If we wait until the water reaches our navel to jump, it's too late, no way we can escape the drown if we don't know how to swim. In the same way, at ordinary times, we don't care about proper or improper acts, but wait until after retirement or near death to start caring about our actions, we may never have that chance. Sincere Buddhists, especially lay people, should always remember that impermanence and death never wait for anybody. So, take advantage of whatever time we have at the present time to cultivate, to plant good roots and to accumulate merits and virtues. In cultivation, practitioners should cultivate both body and mind. Body cultivates but mind does not meaning, there are people who have the appearance of true cultivators by becoming a monk or nun, but their minds are not determined to find enlightenment but instead they yearn for fame, notoriety, wealth, etc just like everyone in the secular life. Thus, cultivating in this way is entirely contradictory to the Buddha's teachings and one is better off remaining in the secular life and be a genuine lay Buddhist. Truly speaking, if you want to reap the "Buddhahood," you must sow the Buddha-seed. A mirror reflects beauty and ugliness as they are, the Buddha's Teachings prevail forever, knowing that requital spans three generations, obviously good deeds cause good results, evil deeds causes evil results. The wise know that it is the object before the mirror that should be changed, while the dull and ignorant waste time and effort hating and resenting the image in the mirror. Encountering good or adverse circumstances, devoted Buddhists should always be peaceful, not resent the heaven nor hate the earth.

## ***II. Vimalakirti's Excellent Cultivative Deeds:***

Vimalakirti's ten excellent deeds for Zen practitioners. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Ten, Vimalakirti said: "As you have said, the Bodhisattvas of the Fragrant world have strong compassion and their lifelong works of salvation for all living beings surpass those done in other pure lands during hundreds and thousands of aeons. Why? Because they achieved ten excellent deeds which are not required in other pure lands. What are these ten excellent deeds? They are: 1) charity (dana) to succour the poor; 2) precept-keeping

(sila) to help those who have broken the commandments; 3) patient endurance (ksanti) to subdue their anger; 4) zeal and devotion (virya) to cure their remissness; 5) serenity (dhyana) to stop their confused thoughts; 6) wisdom (prajna) to wipe out ignorance; 7) putting an end to the eight distressful conditions for those suffering from them; 8) teaching Mahayana to those who cling to Hinayana; 9) cultivation of good roots for those in want of merits; and 10) the four Bodhisattva winning devices for the purpose of leading all living beings to their goals (in Bodhisattva development). These are the ten excellent deeds.” The visiting Bodhisattvas asked: “How many Dharmas should a Bodhisattva achieve in this world to stop its morbid growth (defilements) in order to be reborn in the Buddha’s pure land?” Vimalakirti replied: “A Bodhisattva should bring to perfection eight Dharmas to stop morbid growth in this world in order to be reborn in the Pure Land. They are: 1) benevolence towards all living beings with no expectation of reward; 2) endurance of sufferings for all living beings dedicating all merits to them; 3) impartiality towards them with all humility free from pride and arrogance; 4) reverence to all Bodhisattvas with the same devotion as to all Buddhas (i.e. without discrimination between Bodhisattvas and Buddhas); 5) absence of doubt and suspicion when hearing (the expounding of) sutras which he has not heard before; 6) abstention from opposition to the sravaka Dharma, 7) abstention from discrimination in regard to donations and offerings received with no thought of self-profit in order to subdue his mind; and 8) self-examination without contending with others. Thus, he should achieve singleness of mind bent on achieving all merits; these are the eight Dharmas.” After Vimalakirti and Manjusri had thus expounded the Dharma, hundreds and thousands of devas developed the mind set on supreme enlightenment, and ten thousand Bodhisattvas realized the patient endurance of the uncreate.

## *Chapter Thirteen*

### *The Text of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

The Vimalakirti Sutra, a key Mahayana Sutra particularly with Zen and with some Pure Land followers. The main protagonist is a layman named Vimalakirti who is equal of many Bodhisattvas in wisdom and eloquence. He explained the teaching of “Emptiness” in terms of non-duality. When asked by Manjusri to define the non-dual truth, Vimalakirti simply remained silent. The sutra emphasized on real practice “The true nature of things is beyond the limiting concepts imposed by words.” The sutra was translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva. The primary aim of meditation is to stop the flow of thoughts and to clear the mind. To sit in dhyana (abstract meditation, fixed abstraction, contemplation). Its introduction to China is attributed to Bodhidharma, though it came earlier, and its extension to T’ien-T’ai. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Vimalakirti reminded Sariputra about meditation, saying: “Sariputra, meditation is not necessarily sitting. For meditation means the non-appearance of body and mind in the three worlds (of desire, form and no form); giving no thought to inactivity when in nirvana while appearing (in the world) with respect-inspiring deportment; not straying from the Truth while attending to worldly affairs; the mind abiding neither within nor without; being imperturbable to wrong views during the practice of the thirty-seven contributory stages leading to enlightenment: and not wiping out troubles (klesa) while entering the state of nirvana. If you can thus sit in meditation, you will win the Buddha’s seal.”

**Chapter One—The Buddha Land:** Thus have I heard, once upon a time the Buddha sojourned in the Amra park at Vaisali with an assembly of eight thousand great bhiksus. With them, here were thirty-two thousand Bodhisattvas, who were well known for having achieved all the perfections that lead to the great wisdom. They had received instructions from many Buddhas and formed a Dharma-protecting citadel. By upholding the right Dharma, they could fearlessly give the lion’s roar to teach sentient beings; so their names were heard in the ten directions. They were not invited but came to the assembly to

spread the teaching on the Three Treasures to transmit it in perpetuity. They had overcome all demons and defeated heresies; and their six faculties, karmas of deeds, words and thoughts were pure and clean; being free from the (five) hindrances and the (ten) bonds. They had realized serenity of mind and had achieved unimpeded liberation. They had achieved right concentration and mental stability, thereby, acquiring the uninterrupted power of speech. They had achieved all the (six) paramitas: charity (dana), discipline (sila), patience (ksanti), devotion (virya), serenity (dhyana) and wisdom (prajna), as well as the expedient method (upaya) of teaching which completely benefit self and others. However, to them, these realizations did not mean any gain whatsoever for themselves, so, that they were in line with the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti). They were able to turn the wheel of the Law that never turns back. Being able to interpret the (underlying nature of) phenomena, they knew very well the roots (propensities) of all living beings; they surpassed them all and realized fearlessness. They had cultivated their minds by means of merits and wisdom, with which they embellished their physical features which were unsurpassable, thus, giving up all earthly adornments. Their towering reputation exceeded the height of Mount Sumeru. Their profound faith (in the uncreate) was unbreakable like a diamond. Their treasures of the Dharma illuminated all lands and rained down nectar. Their speeches were profound and unsurpassed. They entered deep into all (worldly) causes but cut off all heretical views, for they were already free from all dualities and had rooted out all (previous) habits. They were fearless and gave the lion's roar to proclaim the Dharma, their voices being like thunder. They could not be gauged, for they were beyond all measures.

They had amassed all treasures of the Dharma and acted like (skillful) seafaring pilots. They were well versed in the profound meanings of all Dharmas. They knew very well the mental states of all living beings and their comings and goings (within the realms of existence). They had reached the state near the unsurpassed sovereign wisdom of all Buddhas, having acquired the ten fearless powers (dasabala) giving complete knowledge and the eighteen different characteristics (of a Buddha as compared with Bodhisattvas (avenikadharma). Although they were free from (rebirth in ) evil

existences, they appeared in five mortal realms as royal physicians to cure all ailments, prescribing the right medicine in each individual case, thereby, winning countless merits to embellish countless Buddha lands. Each living being derived great benefit from seeing and hearing them, for their deeds were not in vain. Thus, they had achieved all excellent merits.

Their names were: the Bodhisattva Beholding All Things As Equal, the Bodhisattva Beholding All Things As Unequal, the Bodhisattva Beholding All Things As Equal Yet As Unequal, the Bodhisattva of Sovereign Serenity, the Bodhisattva of Sovereign Dharma, the Bodhisattva of Dharma-aspects, the Bodhisattva of Light, the Bodhisattva of Glorious Light, the Bodhisattva of Great Majesty, the Bodhisattva Store of Treasures, the Bodhisattva Store of Rhetoric, the Bodhisattva of Precious Hands, the Bodhisattva of Precious Mudra, the Hand Raising Bodhisattva, the Hand Lowering Bodhisattva, the Always Grieved Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva Root of Joy, the Bodhisattva Prince of Joy, the Bodhisattva Discerner of Sound, the Bodhisattva Womb of Space, the Bodhisattva Holding the Precious Torch, the Bodhisattva of Precious Boldness, the Bodhisattva of Precious Insight, the Bodhisattva of Indra-jala, the Bodhisattva Net of Light, the Bodhisattva of Causeless Contemplation, the Bodhisattva of Accumulated Wisdom, the Bodhisattva Precious Conqueror, the Bodhisattva King of Heavens, the Bodhisattva Destroyer of Demons, the Bodhisattva with Lightning Merits, the Bodhisattva of Sovereign Comfort, the Bodhisattva of Majestic Merits, the Bodhisattva of the Lion's Roar, the Bodhisattva of Thundering Voice, the Bodhisattva with a Voice like Rocks Knocking One Another, the Bodhisattva Fragrant Elephant, the Bodhisattva White Fragrant Elephant, the Bodhisattva of Constant Devotion, the Bodhisattva of Unremitting Care, the Bodhisattva of Wonderful Rebirth, the Bodhisattva Garland, the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasthama, the Bodhisattva Brahma-jala, the Bodhisattva of Precious Staff, the Unconquerable Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of Majestic Land, the Bodhisattva with a Golden Topknot, the Bodhisattva with a Pearl in His Topknot, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Bodhisattva Manjusri and other Bodhisattvas numbering in all thirty-two thousand.

There were also ten thousand Brahma-devas including Mahadeva Sikkhin, coming from the four quarters to hear about the Dharma. There were as well twelve thousand kings of heavens who came from the four quarters to sit in the assembly. There were also other devas of awe-inspiring majesty, dragons, spirits, yaksas, gandharas, asuras, garudas, kin-naras and mahoragas who came to sit in the assembly. Many bhiksus, bhiksunis, upasakas and upasikas also came to the assembly.

Thus, surrounded by an incalculable number of people circumambulating to pay their respects, the Buddha was about to expound the Dharma. Like the towering Mount Sumeru emerging from the great ocean. He sat comfortably on the lion throne eclipsing the imposing assembly.

A son of an elder (grhapati), called Ratna-rasi, came with five hundred sons of elders, with canopies decorated with the seven gems to pay respect and offer them to Him. By using His transcendental powers, the Buddha transformed all the canopies into a single one which contained the great chiliocosm.

With Mount Sumeru and all the concentric ranges around it, great seas, rivers, streams, the sun, the moon, planets and stars, and the palaces of devas, dragons, and holy spirits appeared in the precious canopy, which also covered all the Buddhas who were expounding the Dharma in the ten directions.

All those present, who witnessed the Buddha's supernatural powers, praised the rare occurrence which they had never seen before, brought their palms together and gazed at Him without pausing for an instant. Thereupon, Ratna-rasi chanted the following gatha of praise:

"I salute Him whose eyes are broad like the green Lotus, whose mind is unchanging and serene, who has accumulated countless pure deeds that lead all beings to the extinction of mortality.

I have seen the great saint use His transcendental powers to create in the ten directions countless lands in which Buddhas still proclaim the Dharma; all this has the assembly seen and heard.

The power of your Dharma surpasses all beings and bestows on them the wealth of the Law. With great skill your discernment all while unmoved in Reality.

You are from all phenomena released; hence, to the King of Dharma, I bow down. You preached neither *is* nor *is not* for all things by causes are created. There is neither self nor doing nor thing done, but good or evil karma is infallible.

Under the Bodhi tree You conquered Mara, obtained Ambrosia, realized Nirvana and won Bodhi. From mind, thought and feeling are You free, thereby, overcoming heresies, turning thrice in the chiliocosm the wheel of the Law that is pure and clean at heart.

To this gods and men who were saved attested, thus, the Three Treasures appeared in the saha world to save living beings with this profound Dharma which, when applied, fails never to Nirvana lead. You are the king physician who destroys old age, illness and death. So your unfathomable Dharma of boundless merits, I salute.

While like Mount Sumeru you are unmoved by both praise and censure. Your compassion is extended to both good and evil men, like space thy mind remains impartial. Does not anyone revere this human Buddha after hearing about Him?

I have offered Him a small canopy, which encloses the great chiliocosm with palaces of gods, dragons and spirits, Gandharas, yaksas and others such as well.

As all kings in this world. With mercy He used His 'ten powers' to make this change. The witnesses praise the Buddha. I bow to the most Honoured One in the three realms. The whole assembly (now) take refuge in the King of The Law. Those gazing at Him are filled with joy, each seeing the Bhagavat before him; 'tis one of His eighteen characteristics.

When he proclaims the Dharma with unchanging voice, all beings understand according to their natures saying the Bhagavat speaks their own languages; this one of His eighteen characteristics.

When He expounds the Dharma in one voice, they understand according to their versions deriving great benefit from what they have gathered; this is one more of His eighteen characteristics.

When He expounds the Dharma in one voice, some are filled with fear, others are joyful, some hate it while others are from doubts relieved; 'this is one of His eighteen characteristics.

I bow to the Possessor of ‘ten powers’, I bow to Him who has achieved fearlessness acquiring all eighteen characteristics; I bow to Him who guides others like a pilot.

I bow to Him who has untied all bonds; I bow to Him who has reached the other shore; I bow to Him who can all worlds deliver; I bow to Him who from birth and death is free.

Who knows how living beings come and go and penetrates all things to win His freedom, who is skillful in nirvanic deeds, cannot be soiled like the lotus.

Who plumbs the depths of everything without hindrance.

I bow to Him, who like space, relies on nothing.

After chanting the gatha, Ratna-rasi said to the Buddha: “World Honoured One, these five hundred sons of elders have set their minds on seeking supreme enlightenments (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi); they all wish to know how to win the pure and clean land of the Buddha. Will the World Honoured One teach us the Bodhisattva deeds that leads to the realization of the Pure Land?”

The Buddha said: “Excellent, Ratna-rasi, it is good that you can ask on behalf of these Bodhisattvas about deeds that lead to the realization of the Buddha’s Pure Land. Listen carefully and ponder over all what I now tell you.”

At that time, Ratna-rasi and the five hundred sons of elders listened attentively to His instruction.

The Buddha said: “Ratna-rasi, all species of living beings are the Buddha land sought by all Bodhisattvas. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva wins the Buddha land, according to the living beings converted by him (to the Dharma); according to the living beings tamed by him; according to the country (where they will be reborn to) realize the Buddha-wisdom and in which they will grow the Bodhisattva root. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva wins the pure land solely for the benefit of all living beings. For instance, a man can build palaces and houses on vacant ground without difficulty, but he will fail if he attempts to build them in (empty) space. So, a Bodhisattva, in order to bring living beings to perfection seeks the Buddha land which cannot be sought in (empty) space.

“Ratna-rasi, you should know that: a) The straightforward mind is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he realizes Buddhahood, beings



who do not flatter will be reborn in his land. b) The profound mind is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he realizes Buddhahood, living beings who have accumulated all merits will be reborn there. c) The Mahayana (Bodhi) mind is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood all living beings seeking Mahayana will be reborn there. d) Charity (dana) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who can give away (to charity) will be reborn there. e) Discipline (sila) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he realizes Buddhahood, living beings who have kept the ten prohibitions will be reborn there. f) Patience (ksanti) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings endowed with the thirty-two excellent physical marks will be reborn there. g) Devotion (virya) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who are diligent in their performance of meritorious deeds will be reborn there. h) Serenity (dhyana) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings whose minds are disciplined and unstirred will be reborn there. i) Wisdom (prajna) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have realized samadhi will be reborn there. j) The four boundless minds (catvari apramanani) are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have practiced and perfected the four infinities: kindness, compassion, joy and indifference, will be reborn there. k) The four persuasive actions (catuh-samgraha-vastu) are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have benefited from his helpful persuasion will be reborn there. l) The expedient methods (upaya) of teaching the absolute truth are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings conversant with upaya will be reborn there. m) The thirty-seven contributory states to enlightenment (bodhipaksika-dharma) are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have successfully practised the four states of mindfulness (smṛtyu-paṣṭhana), the four proper lines of exertion (samyakpra-hana), the four steps towards supramundane powers (rddhipada), the five spiritual faculties (panca indriyani), the five transcendental powers (panca balani), the seven degrees of enlightenment (sapta bodhyanga) and the eightfold noble path (asta-marga) will be reborn in his land. n)

Dedication (of one's merits to the salvation of others) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, his land will be adorned with all kinds of meritorious virtues. o) Preaching the ending of the eight sad conditions is the Buddhahood his land will be free from these evil states. p) To keep the precepts while refraining from criticizing those who do not is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, his country will be free from people who break the commandments. q) The ten good deeds are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, he will not die young, he will be wealthy, he will live purely, his words are true, his speech is gentle, his encourage will not desert him because of his gift of conciliation, his talk is profitable to others and living beings free from envy and anger and holding right views will be reborn in his land.

So, Ratna-rasi, because of his straightforward mind, a Bodhisattva can act straightforwardly; because of his straightforward deeds, he realizes the profound mind; because of his profound mind his thoughts are kept under control; because of his controlled thoughts, his acts accord with the Dharma (he has heard); because of his deeds in accord with the Dharma, he can dedicate his merits to the benefit of others; because of this dedication, he can make use of expedient methods (upaya); because of his expedient methods, he can bring living beings to perfection; because he can bring them to perfection, his Buddha land is pure; because of his pure Buddha land, his preaching of the Dharma is pure; because of his pure preaching, his wisdom is pure; because of his pure wisdom, his mind is pure, and because of his pure mind, all his merits are pure. Therefore, Ratna-rasi, if a Bodhisattva wants to win the pure land, he should purify his mind and because of his pure mind, the Buddha land is pure."

As Sariputra was fascinated by the Buddha's awe-inspiring majesty, he thought: "If the Buddha land is pure, because of the Bodhisattva's pure mind, is it because the mind of the World Honoured One was not pure when He was still in the Bodhisattva stage, that this Buddha land (i.e. this world) is so unclean (as we see it now)?"

The Buddha knew of his thought and said to Sariputra: "Are the sun and the moon not clean when a blind man does not see their cleanliness?"

Sariputra said: “World Honoured One, this is the fault of the blind man and not that of the sun and the moon.”

The Buddha said: “Sariputra, because of their (spiritual) blindness, living beings do not see the imposing majesty of the Tathagata’s pure land; this is not the fault of the Tathagata. Sariputra, this land of mine is pure but you do not see its purity.”

Thereupon, Brahma with a tuft of hair on his head (resembling a conch) said to Sariputra: “Don’t think this Buddha land is impure. Why? Because I see that the land of Sakyamuni Buddha is pure and clean, like a heavenly palace.”

Sariputra said: “I see that this world is full of hills, mountains, pits, thorns, stones and earth, which are all unclean.”

Brahma said: “Because your mind is up and down and disagrees with the Buddha-wisdom, you see that this land is unclean. Sariputra, because a Bodhisattva is impartial towards all living beings and his profound mind is pure and clean in accord with the Buddha Dharma, he can see that this Buddha land is (also) pure and clean.”

At that time, the Buddha pressed the toes of His (right ) foot on the ground and the world was suddenly adorned with hundreds and thousands of rare and precious gems of the great chiliocosm, like the precious Majestic Buddha’s pure land adorned with countless precious merits, which the assembly praised as never seen before; in addition each person present found himself seated on a precious lotus throne.

The Buddha said to Sariputra: “Look at the majestic purity of this Buddha land of mine.”

Sariputra said: “World Honoured One, I have never seen and heard of this Buddha land in its majestic purity.”

The Buddha said: “This Buddha land of mine is always pure, but appears filthy so that I can lead people of inferior spirituality to their salvation. This is like the food of devas which takes various colours according to the merits of each individual eater. So, Sariputra, the man whose mind is pure sees this world in its majestic purity.”

When this Buddha land (i.e. the world) appeared in its majestic purity, the five hundred sons of elders, who came with Ratna-rasi, realized the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti), and eighty-four thousand people developed their minds set on Supreme Enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi).

The Buddha then stopped pressing His toes on the ground and the world returned to its previous (filthy) condition. Thirty-two thousand devas and men aspiring to the sravaka stage understood the impermanence of all phenomena, kept from earthly impurities and achieved the Dharma-eye (which sees the truth of the four noble truths); eight thousand bhiksus kept from phenomena and succeeded in putting an end to the stream of transmigration (thus realizing arhatship).

**Chapter Two—The Expedient Method of Teaching:** In the great town of Vaisai, there was an elder called Vimalakirti, who had made offerings to countless Buddhas and had deeply planted all good roots, thereby, achieving the patient endurance of the uncreate. His unhindered power of speech enabled him to roam everywhere using his supernatural powers to teach others. He had achieved absolute control over good and evil influences (dharani) thereby, realizing fearlessness. So he overcame all passions and demons, entered all profound Dharma-doors to enlightenment, excelled in Wisdom perfection (prajna-paramita) and was well versed in all expedient methods (upaya) of teaching, thereby, fulfilling all great Bodhisatva vows. He knew very well the mental propensities of living beings and could distinguish their various (spiritual) roots. For along time, he had trodden the Buddha-path and his mind was spotless. Since he understood Mahayana, all his actions were based on right thinking. While dwelling in the Buddha's awe-inspiring majesty, his mind was extensive like the great ocean. He was praised by all Buddhas and revered by Indra, Brahma and worldly kings.

As he was set on saving men, he expediently stayed at Vaisali for this purpose. He used his unlimited wealth to aid the poor; he kept all the rules of morality and discipline to correct those breaking the precepts; he used his great patience to teach those giving rise to anger and hate; he taught zeal and devotion to those who were remiss; he used serenity to check stirring thoughts; and employed decisive wisdom to defeat ignorance. Although wearing white clothes (of the laity) he observed all the rules of the Sangha. Although a layman, he was free from all attachments to the three worlds (of desire, form and beyond form). Although he was married and had children, he was diligent in his practice of pure living. Although a householder, he delighted in keeping from domestic establishments. Although he ate and drank

(like others), he delighted in tasting the flavour of moderation. When entering a gambling house, he always tried to teach and deliver people there. He received heretics but never strayed from the right faith. Though he knew worldly classics, he always took joy in the Buddha Dharma. He was revered by all who met him. He upheld the right Dharma and taught it to old and young people. Although occasionally he realized some profit in his worldly activities, he was not happy about these earnings. While walking in the street, he never failed to convert others (to the Dharma). When he entered a government office, he always protected others (from injustice). When joining a symposium, he led others to the Mahayana. When visiting a school he enlightened the students. When entering a house of prostitution, he revealed the sin of sexual intercourse. When going to a tavern, he stuck to his determination (to abstain from drinking). When amongst elders he was the most revered for he taught them the exalted Dharma. When amongst upasakas, he was the most respected for he taught them how to wipe out all desires and attachments. When amongst those of the ruling class, he was the most revered, for he taught them forbearance. When amongst Brahmins, he was the most revered, for he taught them how to conquer pride and prejudice. When amongst government officials he was the most revered, for he taught them correct law. When amongst princes, he was the most revered, for he taught them loyalty and filial piety. When in the inner palaces, he was the most revered, for he converted all maids of honour there. When amongst common people, he was the most revered, for he urged them to cultivate all meritorious virtues. When amongst Brahma-devas, he was the most revered, for he urged the gods to realize the Buddha wisdom. When amongst Sakras and Indras, he was the most revered, for he revealed to them the impermanence (of all things). When amongst lokapalas, he was the most revered, for he protected all living beings. Thus, Vimalakirti used countless expedient methods (upaya) to teach for the benefit of living beings.

Now using upaya he appeared ill and because of his indisposition kings, ministers, elders, upasakas, Brahmins, etc., as well as princes and other officials reaching many thousands came to enquire after his health. So Vimalakirti appeared in his sick body to receive and expound the Dharma to them, saying: “Virtuous ones, the human body

is impermanent; it is neither strong nor durable; it will decay and is, therefore, unreliable. It causes anxieties and sufferings, being subject to all kinds of ailments. Virtuous ones, all wise men do not rely on this body which is like a mass of foam, which is intangible. It is like a bubble and does not last for a long time. It is like a flame and is the product of the thirst of love. It is like a banana tree, the centre of which is hollow. It is like an illusion being produced by inverted thoughts. It is like a dream being formed by false views. It is like a shadow and is caused by karma. This body is like an echo for it results from causes and conditions. It is like a floating cloud, which disperses any moment. It is like lightning for it does not stay for the time of a thought. It is without owner for it is like the earth. It is egoless for it is like fire (that kills itself). It is transient like the wind. It is not human for it is like water. It is unreal and depends on the four elements for its existence. It is empty, being neither ego nor its object. It is without knowledge like grass, trees and potsherds. It is not the prime mover, but is moved by the wind (of passions). It is impure and full of filth. It is false, and though washed, bathed, clothed and fed, it will decay and die in the end. It is a calamity being subject to all kinds of illnesses and sufferings. It is like a dry well, for it is pursued by death. It is unsettled and will pass away. It is like a poisonous snake, a deadly enemy, a temporary assemblage (without underlying reality), being made of the five aggregates, the twelve entrances (the six organs and their objects) and the eighteen realms of sense (the six organs, their objects and their perceptions).

“Virtuous ones, the (human) body being so repulsive, you should seek the Buddha body. Why? Because the Buddha body is called Dharmakaya, the product of boundless merits and wisdom; the outcome of discipline, meditation, wisdom, liberation and perfect knowledge of liberation; the result of kindness, compassion, joy and indifference (to emotions); the consequence of (the six perfections or paramitas) charity, discipline, patience, zeal, meditation and wisdom and the sequel of expedient teaching (upaya); the six supernatural powers; the three insights; the thirty-seven stages contributory to enlightenment; serenity and insight; the ten transcendental powers (dasabala); the four kinds of fearlessness; the eighteen unsurpassed characteristics of the Buddha; the wiping out of all evils and the

performance of all good deeds; truthfulness, and freedom from looseness and unrestraint. So countless kinds of purity and cleanness produce the body of the Tathagata.

Virtuous Ones, if you want to realize the Buddha body in order to get rid of all the illnesses of a living being, you should set your minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi)."

Thus, the elder Vimalakirti expounded the Dharma to all those who came to enquire after his health, urging countless visitors to seek supreme enlightenment.

**Chapter Three—The Disciples:** 1) *Sariputra:* Vimalakirti wondered why the great compassionate Buddha did not take pity on him as he was confined to bed suffering from an indisposition. The Buddha knew of his thought and said to Sariputra: "Go to Vimalakirti to enquire after his health on my behalf." Sariputra said: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and enquire after his health. The reason is that once, as I was sitting in meditation under a tree in a grove, Vimalakirti came and said: 'Sariputra, meditation is not necessarily sitting. For meditation means the non-appearance of body and mind in the three worlds (of desire, form and no form); giving no thought to inactivity when in nirvana while appearing (in the world) with respect-inspiring deportment; not straying from the Truth while attending to worldly affairs; the mind abiding neither within nor without; being imperturbable to wrong views during the practice of the thirty-seven contributory stages leading to enlightenment: and not wiping out troubles (klesa) while entering the state of nirvana. If you can thus sit in meditation, you will win the Buddha's seal.' "World Honoured One, when I heard his speech I was dumbfounded and found no word to answer him. Therefore I am not qualified to call on him and enquire after his health."

2) *Maudgalyayana:* The Buddha then said to Maudgalaputra: "Go to Vimalakirti and enquire after his health on my behalf." Maudgalyayana said: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to enquire after his health. The reason is that one day when I came to Vaisali to expound the Dharma to lay Buddhists (upasakas) in the street there, Vimalakirti came and said: "Hey Maudgalyayana, when expounding the Dharma to these upasakas, you should not preach like that for what you teach should agree with the absolute Dharma,

which is free from the (illusion of) living beings; is free from the self for it is beyond an ego; from life for it is beyond birth and death and from the concept of a man which lacks continuity (thought seemingly continuous, like a torch whirled around); is always still for it is beyond (stirring) phenomena; is above form for it is causeless; is inexpressible for it is beyond word and speech; is unexplainable for it is beyond intellect; is formless like empty space; is beyond sophistry for it is immaterial; is egoless for it is beyond (the duality of) subject and object; is free from discrimination for it is beyond consciousness; is without compare for it is beyond all relativities; is beyond cause for it is causeless; is identical with Dharmata (or Dharma-nature), the underlying nature (of all things); is in line with the absolute for it is independent; dwells in the region of absolute reality, being above and beyond all dualities; is unmovable for it does not rely on the six objects of sense; neither comes nor goes for it does not stay anywhere; is in line with voidness, formlessness and inactivity; is beyond beauty and ugliness; neither increases nor decreases; is beyond creation and destruction; does not return to anywhere; is above the six sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; is neither up nor down; is eternal and immutable; and is beyond contemplation and practice. “Maudgalyayana, such being the characteristics of the Dharma, how can it be expounded?” For expounding, it is beyond speech and indication, and listening to it is above hearing and grasping. This is like a conjurer expounding the Dharma to illusory men, and you should always bear all this in mind, when expounding the Dharma. You should be clear about the sharp or dull roots of your audience and have a good knowledge of this to avoid all sorts of hindrance. Before expounding the Dharma, you should use your great compassion (for all living beings) to extol Mahayana to them and think of repaying your own debt of gratitude to the Buddha by striving to preserve the three treasures (of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) for ever. “When Vimalakirti spoke, eight hundred upasakas set their minds on seeking supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi). I do not have the eloquence and I am, therefore, not fit to call on him to inquire after his health.”

3) *Mahakasyapa*: The Buddha then said to Mahakasyapa: “ Go to Vimalakirti to enquire after his health on my behalf.” Mahakasyapa



said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health. The reason is that once when I went begging for food in a lane inhabited by poor people, Vimalakirti came and said: “Hey, Mahakasyapa, you are failing to make your kind and compassionate mind all-embracing by begging from the poor while staying away from the rich. Mahakasyapa, in your practice of impartiality, you should call on your donors in succession (regardless of whether they are poor or rich). You should beg for food without the (ulterior) idea of eating it. To wipe out the concept of rolling (food into a ball in the hand), you should take it by the hand (i.e. without the idea of how you take it). You should receive the food given without the idea of receiving anything. When entering a village, you should regard it as void like empty space. When seeing a form, you should remain indifferent to it. When you hear a voice, you should consider it (as meaningless as) an echo. When you smell an odor, take it for the wind (which has no smell). When you eat, refrain from discerning the taste. Regard all touch as if you were realizing wisdom (which is free from feelings and emotions). You should know that all things are illusory, having neither nature of their own nor that of something else, and that since fundamentally, they are not self-existent, they cannot now be the subject of annihilation. Mahakasyapa, if you can achieve all eight forms of liberation without keeping from the eight heterodox ways (of life), that is by identifying heterodoxy with orthodoxy (both as emanating from the same source), and if you can make an offering of your (own) food to all living beings as well as to all Buddhas and all members of the Sangha, then you can take the food. Such a way of eating is beyond the troubles (of the worldly man) and the absence of the troubles of Hinayana men); above the state of stillness (in which Hinayana men abstain from eating) and the absence of stillness (of Mahayana men who eat while in the state of serenity); and beyond both dwelling in the worldly state or in nirvana, while your donors reap neither great nor little merits, what they give being neither beneficial nor harmful. This is correct entry upon the Buddha path without relying on the small way of sravakas. Mahakasyapa, if you can so eat the food given you, your eating shall not be in vain.” “World Honoured One, when I listened to his words which I had never heard before, I gave rise to profound reverence to all Bodhisattvas and thought, ‘His

wisdom and power of speech being such, who will fail to develop a mind set on supreme enlightenment?’ Since then I have refrained from urging people to follow the practices of sravakas and pratyekabuddhas. Hence, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health.”

4) *Subhuti*: The Buddha then said to Subhuti: “You call on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health on my behalf.” Subhuti said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and enquire after his health. The reason is that once when I went to his house begging for food, he took my bowl and filled it with rice, saying: ‘Subhuti, if your mind set on eating is in the same state as when confronting all (other) things, and if this uniformity as regards all things equally applies to (the act of) eating, you can then beg for food and eat it. Subhuti, if without cutting off carnality, anger and stupidity you can keep from these (three) evils: if you do not wait for the death of your body to achieve the oneness of all things; if you do not wipe out stupidity and love in your quest of enlightenment and liberation; if you can look into (the underlying nature of) the five deadly sins to win liberation, with at the same time no idea of either bondage or freedom; if you give rise to neither the four noble truths nor their opposites; if you do not hold both the concept of winning and not winning the holy fruit; if you do not regard yourself as a worldly or unworldly man, as a saint or not as a saint; if you perfect all Dharmas while keeping away from the concept of Dharmas, then can you receive and eat the food. Subhuti, if you neither see the Buddha nor hear the Dharma; if the six heterodox teachers, Purana-kasyapa, Maskari-gosaliputra, Yanjaya-vairatiputra, Ajita-kesakambala, Kakuda-katyayana and Nirgrantha-jnatiputra are regarded impartially as your own teachers and if, when they induce leavers of home into heterodoxy, you also fall with the latter; then you can take away the food and eat it. If you are (unprejudiced about) falling into heresy and regard yourself as not reaching the other shore (of enlightenment); if you are unprejudiced about the eight sad conditions and regard yourself as not free from them; if you are unprejudiced about defilements and relinquish the concept of pure living; if when you realize samadhi in which there is absence of debate or disputation, all living beings also achieve it; if your donors of food are not regarded (with partiality) as (cultivating)

the field of blessedness; if those making offerings to you are partially looked on as also falling into the three evil realms of existence; if you impartially regard demons as your companions without differentiating between them as well as between other forms of defilement; if you are discontented with all living beings, defame the Buddha, break the law (Dharma), do not attain the holy rank and fail to win liberation; then you can take away the food and eat it. “World Honoured One, I was dumbfounded when I heard his words, which were beyond my reach, and to which I found no answer. Then I left the bowl of rice and intended to leave his house but Vimalakirti said: ‘Hey, Subhuti, take the bowl of rice without fear. Are you frightened when the Tathagata makes an illusory man ask you questions? I replied: ‘No.’ He then continued: ‘All things are illusory and you should not fear anything. Why? Because words and speech are illusory. So all wise men do not cling to words and speech, and this is why they fear nothing. Why? Because words and speech have no independent nature of their own and, when they are no more, you are liberated. This liberation will free you from all bondage.’ “When Vimalakirti expounded the Dharma two hundred sons of devas realized the Dharma eye. Hence I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health.”

5) *Puruna*: The Buddha then said to Purnamaitrayaniputra: “You call on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health on my behalf.” Purnamaitrayaniputra said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and enquire after his health. This is because when I was once in a grove and was expounding the Dharma under a tree to a group of newly initiated bhiksus, Vimalakirti came and said: “Hey, Purnamaitrayanaiputra, you should first enter the state of samadhi to examine the minds of your listeners before expounding the Dharma to them. Do not put rotten food in precious bowls. You should know their minds and do not take their precious crystal for (ordinary) glass. If you do not know their propensities, do not teach them Hinayana. They have no wounds, so do not hurt them. To those who want to tread the wide path, do not show narrow tracks. Do not enclose the great sea in the print of an ox’s foot; do not liken sunlight to the dim glow of a firefly. Purnamaitrayaniputra, these bhiksus have long ago developed the Mahayana mind but they now forget all about it; how can you teach them Hinayana? Wisdom as taught by Hinayana is shallow; it is like a

blind man who cannot discern the sharp from the dull roots of living beings.” At that time, Vimalakirti entered the state of samadhi and caused the bhiksus to remember their former lives when they had met five hundred Buddhas and had then planted seeds of excellent virtues, which they had dedicated to their quest of supreme enlightenment; they instantly awakened to their past and recovered their fundamental minds. They at once bowed with their heads at the feet of Vimalakirti, who then expounded the Dharma to them; they resumed their quest of supreme enlightenment without backsliding. I think that Sravakas, who do not know how to look into the roots of their listeners, should not expound the Dharma. Hence, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health.

6) *Mahakatyayana*: The Buddha then said to Mahakatyayana: “You go to Vimalakirti to enquire after his health on my behalf.” Mahakatyayana said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health. For once after the Buddha had expounded the essential aspects of the Dharma to a group of bhiksus, I followed Him to explain to them the meanings of impermanence, suffering, voidness, egolessness and nirvana. “Vimalakirti came and said: ‘Hey, Mahakatyayana, do not use your mortal mind to preach immortal reality. Mahakatyayana, all things are fundamentally above creation and destruction; this is what impermanence means. The five aggregates are perceived as void and not arising; this is what suffering means. All things are basically non-existent; this is what voidness means. Ego and its absence are not a duality; this is what egolessness means. All things basically are not what they seem to be, they cannot be subject to extinction now; this is what nirvana means. After Vimalakirti had expounded the Dharma, the bhiksus present succeeded in liberating their minds. Hence, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health.

7) *Aniruddha*: The Buddha then said to Aniruddha: “You call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Aniruddha said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquired after his health. For once when I was walking about while meditating to prevent sleepiness, a Brahma called, ‘The Gloriously Pure’, together with an entourage of ten thousand devas sent off rays of light, came to my place, bowed their heads to salute me and asked: ‘How far does

your deva eye see?’ I replied: ‘Virtuous one, I see the land of Sakyamuni Buddha in the great chiliocosm like an amala fruit held in my hand.’ Vimalakirti (suddenly) came and said: ‘Hey, Aniruddha, when your deva eye sees, does it see form or formlessness? If it sees form, you are no better than those heretics who have won five supernatural powers. If you see formlessness, your deva eye is non-active (wu wei) and should be unseeing.’ “World Honoured One, I kept silent.” And the devas praised Vimalakirti for what they had not heard before, They then paid reverence and asked him: ‘Is there anyone in this world who has realized the real deva eye?’ Vimalakirti replied: “There is the Buddha who has realized the real deva eye; He is always in the state of samadhi and sees all Buddha lands without (giving rise to) the duality (of subjective eye and objective form).” At that time, Brahma and five hundred of his relatives developed the anuttara-samyak-sambodhi mind; they bowed their heads at Vimalakirti’s feet and suddenly disappeared. This is why I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health.”

8) *Upali*: The Buddha then said to Upali: “You call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Upali said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health. For once, two bhiksus broke the prohibitions, and being shameful of their sins, they dared not call on the Buddha. They came to ask me: ‘Upali, we have broken the commandments and are ashamed of our sins, so we dare not ask the Buddha about this and come to you. Please teach us the rules of repentance so as to wipe out our sins.’ I then taught them the rules of repentance. At that time, Vimalakirti came and said: ‘Hey, Upali, do not aggravate their sins which you should wipe out at once without further disturbing their minds. Why? Because the nature of sin is neither within nor without, nor in between. As the Buddha has said, living beings are impure because their mind are impure; if their minds are pure, they are all pure. And, mind also is neither within nor without nor in between. Their minds being such, so, are their sins. Likewise all things do not go beyond (their ) suchness. Upali, when your mind is liberated, is there any remaining impurity?’ I replied: ‘There will be no more.’ He said: ‘Likewise, the minds of all living beings are free from impurities. Upali, false thoughts are impure and the absence of false thoughts is purity. Inverted (ideas) are impure

and the absence of inverted (ideas) is purity. Clinging to ego is impure and non-clinging to ego is purity. Upali, all phenomena rise and fall without staying (for an instant) like an illusion and lightning. All phenomena do not wait for one another and do not stay for the time of a thought. They all derive from false views and are like a dream and a flame, the moon in water, and an image in a mirror for they are born from wrong thinking. He who understands this is called a keeper of the rules of discipline and he who knows it is called a skillful interpreter (of the precepts).’ At that time, the two bhiksus declared: ‘What a supreme wisdom which is beyond the reach of Upali who cannot expound the highest principle of discipline and morality?’ I said: ‘Since I left the Buddha I have not met a sravaka or a Bodhisattva who can surpass his rhetoric, for his great wisdom and perfect enlightenment have reached such a high degree.’ Thereupon, the two bhiksus got rid of their doubts and repentance, set their mind on the quest of supreme enlightenment and took the vow to make all living beings acquire the same power of speech. Hence, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti and inquire after his health.

9) *Rahula*: The Buddha then said to Rahula: “You go to Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Rahula said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health. For once the sons of the elders at Vaisali came to my place and bowed to salute me, saying: ‘Rahula, you are the Buddha’s son and left the throne to search for the truth; what advantage derives from leaving home? I then spoke of the advantage of earning merits that so derive. Vimalakirti came and said: “Hey, Rahula, you should not speak of the advantage of earning merits that derive from leaving home. Why? Because home-leaving bestows neither advantage nor good merits. Only when speaking of the worldly (way of life) can you talk about advantage and merits. For home-leaving is above the worldly, and the transcendental is beyond advantage and merits. Rahula, home-leaving is beyond thisness, thatness and in between; is above the sixty-two wrong views, and abides in (the state of) nirvana. It is praised by all wise men and practiced by all saints. It overcomes all demons; liberates from the five realms of existence; purifies the five kinds of eyes; helps realize the five spiritual powers and sets up the five spiritual faculties; releases from earthly grievances; keeps from varied

evils (derived from a mixed mind); frees from the unreality of names and terms; gets out of the mud (of defilement); relieves from all bondages, wipes out the duality of subject and object and all responsiveness and disturbances; it gives inner joy; protects all living beings; dwells in serenity and guards against all wrongs. If all this can be achieved, this is true home-leaving.’ Vimalakirti then said to the sons of the elders: ‘During this period of correct Dharma, you should leave home to join the Sangha. Why? Because it is very difficult to have the good fortune of living in the Buddha-age.’ The sons of the elders replied: ‘Venerable Upasaka, we have heard the Buddha said that one cannot leave home without the consent of one’s parents.’ Vimalakirti said: ‘Yes, it is so, but you will really leave home the moment you develop a mind set on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi), which completes your home-leaving.’ At that time, all the thirty-two sons of the elders developed the anuttara-samyak-sambodhi mind. This is why I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti and inquire after his health.”

10) *Ananda*: The Buddha then said to Ananda: “You call on Vimalakirti and inquire after his health on my behalf.” Ananda replied: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health. This is because once when the World Honoured One had a slight indisposition and needed some cow milk, I took a bowl and went to a Brahmin family where I stood at the door. Vimalakirti came and asked me: ‘Why are you out so early holding a bowl in your hand?’ I replied: ‘Venerable Upasaka, the World Honoured One is slightly indisposed and wants some cow milk; this is why I have come here.’ Vimalakirti said: ‘Stop, Ananda, stop speaking these words. The Tathagata’s body is as strong as a diamond for He has cut off all evils and has achieved all good. What kind of indisposition and trouble does He still have? Ananda, do not slander the Tathagata and do not let other people hear such coarse language. Do not let the god (devas) as well as the Bodhisattvas of other pure lands hear about it. Ananda, world ruler (cakravarti) who has accumulated only a few small merits is already free from all ailments; how much more so is the Tathagata who has earned countless merits and has achieved all moral excellences? Go away, Ananda, do not cover us all with shame. If the Brahmins heard you they would say: “How can this man be a saviour if

he cannot cure his own illness; how can he pretend to heal the sick?” Get away unnoticed and quickly and do not let others hear what you have said. Ananda, you should know that the body of the Tathagata is the Dharmakaya and does not come from (the illusion of) thought and desire. The Buddha is the World Honoured One (Bhagavat); His body is above and beyond the three realms (of desire, form and beyond form) and is outside the stream of transmigratory suffering. The Buddha body is transcendental (we wei) and is beyond destiny. How then can such a body be ill?” World Honoured One, his word covered me with shame and I asked myself if I had not wrongly understood the Buddha’s order. At that time, a voice was heard in the air above, saying: ‘Ananda, the Upasaka is right, but since the Buddha appears in the five kasaya (or periods of turbidity on earth), He uses this (expedient) method (upaya) to liberate living beings. Ananda, go and beg for the cow milk without shame.’ World Honoured One, Vimalakirti’s wisdom and power of speech being such, I am really not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health.” Thus each of the five hundred chief disciples related his encounter with Vimalakirti and declined to call on him to inquire after his health.

**Chapter Four—The Bodhisattvas:** 1) *Maitreya*: The Buddha then said to Maitreya Bodhisattva: “You go to Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Maitreya replied: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health. The reason is that once when I was expounding to the deva-king and his retinue in the Tusita heaven the never-receding stage (of Bodhisattva development into Buddhahood) Vimalakirti came and said to me: ‘Maitreya, when the World Honoured One predicted your future attainment of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-sayak-sambodhi) in one lifetime, tell me in which life, whether in the past, future or present, did or will you receive His prophecy? If it was in your past life, that has gone; if it will be in your future life, that has not yet come; and if it is in your present life, that does not stay. As the Buddha once said: ‘O bhiksus, you are born, are aging and are dying simultaneously at this very moment’; if you received His prophecy in a lifeless (state), the latter is prediction (of your future Buddhahood) nor realization of supreme enlightenment. How then did you receive the prediction of your attainment of Buddhahood in one lifetime? Or did you receive it



in the absolute state (thatness or tathata) of either birth or death? If you receive it in the absolute state of birth, this absolute state is uncreated. If you receive it in the absolute state of death, this absolute state does not die. For (the underlying nature of) all living beings and of all things is absolute; all saints and sages are in this absolute state, and so, also are you, Maitreya. So, if you, Maitreya, received the Buddhahood, all living beings (who are absolute by nature) should also receive it. Why? Because that which is absolute is non-dual and is beyond differentiation. If you, Maitreya, realize supreme enlightenment, so should all living beings. Why? Because they are the manifestation of bodhi (enlightenment). If you, Maitreya, win nirvana, they should also realize it. Why? Because all Buddhas know that every living being is basically in the condition of extinction of existence and suffering which is nirvana, in which there can be no further extinction of existence. Therefore, Maitreya, do not mislead the devas because there is neither development of supreme bodhi-mind nor its backsliding. Maitreya, you should instead urge them to keep from discriminating views about bodhi (enlightenment). Why? Because bodhi can be won by neither body nor mind. For bodhi is the state of calmness and extinction of passion (i.e. nirvana) because it wipes out all forms. Bodhi is unseeing, for it keeps from all causes. Bodhi is non-discrimination, for it stops memorizing and thinking. Bodhi cuts off ideation, for it is free from all views. Bodhi forsakes inversion, for it prevents perverse thoughts. Bodhi puts an end to desire, for it keeps from longing. Bodhi is unresponsive, for it wipes out all clinging. Bodhi complies (with self-nature), for it is in line with the state of suchness. Bodhi dwells (in this suchness), for it abides in (changeless) Dharma-nature (or Dharmata, the underlying nature of all things.) Bodhi reaches this suchness, for it attains the region of reality. Bodhi is non-dual, for it keeps from (both) intellect and its objects. Bodhi is impartial, for it is equal to boundless space. Bodhi is the non-active (we wei) state, for it is above the conditions of birth, existence and death. Bodhi is true knowledge, for it discerns the mental activities of all living beings. Bodhi does not unite, for it is free from all confrontation. Bodhi disentangles, for it breaks contact with habitual troubles (klesa). Bodhi is that of which the position cannot be determined, for it is beyond form and shape, and is that which cannot be called by name for all names (have no

independent nature and so) are void. Bodhi is like the mindlessness of an illusory man, for it neither accepts nor rejects anything. Bodhi is beyond disturbance, for it is always serene by itself. Bodhi is real stillness, because of its pure and clean nature. Bodhi is non-acceptance, for it keeps from causal attachments. Bodhi is non-differentiating, because of its impartiality towards all. Bodhi is without compare, for it is indescribable. Bodhi is profound and subtle, for although unknowing, it knows all.’ World Honoured One, when Vimalakirti so expounded the Dharma, two hundred sons of devas realized the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti). This is why I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health.”

2) *Glorious Light Bodhisattva*: The Buddha then said to the Bodhisattva Glorious Light: “You go to Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Glorious Light replied: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health. The reason is that once while I was leaving Vaisali, I met Vimalakirti who was entering it. I saluted and asked him ‘Where does the Venerable Upasaka come from? He replied: ‘From a bodhimandala (a holy site).’ I asked him: ‘Where is this bodhimandala?’ He replied: ‘The straightforward mind is the bodhimandala, for it is free from falsehood. The initiated mind is the bodhimandala, for it can keep discipline. The profound mind is the bodhimandala, for it accumulates merits. The enlightened mind is the bodhimandala, for it is infallible. Charity (dana) is the bodhimandala, for it does not expect reward. Discipline (sila) is the bodhimandala, for it fulfills all vows. Patience (ksanti) is the bodhimandala for it has access to the minds of all living beings. Zeal (virya) is the bodhimandala, for it is free from being remiss. Serenity (dhyana) is the bodhimandala, because of its harmonious mind. Wisdom (prajna) is the bodhimandala, for it discerns all things. Kindness (maitri) is the bodhimandala, for it treats all living beings on an equal footing. Compassion (karuna) is the bodhimandala, because of its great forbearance. Joy (mudita) is the bodhimandala, for it is pleasant. Indifference (upeksa) is the bodhimandala, for it wipes out both love and hate. Transcendental efficiency is the bodhimandala, for it perfects all the six supernatural powers (sadabhijna). Liberation is the bodhimandala, for it turns its back to all phenomenal conditions.

Expedient devices (upaya) are the bodhimandala, for they teach and convert living beings. The four winning actions of a Bodhisattva are the bodhimandala, for they benefit all living beings. Wide knowledge through hearing the Dharma is the bodhimandala, for its practice leads to enlightenment. Control of the mind is the Bodhimandala, because of its correct perception of all things. The thirty-seven contributory stages to enlightenment are the bodhimandala, for they keep from all worldly activities. The four noble truths are the bodhimandala, because they do not deceive. The twelve links in the chain of existence are the bodhimandala, because of their underlying nature which is infinite. Troubles (klesa) are the bodhimandala, for their underlying nature is reality. Living beings are the bodhimandala, because they are (basically) egoless. All things are the bodhimandala, for they are empty. The defeat of demons is the bodhimandala, for it is imperturbable. The three realms (of desire, form and beyond form) are the bodhimandala, for fundamentally they lead to no real destination. The lion's roar is the bodhimandala, because of its fearlessness. The ten powers (dasabla), the four kinds of fearlessness and the eighteen unsurpassed characteristics of the Buddha are the bodhimandala, for they are without fault. The three insights are the bodhimandala, for they are free from all remaining hindrances. The knowledge of all things in the time of a thought is the bodhimandala, for it brings omniscience (sarvajna) to perfection. Thus, son of good family, a Bodhisattva should convert living beings according to the various modes of perfection (paramitas) and all his acts, including the raising or lowering of a foot, should be interpreted as coming from the seat of learning (bodhimandala); he should thus stay within the Buddha Dharma.' While Vimalakirti was thus expounding the Dharma, five hundred devas developed their minds set on supreme enlightenment. This is why I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health."

3) *Bodhisattva Ruler of the World*: The Buddha then said to the Bodhisattva Ruler of the World: "You call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf." Ruler of the World replied: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health. I still remember that once as I was staying in a vihara, a demon like Indra appeared followed by twelve thousand goddesses (devakanya) playing music and singing songs. After bowing their

heads at my feet they brought their palms together and stood at my side. I mistook the demon for Sakra and said to him: 'Welcome, Sakra, although you have won merits, you should guard against passion (arising from music, song and sex). You should look into the five desires (for the objects of the five senses) in your practice of morality. You should look into the impermanence of body, life and wealth in your quest of indestructible Dharma (i.e. boundless body, endless life and inexhaustible spiritual wealth.)' He said: 'Bodhisattva, please take these twelve thousand goddesses who will serve you.' I replied: 'Sakra, please do not make to a monk this unclean offering which does not suit me.' "Even before I had finished speaking, Vimalakirti came and said: 'He is not Sakra; he is a demon who comes to disturb you.' He then said to the demon: 'You can give me these girls and I will keep them.'

The demon was frightened, and being afraid that Vimalakirti might give him trouble, he tried to make himself invisible but failed, and in spite of his use of supernatural powers, he could not go away. Suddenly a voice was heard in the air, saying: 'Demon, give him the girls and then you can go.' Being scared, he gave the girls.' At that time, Vimalakirti said to them: "The demon has given you to me. You can now develop a mind set on the quest of supreme enlightenment." Vimalakirti then expounded the Dharma to them urging them to seek the truth. He declared: 'You have now set your minds on the quest for the truth and can experience joy in the Dharma instead of in the five worldly pleasures (arising from the objects of the five senses).' "They asked him: 'What is this joy in the Dharma?' "He replied: 'Joy in having faith in the Buddha; joy in listening to the Dharma; joy in making offerings to the Sangha; and joy in forsaking the five worldly pleasures; joy in finding out that the five aggregates are like deadly enemies; that the four elements (that make the body) are like poisonous snakes; and that the sense organs and their objects are empty like space; joy in following and upholding the truth; joy in being beneficial to living beings; joy in revering and making offerings to your masters; joy in spreading the practice of charity (dana); joy in firmly keeping the rules of discipline (sila); joy in forbearance (ksanti); joy in unflinching zeal (virya) to sow all excellent roots; joy in unperturbed serenity (dhyana); joy in wiping out all defilement that screens clear

wisdom (prajna); joy in expanding the enlightened (bodhi) mind; joy in overcoming all demons; joy in eradicating all troubles (klesa); joy in purifying the Buddha land; joy in winning merits from excellent physical marks; joy in embellishing the bodhimandala (the holy site); joy in fearlessness to hear (and understand ) the profound Dharma; joy in the three perfect doors to nirvana (i.e. voidness, formlessness and inactivity) as contrasted with their incomplete counterparts (which still cling to the notion of objective realization); joy of being with those studying the same Dharma and joy in the freedom from hindrance when amongst those who do not study it; joy to guide and convert evil men and to be with men of good counsel; joy in the state of purity and cleanness; joy in the practice of countless conditions contributory to enlightenment. All this is the Bodhisattva joy in the Dharma.'

At that time, the demon said to the girls: 'I want you all to return with me to our palace.' The girls replied: 'While we are here with the Venerable Upasaka, we delight in the joy of the Dharma; we no longer want the five kinds of worldly pleasures.' The demon then said to Vimalakirti: 'Will the Upasaka give away all these girls, as he who gives away everything to others is a Bodhisattva?' Vimalakirti said: 'I now give up all of them and you can take them away so that all living beings can fulfill their vows to realize the Dharma.' The girls then asked Vimalakirti: 'What should we do while staying at the demon's palace?' Vimalakirti replied: 'Sisters, there is a Dharma called the *Inexhaustible Lamp*, which you should study and practice. For instance, a lamp can (be used to) light up hundreds and thousands of other lamps; darkness will thus be bright and this brightness will be inexhaustible. So, sisters, a Bodhisattva should guide and convert hundreds and thousands of living beings so that they all develop the mind set on supreme enlightenment; thus his deep thought (of enlightening others) is, likewise, inexhaustible. This teaching of the Dharma will then increase in all excellent Dharmas; this is called the *Inexhaustible Lamp*. Although you will be staying at the demon's palace you should use this *Inexhaustible Lamp* to guide countless sons and daughters of devas to develop their minds set on supreme enlightenment, in order to repay your debt of gratitude to the Buddha, and also for the benefit of all living beings.' The devas' daughters bowed their heads at Vimalakirti's feet and followed the demon to return to his palace and

all of a sudden they vanished.” World Honoured One, since Vimalakirti possesses such supernatural power, wisdom and eloquence, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health.”

4) *Excellent Virtue*: The Buddha then said to a son of an elder called Excellent Virtue: “You call on Vimalakirti to inquire his health on my behalf.” Excellent Virtue said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health. The reason is that once I held a ceremonial meeting at my father’s house to make offerings to the gods and also to monks, brahmins, poor people, outcastes and beggars. When the meeting ended seven days later, Vimalakirti came and said to me: ‘O son of the elder, an offering meeting should not be held in the way you did; it should bestow the Dharma upon others, for what is the use of giving alms away?’ I asked: ‘Venerable Upasaka, what do you mean by bestowal of Dharma?’ He replied: ‘The bestowal of Dharma is (beyond the element of time, having) neither start nor finish and each offering should benefit all living beings at the same time. This is a bestowal of Dharma.’ I asked: ‘What does this mean?’ He replied: ‘This means that bodhi springs from kindness (maitri) toward living beings; the salvation of living beings springs from compassion (karuna); the upholding of right Dharma from joy (mudita); wisdom from indifference (upeksa); the overcoming of greed from charity-perfection (dana-parmita); ceasing to break the precepts from discipline-perfection (sila-paramita); egolessness from patience-perfection (ksanti-paramita); relinquishment of body and mind from zeal-perfection (virya-paramita); realization of enlightenment from serenity-perfection (dhyana-paramita); realization of all-knowledge (sarvajna) from wisdom-perfection (prajna-paramita); the teaching and converting of living beings spring from the void; non-rejection of worldly activities springs from formlessness; appearance in the world springs from inactivity; sustaining the right Dharma from the power of expedient devices (upaya); the liberation of living beings from the four winning virtues; respect for and service to others from the determination to wipe out arrogance; the relinquishment of body, life and wealth from the three indestructibles; the six thoughts to dwell upon from concentration on the Dharma; the six points of reverent harmony in a monastery form the straightforward mind; right deeds from pure livelihood; joy in the pure mind from nearness to saints and

sages; non-rising of hate for bad people from the effective control of mind; retiring from the world from the profound mind; practice in accordance with the preaching from the wide knowledge gained from hearing (about the Dharma); absence of disputation from a leisurely life; the quest of Buddha wisdom from meditation; the freeing of living beings from bondage from actual practice; the earning of all excellent physical marks to embellish Buddha lands from the karma of mortal excellence; the knowledge of the minds of all living beings and the relevant expounding of Dharma to them, from the karma of good knowledge; the understanding of all things commensurate with neither acceptance nor rejection of them to realize their oneness, from the karma of wisdom; the eradication of all troubles (klesa), hindrances and evils from all excellent karmas; the realization of all wisdom and good virtue from the contributory conditions leading to enlightenment. All this, son of good family, pertains to the bestowal of Dharma. A Bodhisattva holding this meeting that bestows the Dharma, is a great almsgiver (danapati); he is also a field of blessings for all worlds.'

World Honoured One, as Vimalakirti was expounding the Dharma, two hundred Brahmins who listened to it, set their minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment. I myself realized purity and cleanliness of mind, which I had never experienced before. I then bowed my head at his feet and took out my priceless necklace of precious stones, which I offered to him but he refused it. I then said: 'Venerable Upasaka, please accept my present and do what you like with it.' He took my necklace and divided it in two, offering half to the poorest beggar in the assembly and the other half to the 'Invincible Tathagata', whose radiant land was then visible to all those present, who saw the half-necklace transformed into a precious tower in all its majesty on four pillars which did not shield one another. After this supernatural transformation, Vimalakirti said: 'He who gives alms to the poorest beggar with an impartial mind performs an act which does not differ from the field of blessings of the Tathagata, for it derives from great compassion with no expectation of reward. This is called the complete bestowal of Dharma.' After witnessing Vimalakirti's supernatural power, the poorest beggar who had also listened to his expounding of the Dharma developed a mind set on supreme enlightenment. Hence, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health."

Thus, each of the Bodhisattvas present related his encounter with Vimalakirti and declined to call on him to inquire after his health.

**Chapter Five—Manjusri Call on Vimalakirti:** The Buddha then said to Manjusri: “You call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health.” Manjusri said: “World Honoured One, he is a man of superior wisdom and it is not easy to match him (in eloquence). For he has reached reality, and is a skillful teacher of the essential aspects of the Dharma. His power of speech is unhindered and his wisdom is boundless. He is well versed in all matters pertaining to Bodhisattva development, for he has entered the mysterious treasure of all Buddhas. He has overcome all demons, has achieved all transcendental powers and has realized wisdom by ingenious devices (upaya). Nevertheless, I will obey the holy command and will call on him to inquire after his health.” The Bodhisattvas, the chief disciples of the Buddha and the rulers of the four heavens who were present, thought to themselves: “As the two Mahasattvas will be meeting, they will certainly discuss the profound Dharma.” So, eight thousand Bodhisattvas, five hundred sravakas and hundreds and thousands of devas wanted to follow Manjusri. So Manjusri, reverently surrounded by the Bodhisattvas, the Buddha’s chief disciples and the devas, made for Vaisali town. Vimalakirti, who knew in advance that Manjusri and his followers would come, used his transcendental powers to empty his house of all attendants and furniture except a sick bed. When entering the house, Manjusri saw only Vimalakirti lying on sick bed and was greeted by the upasaka. Who said: “Welcome, Manjusri, you come with no idea of coming and you see with no idea of seeing.”

Manjusri replied: “It is so, Venerable Upasaka, coming should not be further tied to (the idea of) coming, and going should not be further linked with (the concept of) going. Why? Because there is neither whence to come nor whither to go, and that which is visible cannot further be (an object of) seeing. Now, let us put all this aside. Venerable Upasaka, is your illness bearable? Will it get worse with the wrong treatment? The World Honoured One sends me to inquire after your health, and is anxious to have good news of you. Venerable Upasaka, where does your illness come from; how long since it arose, and how will it come to an end?” Vimalakirti replied: “Stupidity leads to love, which is the origin of my illness. Because all living beings are



subject to illness, I am ill as well. When all living beings are no longer ill, my illness will come to an end. Why? A Bodhisattva, because of (his vow to save) living beings, enters the realm of birth and death which is subject to illness; if they are all cured, the Bodhisattva will no longer be ill. For instance, when the only son of an elder falls ill, so do his parents, and when he recovers his health, so do they. Likewise, a Bodhisattva loves all living beings as if they were his sons; so when they fall ill, the Bodhisattva is also ill, and when they recover, he is no longer ill.”

Manjusri asked: “What is the cause of a Bodhisattva’s illness?” Vimalakirti replied: “A Bodhisattva’s illness comes from (his) great compassion.” Manjusri asked: “Why is the Venerable Upasaka’s house empty and without servants?” Vimalakirti replied: “All Buddha lands are also void.” Manjusri asked: “What is the Buddha land void of?” Vimalakirti replied: “It is void of voidness.” Manjusri asked: “Why should voidness be void?” Vimalakirti replied: “Voidness is void in the absence of discrimination.” Manjusri asked: “Can voidness be subject to discrimination?” Vimalakirti replied: “All discrimination is also void.” Manjusri asked: “Where can voidness be sought?” Vimalakirti replied: “It should be sought in the sixty-two false views.” Manjusri asked: “Where should the sixty-two false views be sought?” Vimalakirti replied: “They should be sought in the liberation of all Buddhas.” Manjusri asked: “Where should the liberation of all Buddhas be sought?” Vimalakirti replied: “It should be sought in the minds of all living beings.” He continued: “The virtuous one has also asked why I have no servants; well, all demons and heretics are my servants. Why? Because demons like (the state of) birth and death which the Bodhisattva does not reject, whereas heretics delight in false views in the midst of which the Bodhisattva remains unmoved.”

Manjusri asked: “What form does the Venerable Upasaka’s illness take?” Vimalakirti replied: “My illness is formless and invisible.” Manjusri asked: “Is it an illness of the body or of the mind?” Vimalakirti replied: “It is not an illness of the body, for it is beyond body and it is not that of the mind, for the mind is like an illusion.” Manjusri asked: “Of the four elements, earth, water, fire and air, which one is ill?” Vimalakirti replied: “It is not an illness of the element of earth but it is not beyond it; it is the same with the other elements of

water, fire and air. Since the illnesses of all living beings originate from the four elements which cause them to suffer, I am ill too.”

Manjusri then asked: “What should a Bodhisattva say when comforting another Bodhisattva who falls ill?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should speak of the impermanence of the body but never of the abhorrence and relinquishment of the body. He should speak of the suffering body but never of the joy in nirvana. He should speak of egolessness in the body while teaching and guiding all living beings (in spite of the fact that they are fundamentally non-existent in the absolute state). He should speak of the voidness of the body but should never cling to the ultimate nirvana. He should speak of repentance of past sins but should avoid slipping into the past. Because of his own illness he should take pity on all those who are sick. Knowing that he has suffered during countless past aeons, he should think of the welfare of all living beings. He should think of his past practice of good virtues to uphold (his determination for) right livelihood. Instead of worrying about troubles (klesa) he should give rise to zeal and devotion (in his practice of the Dharma). He should act like a king physician to cure others’ illnesses. Thus, a Bodhisattva should comfort another sick Bodhisattva to make him happy.”

Manjusri asked: “How does a sick Bodhisattva control his mind?” Vimalakirti replied: a) “A sick Bodhisattva should think thus: ‘My illness comes from inverted thoughts and troubles (klesa) during my previous lives but it has no real nature of its own. Therefore, who is suffering from it? Why is it so? Because when the four elements unite to form a body, the former are without owner and the latter is without ego. Moreover, my illness comes from my clinging to an ego; hence, I should wipe out this clinging.’ b) Now that he knows the source of his illness, he should forsake the concept of an ego and a living being. He should think of things (dharma) thus: ‘A body is created by the union of all sorts of dharmas (elements) which alone rise and fall, without knowing one another and without announcing their rise and fall.’ In order to wipe out the concept of things (dharmas), a sick Bodhisattva should think thus: ‘This notion of dharma is also an inversion, which is my great calamity. So I should keep from it.’ What is to be kept from? From both subject and object. What does this keeping from subject and object mean? It means keeping from dualities. What does this keeping

from dualities mean? It means not thinking of inner and outer dharmas (i.e. contraries) by the practice of impartiality. What is impartiality? It means equality (of all contraries e.g.) ego and nirvana. Why is it so? Because both ego and nirvana are void. Why are both void? Because they exist only by names which have no independent nature of their own. “When you achieve this equality you are free from all illnesses but there remains the conception of voidness which also is an illusion and should be wiped out as well.” c) A sick Bodhisattva should free himself from the conception of sensation (vedana) when experiencing any one of its three states (which are painful, pleasurable and neither painful nor pleasurable feeling). Before his full development into Buddhahood (that is before delivering all living beings in his own mind), he should not wipe out vedana for his own benefit with a view to attaining nirvana for himself only. Knowing that the body is subject to suffering he should think of living beings in the lower realms of existence and give rise to compassion (for them). Since he has succeeded in controlling his false views he should guide all living beings to bring theirs under control as well. He should uproot theirs (inherent) illnesses without (trying to) wipe out non-existence dharmas (externals for sense data). For he should teach them how to cut off the origin of illness. What is the origin of illness? It is their clinging which causes their illness. What are the objects of their clinging? They are the three realms (of desire, form and beyond form). By what means should they cut off their clinging? By means (of the doctrine that) nothing whatsoever can be found, and (that) if nothing can be found there will be no clinging. What is meant by ‘nothing can be found’? It means (that) apart from dual views (there is nothing else that can be had). What are dual views? They are inner and outer views beyond which there is nothing. d) Manjusri, this is how a sick Bodhisattva should control his mind. To wipe out suffering from old age, illness and death is the Bodhisattva’s bodhi (enlightened practice). If he fails to do so, his practice lacks wisdom and is ineffective. For instance, a Bodhisattva is (called) courageous if he overcomes hatred; if in addition he wipes out (the concept of) old age, illness and death, he is a true Bodhisattva. e) A sick Bodhisattva should again reflect: since my illness is neither real nor existing, the illnesses of all living beings are also unreal and non-existent. But while so thinking if he

develops a great compassion derived from his love for living beings and from his attachment to this false view, he should (immediately) keep from these feelings. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva should wipe out all external causes of troubles (klesa) while developing great compassion. For (this) love and (these) wrong views result from hate of birth and death. If he can keep from this love and these wrong views, he will be free from hatred, and wherever he may be reborn he will not be hindered by love and wrong views. His next life will be free from obstructions and he will be able to expound the Dharma to all living beings and free them from bondage. As the Buddha has said, there is no such thing as untying others when one is still held in bondage for it is possible to untie others only after one is free from bonds. f) Therefore, a Bodhisattva should not tie himself up (with wrong views). What is tying and what is untying? Clinging to serenity (dhyana) is a Bodhisattva's bondage, but his expedient rebirth (for the salvation of others) is freedom from bondage. Further, he is held in bondage by wisdom which lacks expedient methods (upaya), but is liberated by wisdom supported by expedient device; he is (also) held in bondage by expedient methods which are not upheld by wisdom but is liberated by expedient methods backed by wisdom. g) What is bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods? It is bondage caused by the Bodhisattva's desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection while practicing for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely,) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods (upaya). h) What is liberation by wisdom backed by expedient methods? It is liberation achieved in the absence of desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection, while practicing unremittingly for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called liberation by wisdom supported by expedient methods (upaya). i) What is bondage by expedient methods unsupported by wisdom? It is bondage caused by a Bodhisattva's lack of determination to keep from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all wisdom roots. This is called bondage by expedient methods, which lack wisdom. j) What is liberation by expedient methods sustained by wisdom? It is liberation won by a Bodhisattva

who keeps from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all virtuous roots which he dedicates to his realization of supreme enlightenment. This is called liberation by expedient methods sustained by wisdom. k) Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should look into all things in this way. He should further meditate on his body, which is impermanent, is subject to suffering and is non-existent and egoless; this is called wisdom. Although his body is sick, he remains in (the realm of) birth and death for the benefit of all (living beings) without complaint; this is called expedient method (upaya). l) Manjusri! He should further meditate on the body, which is inseparable from illness and on illness, which is inherent in the body, because sickness and the body are neither new nor old; this is called wisdom. The body, though ill, is not to be annihilated; this is the expedient method (for remaining in the world to work for salvation). m) Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should thus control his mind while dwelling in neither the (state of) controlled mind nor its opposite, that of uncontrolled mind. For if he dwells in (the state of) uncontrolled mind, this is stupidity and if he dwells in (that of) controlled mind, this is the sravaka stage. Hence, a Bodhisattva should not dwell in either and so keep from both; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. When staying in the realm of birth and death he keeps from its impurity, and when dwelling in nirvana, he keeps from (its condition of) extinction of reincarnation and escape from suffering; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. That which is neither worldly nor saintly is Bodhisattva development (into Buddhahood). That which is neither impure nor pure is Bodhisattva practice. Although he is beyond the demonic state, he appears (in the world) to overcome demons; this is Bodhisattva conduct. In his quest of all knowledge (sarvajna) he does not seek it at an inappropriate moment; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into the uncreated he does not achieve Buddhahood; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into nidana (or the twelve links in the chain of existence), he enters all states of perverse views (to save living beings); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he helps all living beings he does not give rise to clinging; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps from the phenomenal he does not lean on the voidness of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he passes through the three worlds (of desire, form and

beyond form), he does not injure the Dharmata; this is the Bodhisattva conduct. Although he realizes the voidness (of thing) he sows the seeds of all merits; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he dwells in formlessness, he continues delivering living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he refrains from (creative) activities he appears in his physical body; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps (all thoughts) from rising he performs all good deeds; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the six perfections (paramitas), he knows all the mental states of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he possesses the six supernatural powers, he refrains from putting an end to all worldly streams; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four infinite states of mind, he does not wish to be reborn in the Brahma heavens, this is the Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices meditation, serenity (dhyana), liberation and samadhi, he does not avail himself of these to be reborn in dhyana heavens; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four states of mindfulness, he does not keep for ever from the karma of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four right efforts, he persists in physical and mental zeal and devotion; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four Hinayana steps to supernatural powers, he will continue doing so until he achieves all Mahayana supernatural powers; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five spiritual faculties of the sravaka stage, he discerns the sharp and dull potential of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five powers of the sravaka stage, he strives to achieve the ten powers of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the seven Hinayana degrees of enlightenment, he discerns the Buddha's all-wisdom (sarvajna); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the eightfold noble truth (of Hinayana), he delights in treading the Buddha's boundless path; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices samathavipasyana, which contributes to the realization of bodhi (enlightenment), he keeps from slipping into nirvana; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the doctrine of not creating and not annihilating things (dharma), he still embellishes his body with the excellent physical marks of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he appears as a sravaka or a pratyeka-buddha, he

does not stray from the Buddha Dharma; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has realized ultimate purity, he appears in bodily form to do his work of salvation; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he sees into all Buddha lands, which are permanently still like space, he causes them to appear in their purity and cleanness; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has reached the Buddha stage, which enables him to turn the wheel of the Law (to preach the Dharma) and to enter the state of nirvana, he does not forsake the Bodhisattva path; this is bodhisattva conduct.”

While Vimalakirti was expounding the Dharma, all the eight thousand sons of devas who had come with Manjusri, developed the profound mind set on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi).

**Chapter Six—The Inconceivable Liberation:** Sariputra saw no seats in the room and thought: “Where do the Bodhisattvas and chief disciples sit?” Vimalakirti knew of Sariputra’s thought and asked him: “Virtuous One, do you come here for a seat or for the Dharma?” Sariputra replied: “I come here for the Dharma and not for a seat.” Vimalakirti said: “Hey Sariputra, he who searches for the Dharma does not even cling to his body and life, still less to a seat, for the quest of Dharma is not related to (the five aggregates): form (rupa), sensation (vedana), conception (sanjna), discrimination (samskara) and consciousness (vijnana); to the eighteen fields of sense (dhatu: the six organs, their objects and their perceptions); to the twelve entrances (ayatana: the six organs and six sense data that enter for or lead to discrimination); and to the worlds of desire, form and beyond form. Sariputra, a seeker of the Dharma, does not cling to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. A seeker of the Dharma does not hold the view of suffering, of cutting off all the accumulated causes, thereof, to put an end to it by treading the path to nirvana (i.e. the four noble truths). Why is it so? Because the Dharma is beyond all sophistry. For if one says: ‘Because I see suffering, I cut off its accumulated causes to wipe it out by treading the path thereto’, this is mere sophistry and is not the quest of the Dharma. “Sariputra, the Dharma is called nirvana (the condition of complete serenity and ultimate extinction of reincarnation); if you give rise to (the concept of) birth and death, this is a search for birth and death and is not the quest of Dharma. The

Dharma is (absolute and) immaculate, but if you are defiled by the (thought of) Dharma and even that of nirvana, this is pollution which runs counter to the quest of Dharma. Dharma cannot be practiced and if it is put into practice, this implies something (i.e. an object) to be practiced and is not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is beyond grasping and rejecting, and if you grasp or reject it, this is grasping or rejecting (something else) but not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is beyond position but if you give it a place, this is clinging to space but not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is formless but if you rely on form to conceive the Dharma, this is search for form but not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is not an abode but if you want to stay in it this is dwelling in (an objective) Dharma, but not the quest of (absolute) Dharma. Dharma can be neither seen, nor heard nor felt nor known but if you want to see, hear, feel and know it, this is the functioning of your (discriminatory) seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing but not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is (transcendentally) inactive (wu wei) but if you are set on worldly activities, this is a search for the worldly way of life but not the quest of Dharma. Therefore, Sariputra, the quest of Dharma does not imply seeking anything whatsoever.” When Vimalakirti so spoke, five hundred sons of devas realized the pure Dharma Eye. Vimalakirti then asked Manjusri: “The Virtuous One has traveled in countless thousands and tens of thousands of lakhs of worlds; which one is the Buddha land where the highest merits make the lion throne (of its Buddha)?”

Manjusri replied: “Venerable Upasaka, in the east there is a Buddha land which is separated from here by a distance represented by worlds as countless as the sand grains in thirty-six Ganges rivers; it is called Merudhvaja whose Buddha is called Merukalpa who is still there. His body is 84,000 yojana tall and his lion throne, also as high, is of prominent majesty.” At that time, Vimalakirti used his transcendental powers to invite Buddha Merukalpa to send to his room thirty-two thousand high, large, majestic and clean lion thrones which the Bodhisattvas, chief disciples of the Buddha (Sakyamuni), Indra and Brahma, the four deva kings, etc., had never seen before. The room contained all the thirty-two thousand lion thrones which did not hinder one another and which did not obstruct anything at Vaisali, in Jambudvipa (our earth) and in the four heavens where all things



remained unchanged as before. Vimalakirti then said to Manjusri: “Please take a lion throne and be seated amongst the great Bodhisattvas by enlarging the size of your body to that of the seat.” Those Bodhisattvas who had acquired supernatural powers, enlarged their bodies to the size of the thrones on which they sat (without difficulty). But the newly initiated Bodhisattvas and chief disciples of the Buddha could not mount the high thrones.

Vimalakirti then said to Sariputra: “Please be seated on a lion throne.” Sariputra replied: “Venerable Upasaka, these thrones are large and high; I cannot mount them.” Vimalakirti said: “Sariputra, you should first pay reverence to the Tathagata Merukalpa and will then be able to sit on one of them.” At that time, all newly initiated Bodhisattvas and chief disciples of the Buddha paid reverence to the Tathagata Merukalpa and then sat on the lion throne. Sariputra said to Vimalakirti: Venerable Upasaka, this was not seen before; this small room can contain these high and large thrones which do not obstruct anything at Vaisali and do not interfere with the cities, towns and villages on Jambudvipa (our world) as well as with the palaces of the devas and heavenly nagas (dragons) and the abodes of the ghosts and spirits.”

Vimalakirti said: “Sariputra, the liberation realized by all Buddhas and (great) Bodhisattvas is inconceivable. If a Bodhisattva wins this liberation, he can put the great and extensive (Mount) Sumeru in a mustard seed, which neither increases nor decreases (its size) while Sumeru remains the same, and the four deva kings (guardians of the world) and the devas of Trayastrimsas (the heavens of Indra) are not even aware of their being put into the seed, but only those who have won liberation see Sumeru in the mustard seed. This is the inconceivable Dharma door to liberation. He can also put the four great oceans that surround Sumeru in a pore without causing inconvenience to fishes, water tortoises, sea-turtles, water-lizards and all other aquatic animals while the oceans remain the same and the nagas (dragons), ghosts, spirits and asuras (titans) are not even aware of being displaced and interposed. “Further, Sariputra, a great Bodhisattva who has won this inconceivable liberation can (take and) put on his right palm the great chiliocosm like the potter holding his wheel, throw it beyond a number of worlds as countless as the sand grains in the Ganges and

then take it back (to its original place) while all living beings therein do not know of their being thrown away and returned and while our world remains unchanged. Further, Sariputra, if there are living beings who are qualified for liberation but who want to stay longer in the world, this Bodhisattva will (use his supernatural power to) extend a week to an aeon so that they will consider their remaining in time to be one week. Further, Sariputra, a Bodhisattva who has won this inconceivable liberation can gather in one country all the majestic things of all Buddha lands so that they are all visible in that particular country. Further, he can place on his right palm all the living beings of a Buddha land and then fly in all the ten directions to show them all things everywhere without even shaking them. Further, Sariputra, this Bodhisattva can show through one of his pores all offerings to the Buddhas by living beings in the ten directions. He can show through one of his pores all suns, moons, planets and stars in all the worlds in the ten directions. Further, Sariputra, he can breathe in (and hold in his mouth) all the winds blowing in the worlds in the ten directions without injuring his own body or the trees of these worlds. Further, when the worlds in the ten directions come to an end through destruction by fires, this Bodhisattva can breathe in these fires into his own belly without being injured by them while they continue to burn without change. Further, this Bodhisattva can take from the nadir a Buddha land separated from him by worlds as countless as the sand grains in the Ganges and lift it up to the zenith, which is separated from him by worlds as countless as there are sand grains in the Ganges, with the same ease as he picks up a leaf of the date tree with the point of a needle. Further, Sariputra, a Bodhisattva who has won this inconceivable liberation can use his transcendental powers to appear as a Buddha, or a Pratyeka-buddha, a Sravaka, a sovereign Sakra, Brahma, or a ruler of the world (cakravarti). He can also cause all sound and voices of high, medium and low pitches in the worlds in the ten directions to change into the Buddha's voice proclaiming (the doctrine of) impermanence, suffering, unreality and absence of ego as well as all Dharmas expounded by all Buddhas in the ten directions, making them heard everywhere. Sariputra, I have mentioned only some of the powers derived from this inconceivable liberation but if I were to enumerate them all, a whole aeon would be too short for the

purpose. Mahakasyapa who had heard of this Dharma of inconceivable liberation, praised it and said it had never been expounded before. He then said to Sariputra: “Like the blind who do not see images in various colours shown to them, all sravakas hearing this Dharma door to inconceivable liberation will not understand it. Of the wise men hearing about it, who will not set his mind on the quest of supreme enlightenment? What should we do to uproot for ever the rotten sravaka root as compared with this Mahayana, so that all sravakas hearing this doctrine of inconceivable liberation, shed tears of repentance and scream so loudly as to shake the great chiliocosm? As to the Bodhisattvas, they are all happy to receive this Dharma reverently by placing it on the tops of their heads. If a Bodhisattva believes and practices this Dharma door to inconceivable liberation, all demons cannot oppose him.”

When Mahakasyapa spoke these words, thirty-two thousand sons of the devas set their minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment. At that time, Vimalakirti declared to Mahakasyapa: “Virtuous One, those who appear as kings of demons in countless worlds in the ten directions are mostly Bodhisattvas who have realized this inconceivable liberation and who use expedient devices (upaya) to appear as their rulers in order to convert living beings. Further, Mahakasyapa, countless Bodhisattvas in the ten directions appear as beggars asking for hands, feet, ears, noses, heads, brains, blood, flesh, skin and bones, towns and hamlets, wives and (female) slaves, elephants, horses, carts, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, agate, cornelian, coral, amber, pearl, jade shell, clothing, food and drink; most of these beggars are Bodhisattvas who have realized this inconceivable liberation and use expedient devices to test believers in order to cement their faith (in the Dharma). Because the Bodhisattvas who have realized inconceivable liberation possess the awe-inspiring power to bring pressure to bear upon (believers) and ask for inalienable things (to test them), but worldly men whose spirituality is low have no such (transcendental) powers and cannot do all this. These Bodhisattvas are like dragons and elephants which can trample (with tremendous force), which donkeys cannot do. This is called the wisdom and expedient methods (upaya) of the Bodhisattvas who have won inconceivable liberation.”

***Chapter Seven—Looking At Sentient Beings:*** Manjusri asked

Vimalakirti: “How should a Bodhisattva look at living beings?” Vimalakirti replied: “A Bodhisattva should look at living beings like an illusionist does at the illusory men (he has created); and like a wise man looking at the moon’s reflection in water; at his own face in a mirror; at the flame of a burning fire; at the echo of a calling voice; at flying clouds in the sky; at foam in a liquid; at bubbles on water; at the (empty) core of a banana tree; at a flash of lightning; at the (non-existent) fifth element (beside the four that make the human body); at the sixth aggregate (beside the five that make a sentient being); at the seventh sense datum (beside the six objects of sense); at the thirteenth entrance (ayatana-beside the twelve involving the six organs and six sense data); at the nineteenth realm of sense (beside the eighteen dhatus or fields of sense); at form in the formless world; at the (non-existent) sprout of a charred grain of rice; at a body seen by a srotapanna (who has wiped out the illusory body to enter the holy stream); at the entry of an anagamin (or a non-returning sravaka) into the womb of a woman (for rebirth); at an arhat still preserving the three poisons (of desire, anger and stupidity which he has eliminated forever); at a Bodhisattva realizing the patient endurance of the uncreated who is still greedy, resentful and breaking the prohibitions; at a Buddha still suffering from klesa (troubles); at a blind man seeing things; at an adept who still breathes air in and out while in the state of nirvanic imperturbability; at the tracks of birds flying in the air; at the progeny of a barren woman; at the suffering of an illusory man; at a sleeping man seeing he is awake in a dream; at a devout man realizing nirvana who takes a bodily form for (another) reincarnation; and at a smokeless fire. This is how a Bodhisattva should look at living beings.”

At that time, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “When a Bodhisattva so meditates how should he practise kindness (maitri)?” Vimalakirti replied: When a Bodhisattva has made this meditation, he should think that: a) Ought to teach living beings to meditate in the same manner; this is true kindness. b) Should practise causeless (nirvanic) kindness which prevents creativeness. c) Should practice unheated kindness which puts an end to klesa (troubles and causes of troubles). d) Should practice impartial kindness which covers all the three periods of time (which means that it is eternal involving past, future and present). e) Should practice passionless kindness which wipes out disputes. f)

Should practice non-dual kindness which is beyond sense organs within and sense data without. g) Should practice indestructible kindness which eradicates all corruption. h) Should practice stable kindness which is a characteristic of the undying self-mind. i) Should practice pure and clean kindness which is spotless like Dharmata. j) Should practice boundless kindness which is all-pervasive like space. k) Should practice the kindness of the arhat stage which destroys all bondage. l) Should practice the Bodhisattva kindness which gives comfort to living beings. m) Should practice the Tathagata kindness which leads to the state of thatness. n) Should practice the Buddha kindness which enlightens all living beings. o) Should practice spontaneous kindness which is causeless. p) Should practice Bodhi kindness which is one flavour (i.e. uniform and unmixed wisdom). q) Should practice unsurpassed kindness which cuts off all desires. r) Should practice merciful kindness which leads to the Mahayana (path). s) Should practice untiring kindness because of deep insight into the void and non-existent ego. t) Should practice Dharma-bestowing (dana) kindness which is free from regret and repentance. u) Should practice precepts (sila) upholding kindness to convert those who have broken the commandments. v) Should practice patient (ksanti) kindness which protects both the self and others. w) Should practice Zealous (virya) kindness to liberate all living beings. x) Should practice serene (dhyana) kindness which is unaffected by the five senses. y) Should practice wise (prajna) kindness which is always timely. z) Should practice expedient (upaya) kindness to appear at all times for converting living beings. aa) Should practice unhidden kindness because of the purity and cleanliness of the straightforward mind. bb) Should practice profound minded kindness which is free from discrimination. cc) Should practice undeceptive kindness which is without fault. dd) Should practice joyful kindness which bestows the Buddha joy (in nirvana). “Such are the specialities of Bodhisattva kindness.”

Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “What should be his compassion (karuna)?” Vimalakirti replied: “His compassion should include sharing with all living beings all the merits he has won.” Manjusri asked: “What should be his joy (mudita)?” Vimalakirti replied: He should be filled with joy on seeing others win the benefit of the Dharma with no

regret whatsoever.” Manjusri asked “What should he relinquish (upeksa)?” Vimalakirti replied: “In his work of salvation, he should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return.” Manjusri asked: “On what should he rely in his fear of birth and death?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should rely on the power of the Tathagata’s moral merits.”

Manjusri asked: “What should he do to win support from the power of the Tathagata’s moral merits?” Vimalakirti replied: “ He should liberate all living beings in order to win support from the power of the Tathagata’s moral merit.” Manjusri asked: “What should he wipe out in order to liberate living beings?” Vimalakirti replied: “When liberating living beings, a Bodhisattva should first wipe out their klesa (troubles and causes of troubles)?” Manjusri asked: “What should he do to wipe out klesa?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should uphold right mindfulness.”

Manjusri asked: “What should he do to uphold right mindfulness?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should advocate the unborn and the undying.” Manjusri asked: “What is the unborn and what is the undying?” Vimalakirti replied: “The unborn is evil that does not arise and the undying is good that does not end.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of good and evil?” Vimalakirti replied: “The body is the root of good and evil.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of the body?” Vimalakirti replied: “Craving is the root of the body.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of craving?” Vimalakirti replied: “Baseless discrimination is the root of craving.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of baseless discrimination?” Vimalakirti replied: “Inverted thinking is the root of discrimination.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of inverted thinking?” Vimalakirti replied: “Non-abiding is the root of inverted thinking.”

Manjusri asked: “What is the root of non-abiding?” Vimalakirti replied: “Non-abiding is rootless. Manjusri, from this non-abiding root all things arise.” A goddess (devakanya) who had watched the gods (devas) listening to the Dharma in Vimalakirti’s room appeared in bodily form to shower flowers on the Bodhisattvas and the chief disciples of the Buddha (in their honour). When the flowers fell on the Bodhisattvas, they fell to the ground, but when they fell on the chief disciples, they stuck to their bodies and did not drop in spite of all their efforts to shake them off. At that time, the goddess asked Sariputra why he tried to shake the flowers off. Sariputra replied: “I want to

shake off these flowers which are not in the state of suchness.” The goddess said: “Do not say these flowers are not in the state of suchness. Why? Because they do not differentiate, and it is you (alone) who give rise to differentiation. If you (still) differentiate after leaving home in your quest of Dharma, this is not the state of suchness, but if you no longer give rise to differentiation, this will be the state of suchness. Look at the Bodhisattvas whose bodies do not retain the flowers this is because they have put an end to differentiation. This is like a man taking fright who invites trouble for himself is like a man taking right and evil (people). So if a disciple fears birth and death, then form, sound, smell, taste and touch can trouble him, but if he is fearless he is immune from all the five sense data. (in your case). It is because the force of habit still remains that these flowers cleave to your body but if you cut it off, they will not stick to it.”

Sariputra asked: “How long have you been in this room?” The goddess replied: “My stay in this room is just like the Venerable Elder’s liberation.” Sariputra asked: “Do you then mean that you have stayed here for a long time?” The goddess retorted: “Does your liberation also involve time?” Sariputra kept silent and did not reply. The goddess then asked: “Why is the wise elder silent on this point?” Sariputra replied: “He who wins liberation does not express it in words; hence I do not know what to say!” The goddess said: “Spoken and written word reveal liberation. Why? For liberation is neither within nor without nor in between, and words also are neither inside nor outside nor in between. Therefore, Sariputra, liberation cannot be preached without using words. Why? Because all things point to liberation.”

Sariputra asked: “Do you then mean that there is no need to keep from carnality, hatred and stupidity to win liberation?” The goddess replied: “In the presence of those who are proud (of their superior knowledge) the Buddha said it is important to keep from carnality, hatred and stupidity in the quest of liberation; but where they are absent, He said that the underlying nature of carnality, hatred and stupidity (i.e. the self-nature) is identical with liberation. Sariputra exclaimed: “Excellent, goddess, excellent, what have you gained and experienced that gives you such an eloquence?” The goddess replied: “The fact that I neither gain nor experience anything gives me this

eloquence. Why is it so? Because he who (claims to) have won and experienced (something) is arrogant in the eye of the Buddha Dharma.” Sariputra asked: “Which of the three vehicles is your aim?” The goddess replied: “When I preach the sravaka Dharma to convert people, I appear as a sravaka; when I expound the (twelve) links in the chain of existence I appear as a pratyeka-buddha; and when I teach great compassion to convert them, I appear as a (teacher of) Mahayana. Sariputra, like those entering a campa grove who smell only the fragrance of campas to the exclusion of all other odours, those entering this room smell only the fragrance of Buddha merits and no longer like the aroma of achievements by sravakas and pratyeka-buddha.” 1) Sariputra, when Indra, Brahma, the four deva kings of the four heavens (guardians of the world), heavenly dragons, ghosts and spirits, etc. entered the room and heard this Upasaka (Vimalakirti) expound the right Dharma, they all took delight in smelling the fragrance of Buddha merits and developed the Mahayana mind before returning to their worlds. 2) Sariputra, I have stayed here for twelve years during which I have never heard the Dharmas of sravakas and pratyeka-buddhas but only the doctrine of great kindness (maitri) and great compassion (karuna) of the Bodhisattvas and the inconceivable Buddha Dharma. Sariputra, in this room there are always eight unusual manifestations: First, this room is illuminated by a golden light, which is the same by day and by night and does not depend on either sunlight or moonlight to light it up. Second, he who enters it is immune from all troubles caused by defilements. Third, this room is visited by Indra, Brahma, the four deva kings of the four heavens and Bodhisattvas from other realms. Fourth, the never-receding Dharma of the six paramitas is always expounded in it. Fifth, the most melodious heavenly music intoning countless Dharma doors (to enlightenment) is heard in it. Sixth, this room contains the four canons (of sutras, vinaya, sastras and miscellaneous scriptures) full of inexhaustible precious treasures for those who are (spiritually) poor. Seventh, when the Venerable Upasaka thinks of Sakyamuni Buddha, Amitabha Buddha, Aksobhya Buddha, the Buddha of Precious Virtues, the Buddha of Precious Flame, the Buddha of Precious Moonshine, the Buddha of Precious Majesty, the Invincible Buddha, the Buddha of the Lion’s Roar, the Buddha of All-Perfection, and countless other Buddhas in the ten directions, they all



come to expound the secrets of the esoteric Buddha Dharma, after which they return to their realms. Eighth, all majestic heavenly palaces and all pure lands of Buddhas appear in this room.

Sariputra, after witnessing these eight remarkable things in this room, who still seeks the sravaka Dharma?" Sariputra asked: "Why do not you change your female bodily form?" The goddess replied: "For the last twelve years, I have been looking in vain for a female bodily form; so what do you want me to change? This is like an illusionist who creates an illusory woman; is it correct to ask him to change this unreal woman?" Sariputra said: "No, because it is not a real body; into what then can it be changed?" The goddess said: "All phenomena (including forms) are also unreal. So why have you asked me to change my unreal female body?" At that time, she used her supernatural powers to change Sariputra into a heavenly goddess and herself into a man similar to Sariputra, and asked him: "Why do you change your female form?" Sariputra replied: "I do not know why I have turned into a goddess." The goddess said: "Sariputra, if you can change your female body, all women should also be able to turn into men. Like Sariputra who is not a woman but appears in female bodily form, all women are the same and though they appear in female form, they are fundamentally not women. Hence the Buddha said: 'All things are neither male nor female'." At that time, the goddess again used her supernatural powers to change Sariputra back to his (original) male body, and asked: "Where is your female body now?" Sariputra replied: "The form of a woman neither exists nor is non-existent." The goddess then declared: "Likewise, all things are fundamentally neither existing nor non-existent, and that which neither exists nor is non-existent is proclaimed by the Buddha." Sariputra asked: "When will you leave (die) here and where will you be reborn?" The goddess replied: "I shall be reborn like a Buddha by transformation." Sariputra interjected: "The Buddha's transformation body implies neither birth nor death." The goddess said: "Likewise all living beings (fundamentally) are subject to neither death nor birth." Sariputra asked: "When will you realize supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi)?" The goddess replied: "I shall realize supreme enlightenment when Sariputra returns to the worldly way of life." Sariputra retorted: "There is no such thing as myself (a holy man at the sravaka stage) returning to the worldly

way of life.” The goddess said: “There is also no such thing as myself realizing enlightenment. Why? Because bodhi (or enlightenment) is not an objective, which can be realized.” Sariputra retorted: “There are Buddhas as countless as sand grains in the Ganges, who have realized and will win supreme enlightenment; what will you say of them?” The goddess said: “The three periods of time (the past, future and present) are spoken of (to the common man) as being in line with worldly thinking but this does not mean that bodhi (which is timeless or eternal) is tied to the past, future and present.” She then asked Sariputra: “Sariputra, have you realized arhatship?” Sariputra replied: “I have realized it because I hold no concept of winning anything.” The goddess said: “Likewise, all Buddhas and great Bodhisattvas achieved their goals because they were free from the idea of winning supreme enlightenment.” At that time, Vimalakirti said to Sariputra: “This goddess has made offering to ninety-two lacs of Buddhas. She is able to play with the Bodhisattva transcendental powers, has fulfilled all her vows, has realized the patient endurance of the uncreate and has reached the never-receding Bodhisattva stage. In fulfillment of a vow, she appears at will (everywhere) to teach and convert living beings.”

**Chapter Eighth—The Buddha Path:** Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “How does a Bodhisattva enter the Buddha path?” Vimalakirti replied: “If a Bodhisattva treads the wrong ways (without discrimination), he enters the Buddha path.” Manjusri asked: “What do you mean by a Bodhisattva treading the wrong ways?” Vimalakirti replied: “(In his work of salvation) if a Bodhisattva is free from irritation and anger while appearing in the fivefold uninterrupted hell; is free from the stain of sins while appearing in (other) hells; is free from ignorance, arrogance and pride while appearing in the world of animals; is adorned with full merits while appearing in the world of hungry ghosts; does not show his superiority while appearing in the (heavenly) worlds of form and beyond form; is immune from defilements while appearing in the world of desire; is free from anger while appearing as if he were resentful; uses wisdom to control his mind while appearing to be stupid; appears as if he were greedy but gives away all his outer (i.e. money and worldly) and inner (i.e. bodily) possessions without the least regret for his own life; appears as if he broke the prohibitions while delighting in pure living and being apprehensive of committing even a minor

fault; appears as if he were filled with hatred while always abiding in compassionate patience; appears as if he were remiss while diligently practicing all meritorious virtues; appears as if he were disturbed while always remaining in the state of serenity; appears as if he were ignorant while possessing both mundane and supramundane wisdoms; appears as if he delighted in flattering and falsehood while he excels in expedient methods in conformity with straightforwardness as taught in the sutras; shows arrogance and pride while he is as humble as a bridge; appears as if he were tormented by troubles while his mind remains pure and clean; appears in the realm of demons while defeating heterodox doctrines to conform with the Buddha wisdom; appears in the realm of sravakas where he expounds the unheard of supreme Dharma; appears in the realm of pratyeka-buddhas where he converts living beings in fulfillment of great compassion; appears amongst the poor but extends to them his precious hand whose merits are inexhaustible; appears amongst the crippled and disabled with his own body adorned with the excellent physical marks (of the Buddha); appears amongst the lower classes but grows the seed of the Buddha nature with all relevant merits; appears amongst the emaciated and ugly showing his strong body to the admiration of them all; appears as an old and ill man but is actually free from all ailments with no fear of death; appears as having all the necessities of life but always sees into impermanence and is free from greed; appears to have wives, concubines and maids but always keeps away from the morass of the five desires; appears amongst the dull-witted and stammerers to help them win the power of speech derived from the perfect control of mind; appears amongst heretics to teach orthodoxy and deliver all living beings; enters all worlds of existence to help them uproot the causes leading thereto; and appears as if entering nirvana but without cutting off birth and death; Manjusri, this Bodhisattva can tread heterodox ways because he has access to the Buddha path.”

Vimalakirti then asked Manjusri: “What are the seeds of the Tathagata?” Manjusri replied: a) “Body is a seed of the Tathagata. b) Ignorance and craving are its (two) seeds. c) Desire, hate and stupidity its (three) seeds. d) The four inverted views its (four) seeds. e) The five covers (or screens) its (five) seeds. f) The six organs of sense its (six) seeds. g) The seven abodes of consciousness its (seven) seeds. h) The

eight heterodox views its (eight) seeds. i) The nine causes of klesa (troubles and their causes) its (nine) seeds. j) The ten evils its (ten) seeds. To sum up, all the sixty-two heterodox views and all sorts of klesa are the seeds of Buddhahood. Vimalakirti asked Manjusri: “Why is it so?” Manjusri replied: “Because he who perceives the inactive (wu wei) state and enters its right (nirvanic) position, is incapable of advancing further to achieve supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi). For instance, high ground does not produce the lotus, which grows only in marshy land. Likewise, those perceiving nirvana and entering its right position, will not develop into Buddhahood, whereas living beings in the mire of klesa can eventually develop the Buddha Dharma. This is also like seeds scattered in the void, which do not grow, but if they are planted in manured fields they will yield good harvests.

Thus, those entering the right position (of nirvana) do not develop the Buddha Dharma, whereas those whose view of the ego is as great as (Mount) Sumeru may (because of the misery of life) eventually set their minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment, thereby developing the Buddha Dharma. “Therefore, we should know that all sorts of klesa are the seeds of the Tathagata. This is like one who does not plunge into the ocean will never find the priceless pearl. Likewise, a man who does not enter the ocean of klesa will never win the gem of all-knowledge (sarvajna).” At that time, Mahakasyapa exclaimed : “Excellent, Manjusri, excellent, your sayings are most gratifying. As you have said, those suffering from klesa are the seeds of the Tathagata. So we are no longer capable of developing a mind set on enlightenment. Even those committing the five deadly sins can eventually set their minds on the quest of the Buddha Dharma but we are unable to do so, like persons whose defective organs prevent them from enjoying the five objects of the senses. Likewise, the sravakas who have cut off all bonds (of transmigration) are no longer interested in the Buddha Dharma and will never want to realize it. Therefore, Manjusri, the worldly man still reacts (favourably) to the Buddha Dharma whereas the sravaka does not. Why? Because when the worldly man hears about the Buddha Dharma, he can set his mind on the quest of the supreme path, thereby preserving for ever the Three Treasures (of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), whereas the sravaka,

even if he passes his lifetime listening to the Dharma and witnessing the fearlessness of the Buddha, etc., will never dream of the supreme way.”

A Bodhisattva called Universal Manifestation, who was present asked Vimalakirti: “Who are your parents, wife and children, relatives and kinsmen, official and private friends, and where are your pages and maids, elephants and horse carts?” In reply Vimalakirti chanted the following: a) Wisdom-perfection is a Bodhisattva’s Mother, his father is expedient method, For the teachers of all living beings come, Only from these two (upaya and prajna). b) His wife is joy in Dharma’s law; Kindness and pity are his daughters; His sons morality and truthfulness; Absolute voidness his quiet abode. c) Passions are his disciples Whom he transforms at will. Bodhipaksita dharma are his friends. Helping him to win supreme enlightenment. d) All other perfections are his companions. The four winning methods are his courtesans, hymns, chants and intonations of Dharma are his melodies. Complete control over passions is his domain, passionlessness is his grove. The (seven) grades of bodhi are the flowers bearing the fruit of wisdom’s liberation. e) The pool of eightfold liberation holds calm water, which is clear and full. The seven blossoms of purity are well arranged to bathe this undefiled (Bodhisattva) man. f) Whose five supernatural powers are walking elephants and horses while the Mahayana is his vehicle, which controlled by the one mind, rolls through the eight noble paths. g) (Thirty-two) distinctive marks dignify his body; while (eighty) excellences add to it their grace. Shamefulness is his raiment, and deep mind his coiffure. h) The seven riches that he owns are his assets which, used to teach others, earn more dividends. Dedicating all merits (to Buddhahood), his practice of the Dharma has received wins far greater profit. i) The four dhyanas are his meditation bed, which from pure living originates. Much learning increases wisdom announcing self-awakening. j) His broth is the flavour of release. The precepts are his perfumed. k) Salve and pure mind is his bath. By killing the culprit klesa is his boldness unsurpassed. By defeating the four demons, he plants his triumphant banner as a bodhimandala. l) Though he knows there is neither birth nor death, he is reborn to show himself to all, appearing in many countries. Like the sun seen by everyone. m) When making offerings to countless Buddhas in the ten directions, he does

not discriminate between himself and them. n) Although He knows that Buddha lands are void like living beings. He goes on practicing the Pure Land (Dharma) to teach and convert men. o) In their kinds, features, voices and bearing, this fearless Bodhisattva can appear the same as they. p) He, knows the mischief demons, do but appears as one of them. Using wise expedient means to look like them at will. Or he appears old, ill and dying to make living beings realize that all things are but illusion, to free them from all handicaps. q) Or he shows the aeon's end with fire destroying heaven and earth, so that those clinging to permanence realize the impermanence of things. r) Then countless living beings call on this Bodhisattva, inviting Him to their homes to convert them to the Buddha path. In heterodox books, spells, skills, magic, arts and talents, he appears to be an expert to help and benefit (all) living beings. s) Appearing in their midst, he joins the Sangha in order to release them from defilement, to prevent their slipping into heresy. Then, is he seen as the sun, moon or heaven as Brahma or the lord of (all) the world. At times, as earth or water or as the wind and fire. t) When they fall ill or epidemics rage, he prepares medicinal herbs for them to take to cure their illness or infection. u) When famine prevails, he makes food and drink to save them from thirst and hunger, before teaching them the Dharma. v) In times of war, he teaches kindness mercy to convert living beings, so that they can live in peace. w) When armies line up for battle, he gives equal strength to both. With his authority and power, he forces them to be reconciled and live in harmony. x) To all countries where there are hells, he comes unexpectedly to relieve their sufferings. y) Wherever animals devour one another, he appears among them urging them to do good. z) Seeming to have the five desires, he is always meditating to upset the demons and prevent their mischief. aa) Like that thing most rare, a lotus blossoming in a scorching fire, he meditates amidst desires, which also is a thing most rare. bb) Or, he appears as a prostitute to entice those, who to lust is a given. First, using temptation to hook them, he then leads them to the Buddha wisdom. cc) He appears as a district magistrate, or as a chief of the caste of traders, a state preceptor or high official to protect living beings. dd) To the poor and destitute, he appears with boundless purse to advise and guide them until they develop the bodhi mind. ee) To the proud and arrogant, he appears as

powerful to overcome their vanity until they tread the path supreme. ff) Then he comes to comfort people who are cowards, first he makes them fearless, then urges them to seek the truth. gg) Or he appears without desires and acts, like a seer with five spiritual powers to convert living beings by teaching them morality, patience and mercy. hh) To those needing support and help, he may appear as a servant to please and induce them to grow the Tao mind. ii) Providing them with all they need to enter on the Buddha path; thus using expedient methods to supply them with all their needs. jj) Then as with boundless truth, his deeds are also endless; with his wisdom that has no limit, he frees countless living beings. kk) If all the Buddhas were to spend countless aeons in praising his merits, they could never count them fully. ll) Who, after hearing this Dharma, develops not the bodhi mind, can only be a worthless man without wisdom.”

**Chapter Nine—Initiation Into the Non-Dual Dharma:** At that time, Vimalakirti said to the Bodhisattvas present: “Virtuous Ones, each of you please say something about the non-dual Dharma as you understand it.” a) In the meeting, a Bodhisattva called “Comfort in the Dharma” said: “Virtuous Ones, birth and death are a duality but nothing is created and nothing is destroyed. Realization of this patient endurance leading to the uncreate is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” b) The bodhisattva called “Guardian of the Three Virtues” said: “Subject and object are a duality for where there is ego there is also (its) object, but since fundamentally there is no ego, its object does not arise; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” c) The Bodhisattva “Never Winking” said: “Responsiveness (vedana, the second aggregate) and unresponsiveness are a duality. If there is no response to phenomena, the latter cannot be found anywhere; hence there is neither accepting nor rejecting (of anything), and neither karmic activity nor discrimination; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” d) The Bodhisattva “Highest virtue” said: “Impurity and purity are a duality. When the underlying nature of impurity is clearly perceived, even purity ceases to arise. Hence this cessation (of the idea of purity) is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” e) The Bodhisattva “Winner of Samadhi by Looking at the Star” said: “(External) disturbance and (inner) thinking are a duality; when disturbance subsides, thinking comes to an end and the absence of

thought leads to non-dual Dharma.” f) The Bodhisattva “Skillful Eye” said: “Monistic form and formlessness are a duality. If monistic form is realized as (fundamentally) formless, with relinquishment of formlessness in order to achieve impartiality, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” g) The Bodhisattva “Wonderful Arm” said: “The Bodhisattva mind and the Sravaka mind are a duality. If the mind is looked into as void and illusory, there is neither Bodhisattva mind nor sravaka mind; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” h) The Bodhisattva Pusya said: “Good and evil are a duality; if neither good nor evil arises so that formlessness is realized to attain Reality, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” i) The Bodhisattva Simha (Lion) said: “Weal and woe are a duality; if the underlying nature of woe is understood, woe does not differ from weal. If the diamond (indestructible) wisdom is used to look into this with neither bondage nor liberation (coming into play), this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” j) The Bodhisattva “Lion’s Fearlessness” said: “The mundane and supra-mundane are a duality. If all things are looked into impartially, neither the mundane nor the supra-mundane will arise, with no differentiation between form and formlessness, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” k) The Bodhisattva “Pure Interpretation” said: “Activity (ju wei) and non-activity (wu wei) are a duality, but if the mind is kept from all mental conditions it will be (void) like space and pure and clean wisdom will be free from all obstructions. This is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” l) The Bodhisattva Narayana said: “The mundane and the supra-mundane are a duality but the underlying nature of the mundane is void (or immaterial) and is but the supra-mundane, which can be neither entered nor left and neither overflows (like the stream of transmigration) nor scatters (like smoke). This is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” m) The Bodhisattva “Skillful Mind” said: “Samsara and nirvana are a duality. If the underlying nature of samsara is perceived there exists neither birth nor death, neither bondage nor liberation, and neither rise nor fall. Such an understanding is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” n) The Bodhisattva “Direct Insight” said: “The exhaustible and the inexhaustible are a duality. If all things are looked into exhaustively, both the exhaustible and the inexhaustible cannot be exhausted; and the inexhaustible is identical with the void which is beyond both the



exhaustible and the inexhaustible. Such an interpretation is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” o) The Bodhisattva “Upholder of Universality” said: “The ego and non-ego are a duality. Since the ego cannot be found, where can the non-ego be found? He who perceives the real nature of the ego will not give rise to dualities; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” p) The Bodhisattva “Lightning Perception” said: “Enlightenment and unenlightenment are a duality, but the underlying nature of non-enlightenment is enlightenment which should also be cast away; if all relativities are discarded and replaced by non-dual impartiality, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” q) The Bodhisattva Priyadarsana said: “Form (rupa) and voidness are a duality, (but) form is identical with voidness, which does not mean that form wipes out voidness, for the underlying nature of form is void of itself. So are (the other four aggregates) reception (vedana), conception (sanjna), discrimination (samskara) and consciousness (vijñana- in relation to voidness). “Consciousness and voidness are a duality (yet) consciousness is identical with voidness, which does not mean that consciousness wipes out voidness for the underlying nature of voidness is void of itself. A thorough understanding of this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” r) The Bodhisattva “Understanding the Four Elements” said: “The four elements (earth, water, fire and air) and their voidness are a duality (but) the underlying nature of the four elements is identical with that of voidness. Like the past (before the four elements came into being) and the future (when they scatter away) which are both void, the present (when they appear) is also void. Identical understanding of the underlying nature of all four elements is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” s) The Bodhisattva “Deep Thought” said: “Eyes and form are a duality (but) if the underlying nature of the eye is known with neither desire nor anger nor stupidity in relation to things seen, this is nirvana. “Likewise, the ear and sound, the nose and smell, the tongue and taste, the body and touch, and the mind and ideation are dualities (but) if the underlying nature of the mind is known with neither desire, anger and stupidity in relation to things (heard, smelt, tasted, touched and thought), this is nirvana. Resting in this state (of nirvana) is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” t) The Bodhisattva “Inexhaustible Mind” said: “Charity-perfection (dana-paramita) and the dedication (pariṇāmana) of its

merits towards realizing the all-knowledge (sarvajna) are a duality, (but) the underlying nature of charity is dedication towards the All-knowledge. “Likewise, discipline perfection (sila-paramita), patience-perfection, (ksanti-paramita), zeal-perfection (viry-paramita), meditation-perfection (dhyana-paramita) and wisdom-perfection (prajna-paramita), with dedication to the All-knowledge, are (five) dualities, but their underlying natures are but dedication to the All-knowledge, while realization of their oneness is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” u) The Bodhisattva “Profound Wisdom” said: “Voidness, formlessness and non-activity are (three different gates to liberation, and when each is compared to the other two there are) three dualities, (but) voidness is formless and formlessness is non-active. For when voidness, formlessness and non-activity obtain, there is neither mind, nor intellect nor consciousness, and liberation through either one of these three gates is identical with liberation through all the three. This is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” v) The Bodhisattva “Unstirred Sense Organs” said: “Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are three different treasures and when each is compared to the other two there are three dualities (but) Buddha is identical with Dharma, and Dharma is identical with Sangha. For the three treasures are non-active (wu wei) and are equal to space, with the same equality for all things. The realization of this (equality) is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” w) The Bodhisattva “Unimpeded Mind” said: “Body and its eradication (in nirvana) are a duality but body is identical with nirvana. Why? Because if the underlying nature of body is perceived, no conception of (existing) body and its nirvanic condition will arise, for both are fundamentally non-dual, not being two different things. The absence of alarm and dread when confronting this ultimate state is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” x) The Bodhisattva “Superior Virtue” said: “The three karmas (produced by) body, mouth and mind (are different when each is compared to the other two and make three) dualities (but) their underlying nature is non-active; so non-active body is identical with non-active mouth, which is identical with non-active mind. These three karmas being non-active, all things are also non-active. Likewise, if wisdom (prajna) is also non-active, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” y) The Bodhisattva “Field of Blessedness” said: “Good conduct, evil conduct and motionlessness are (different

and when each is compared to the other two make three) dualities (but) the underlying nature of all three is voidness which is free from good, evil and motionlessness. The non-rising of these three is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” z) The Bodhisattva “Majestic Blossom” said: “The ego and its objective are a duality, (but) if the underlying nature of the ego is looked into, this duality vanishes. If duality is cast away there will be no consciousness, and freedom from consciousness is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” aa) The Bodhisattva “Treasure of Threefold Potency” said: “Realization implies subject and object which are a duality, but if nothing is regarded as realization, there will be neither grasping nor rejecting, and freedom from grasping and rejecting is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” bb) The Bodhisattva “Moon in Midheaven” said: “Darkness and light are a duality. Where there is neither darkness nor light, this duality is no more. Why? Because in the state of samadhi resulting from the complete extinction of sensation and thought there is neither darkness nor light, while all things disappear. A disinterested entry into this state is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” cc) The Bodhisattva Ratna Mudra (Precious Symbol) said: Joy in nirvana and sadness in samsara are a duality which vanishes when there is no longer joy and sadness. Why? Because where there is bondage, there is also (desire for) liberation, but if fundamentally there is no bondage nor liberation, there will be neither joy nor sadness; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” dd) The Bodhisattva “Gem on the Head” said: “Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are a duality, (but) he who dwells in (i.e. realizes) orthodoxy does not discriminate between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Keeping from these two extremes is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” ee) The Bodhisattva “Joy in Reality” said: “Reality and non-reality are a duality, (but) he who realizes reality does not even perceive it, still less non-reality. Why? Because reality is invisible to the ordinary eyes and appears only to the eye of wisdom. Thus (realization of) the eye of wisdom, which is neither observant nor unobservant, is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” ff) After the Bodhisattva had spoken, they asked Manjusri for his opinion on the non-dual Dharma. gg) Manjusri said: “In my opinion, when all things are no longer within the province of either word or speech, and of either indication or knowledge, and are beyond questions and answers, this is initiation into the non-dual

Dharma.” hh) At that time, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “All of us have spoken; please tell us what is the Bodhisattva’s initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” ii) Vimalakirti kept silent without saying a word. At that, Manjusri exclaimed: “Excellent, excellent! Can there be true initiation into the non-dual Dharma until words and speech are no longer written or spoken?” jj) After this initiation into the non-dual Dharma had been expounded, five thousand Bodhisattvas at the meeting were initiated into it thereby, realizing the patient endurance of the uncreate.

**Chapter Ten—The Buddha of the Fragrant Land:** Sariputra was thinking of mealtime and of the food for the Bodhisattvas in the meeting when Vimalakirti, who read his thought, said to him: “The Buddha taught the eight forms of liberation which you have received for practice; do you know mix your desire to eat with His Dharma? If you want to eat, please wait for a moment and you will have a rare treat.”

At that, Vimalakirti entered the state of samadhi and used his transcendental power to show to the assembly a country, which is above separated from this world by a distance represented by Buddha lands as countless as sand grains in forty-two Ganges rivers and which was called the country of All Fragrances, whose Buddha was called the Tathagata of the Fragrant Land, and was still there. The fragrance of that country surpassed all scents emitted by the devas in Buddha lands in the ten directions. In that Buddha land, there were neither sravakas nor pratyeka-buddhas but only pure and clean Bodhisattvas to whom that Buddha expounded the Dharma. All things there are formed by fragrances, such as palaces, the earth, gardens and parks which emit sweet scent, and the fragrance of its food spreads to countless worlds in the ten directions.

Its Buddha and Bodhisattvas were sitting down for the meal offered to them by the sons of devas who were all called Glorious Fragrances and were setting their minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment. This was seen by all those present in the meeting. Vimalakirti said to his listeners: “Virtuous Ones, who of you can go there to beg for food from that Buddha?” As Manjusri was noted for his supernatural power, all the Bodhisattvas kept silent. At that time, Vimalakirti said: “Are not the Virtuous Ones ashamed (of their inability to do so)? Manjusri

retorted: “As the Buddha has said, those who have not yet study and practiced Mahayana should not be slighted.”

Thereupon, Vimalakirti, without rising from his seat, used his transcendental power to create an illusory (bogus) Bodhisattva whose features were radiant and whose dignity was unsurpassable, overshadowing the whole assembly. He then said to this illusory Bodhisattva: “Ascend to the Fragrant Land to call on its Buddha, saying what I now tell you: ‘Upasaka Vimalakirti bows his head at your feet to pay his reverence and inquires respectfully about your happy tidings; he hopes you are well and have no difficulties (in converting living beings) and that your vigor is full. He wishes to receive some leftovers from your meal to do the salvation work in the saha world for the purpose of converting to Mahayana those of the small vehicle and of spreading the renown of the Tathagata to make it known everywhere’.”

After that, the illusory Bodhisattva ascended and was seen by the whole assembly to approach the Buddha of Fragrant Land and repeat what Vimalakirti had ordered him to say. When the Bodhisattvas there saw the messenger, they praised the rare visit, asking their Buddha: “Where does this Bodhisattva come from? Where is this world called saha? What does the small vehicle mean?”

Their Buddha replied: “There is a world called saha, which is below and is separated from here by Buddha lands as countless as the sand grains in forty-two Ganges rivers, whose Buddha is called Sakyamuni and is now staying in the midst of five turbid conditions, where he teaches the supreme Dharma to those clinging to the small vehicle. Over there is a Bodhisattva called Vimalakirti who has achieved inconceivable liberation and is expounding the Dharma to other (young) Bodhisattvas. Hence, he has created an illusory messenger to extol my name and praise this land so that they can earn more merits.”

The Bodhisattvas asked: “Who is that Bodhisattva who can create an illusory messenger and whose transcendental powers, fearlessness and ubiquity are so great?” That Buddha replied: “His (powers, fearlessness and ubiquity) are very great indeed. He used to send his illusory messengers to all places in the ten directions to perform the Bodhisattva work of salvation for the benefit of living beings.” That Buddha then filled a bowl of fragrant rice and handed it to the illusory

messenger. All his nine million Bodhisattvas declared they all wished to go to saha to pay reverence to Sakyamuni Buddha and to see Vimalakirti and the other Bodhisattvas there. That Buddha warned them: “You may go there but hide your fragrance, if not, the people give rise to the wrong thought of clinging to it. You should also change your appearance in order not to provoke their self-abasement. To avoid wrong views do not slight them. Why? Because all worlds in the ten directions are (fundamentally immaterial) like space and because all Buddhas wishing to convert those of the small vehicle do not reveal completely to them their own pure and clean lands.” At that, the illusory messenger received the bowl of fragrant rice and together with the nine million Bodhisattvas availed themselves of that Buddha’s and Vimalakirti’s transcendental powers, disappeared from the Fragrant Land and, a little later, arrived at Vimalakirti’s abode.

Vimalakirti then used his transcendental powers to make nine million lion thrones as majestic as those already there, for the visitors. The illusory messenger then handed him the bowl of rice the fragrance of which spread to the whole town of Vaisali and then to the whole great chiliocosm. Brahmin devotees at Vaisali perceived the fragrance and became elated; they praised the rare occurrence. Their chief, called “Lunar Canopy” took eighty-four thousand men to Vimalakirti’s house where they saw many Bodhisattvas seated on majestic lion thrones; they were jubilant and paid reverence to the Bodhisattvas and the Buddha’s chief disciples, and then stood at one side. Earthly and heavenly ghosts as well as the devas of the worlds of desire and of form who smelt the fragrance, came as well.

At that time, Vimalakirti said to Sariputra and the sravakas: “Virtuous Ones, you may now take the Tathagata’s immortal rice which has been infused with great compassion; do not give rise to the thought of limitation when taking it or you will not be able to digest it.” When some sravakas thought that the small quantity of rice seemed insufficient for the whole assembly. The illusory Bodhisattva said: “Do not use the little virtue and intelligence of a sravaka to estimate the Tathagata’s boundless blessing and wisdom; the four oceans are exhaustible but this rice is inexhaustible. If all men took and rolled it into a ball as large as (Mount) Sumeru, they would not have finished eating it by the end of the aeon. Why? Because food that has been left

over by those who have practiced boundless morality and discipline (sila), serenity (dhyana) and wisdom (prajna), liberation and knowledge of liberation, and who have won all merits, is inexhaustible.

Hence this bowl of rice will satisfy the whole meeting without being exhausted. The Bodhisattvas, Sravakas, devas and men who take it will experience comfort and joy, like the Bodhisattvas of all blessed pure lands. Their pores will give out profound fragrance which is like the scent of the trees in Fragrant Lands.” Vimalakirti then asked the visiting Bodhisattvas: “How does the Tathagata of your land preach the Dharma?” They replied: “The Tathagata of our land does not use word and speech to preach but uses the various fragrance to stimulate the devas in their observance of the commandments. They sit under fragrant trees and perceive how sweet the trees smell thereby realizing the samadhi derived from the store of all merits. When they realize this samadhi, they win all merits.”

These Bodhisattvas then asked Vimalakirti: “How does the World Honoured One, Sakyamuni Buddha, preach the Dharma?” Vimalakirti replied: “Living beings of this world are pig-headed (stubborn) and difficult to convert; hence the Buddha uses strong language to tame them. He speaks of hells, animals and hungry ghosts in their planes (realms) of suffering; of the places of rebirth for stupid men as retribution for perverse deeds, words and thoughts, i.e. for killing, stealing, carnality, lying, double tongue, coarse language, affected speech, covetousness, anger, perverted views (which are the ten evils); for stinginess, breaking the precepts, anger, remissness, confused thoughts and stupidity (i.e. the six hindrances to the six paramitas); for accepting, observing and breaking the prohibitions; for things that should and should not be done; for obstructions and non-obstructions; for what is sinful and what is not; for purity and filthiness; for the worldly and holy states; for heterodoxy and orthodoxy; for activity and non-activity; and for samsara and nirvana. Since the minds of those who are difficult to convert are like monkeys, various methods of preaching are devised to check them so that they can be entirely tamed. Like elephants and horses which cannot be tamed without whipping them until they feel pain and become easily managed, the stubborn of this world can be disciplined only with bitter and eager words.”

After hearing this, the visiting Bodhisattvas said: “We have never heard of the World Honoured One, Sakyamuni Buddha, who conceals his boundless sovereign power to appear as a beggar to mix with those who are poor in order to win their confidence (for the purpose of liberating them) and of the Bodhisattvas here who are indefatigable and so humble and whose boundless compassion caused their rebirth in this Buddha land.” Vimalakirti said: “As you have said, the Bodhisattvas of this world have strong compassion and their lifelong works of salvation for all living beings surpass those done in other pure lands during hundreds and thousands of aeons. Why? Because they achieved ten excellent deeds which are not required in other pure lands. What are these ten excellent deeds? They are: 1, charity (dana) to succour the poor; 2, precept-keeping (sila) to help those who have broken the commandments; 3, patient endurance (ksanti) to subdue their anger; 4, zeal and devotion (viryā) to cure their remissness; 5, serenity (dhyana) to stop their confused thoughts; 6, wisdom (prajna) to wipe out ignorance; 7, putting an end to the eight distressful conditions for those suffering from them; 8, teaching Mahayana to those who cling to Hinayana; 9, cultivation of good roots for those in want of merits; and 10, the four Bodhisattva winning devices for the purpose of leading all living beings to their goals (in Bodhisattva development). These are the ten excellent deeds.”

The visiting Bodhisattvas asked: “How many Dharmas should a Bodhisattva achieve in this world to stop its morbid growth (defilements) in order to be reborn in the Buddha’s pure land?” Vimalakirti replied: “A Bodhisattva should bring to perfection eight Dharmas to stop morbid growth in this world in order to be reborn in the Pure Land. They are: 1, benevolence towards all living beings with no expectation of reward; 2, endurance of sufferings for all living beings dedicating all merits to them; 3, impartiality towards them with all humility free from pride and arrogance; 4, reverence to all Bodhisattvas with the same devotion as to all Buddhas (i.e. without discrimination between Bodhisattvas and Buddhas); 5, absence of doubt and suspicion when hearing (the expounding of) sutras which he has not heard before; 6, abstention from opposition to the sravaka Dharma, 7, abstention from discrimination in regard to donations and offerings received with no thought of self-profit in order to subdue his



mind; and 8, self-examination without contending with others. Thus, he should achieve singleness of mind bent on achieving all merits; these are the eight Dharmas.”

After Vimalakirti and Manjusri had thus expounded the Dharma, hundreds and thousands of devas developed the mind set on supreme enlightenment, and ten thousand Bodhisattvas realized the patient endurance of the uncreate.

**Chapter Eleven—The Bodhisattva Conduct:** The Buddha was expounding the Dharma at Amravata park which suddenly became majestic and extensive while all those present turned golden hued. Ananda asked the Buddha: “World Honoured One, what is the cause of these auspicious signs, why does this place become extensive and majestic and why does the assembly turn golden hued?” The Buddha replied: “This is because Vimalakirti and Manjusri, with their followers circumambulating them, want to come here; hence these auspicious signs.” At Vaisali, Vimalakirti said to Manjusri: “We can now go and see the Buddha, so that we and the Bodhisattvas can pay reverence and make offerings to Him.” Manjusri said: “Excellent, let us go; it is now time to start.” Vimalakirti then used his transcendental powers to carry the whole meeting with the lion thrones on the palm of his right hand and flew (in the air) to the Buddha’s place. When they landed there, Vimalakirti bowed his head at His feet, walked round Him from the right seven times, and bringing his palms together, stood at one side. The Bodhisattvas left their lion thrones to bow their heads at His feet, and also walked round Him seven times and stood at one side. The Buddha’s chief disciples with Indra, Brahma (both as protectors of the Dharma) and the four deva kings of the four heavens, also left their lion thrones, bowed their heads at His feet, walked round Him seven times and then stood at one side.

The Buddha comforted the Bodhisattvas and ordered them to take their seats to listen to His teaching. After they had sat down the Buddha asked Sariputra: “Have you seen what the great Bodhisattvas have done with their transcendental powers?” Sariputra replied that he had. The Buddha asked: “What do you think of all this?” Sariputra answered: “I saw them do inconceivable (feats), which the mind can neither think of nor anticipate.” Ananda then asked the Buddha: “World Honoured One, the fragrance we are smelling was never

perceived before; what is it?" The Buddha replied: "Ananda, it is the fragrance given out by the pores of these Bodhisattvas." At that, Sariputra said to Ananda: "Our pores also give the same fragrance!" Ananda asked Sariputra: "Where does it come from?" Sariputra replied: "It is this Upasaka Vimalakirti who obtained what was left over from the Buddha's meal in the Fragrant Land, and those who ate it at his abode give out this fragrance from their pores." Ananda then asked Vimalakirti: "How long does this fragrance last?" Vimalakirti replied: "It lasts until the rice has been digested." Ananda asked: "How long does this take?" Vimalakirti replied: "It will be digested after a week. Ananda, sravakas who have not reached the right position (nirvana) will attain it after taking this rice which will then be digestible, and those who have attained nirvana will realize liberation of their minds (from the subtle conception of nirvana) and then the rice will be digested. Those who have not developed the Mahayana mind will develop it and then the rice will be digested. Those who have developed it and take this rice will achieve the patient endurance of the uncreate, and the rice will then be digestible. Those who have achieved the patient endurance of the uncreate and take this rice will reincarnate once more for final development into Buddhahood and the rice will be digested. Like an effective medicine which cures an ailment before wasting away, this rice will be digestible after it has killed all troubles and afflictions (klesa)."

Ananda said to the Buddha: "World Honoured One, it is indeed a rare thing that this fragrant rice performs the Buddha work of salvation." The Buddha said: "It is so, Ananda, it is so." a) There are Buddha lands where the Buddha light performs the work of salvation. b) Where the Bodhisattvas perform it. c) Where illusory men created by the Buddha do it. d) Where the Bodhi-trees do it. e) Where the Buddha's robe and bedding do it. f) Where the rice taken by the Buddha does it. g) Where parks and temples do it. h) Where (the Buddha's) thirty-two physical marks and their eighty notable characteristics do it. i) Where the Buddha's body (rupa-kaya) does it. j) Where empty space does it. k) Living beings practice discipline with success because of these causes. Also used for the same purpose are dream, illusion, shadow echo, the image in a mirror, the moon reflected in water, the flame of a fire, sound, voice, word, speech and writing. l)

The pure and clean Buddha land, silence with neither word nor speech, neither pointing, discerning, action nor activity. Thus, Ananda, whatever the Buddhas do by either revealing or concealing their awe-inspiring majesty, is the work of salvation.

Ananda, because of the four basic delusions (in reference to the ego) divided into 84,000 defilements which cause living beings to endure troubles and tribulations, the Buddhas avail themselves of these trials to perform their works of salvation. This is called entering the Buddha's Dharma door to enlightenment (Dharmaparyaya).

"When entering this Dharma door, if a Bodhisattva sees all the clean Buddha lands, he should not give rise to joy, desire and pride, and if he sees all the unclean Buddha lands he should not give rise to sadness, hindrance and disappointment; he should develop a pure and clean mind to revere all Tathagatas who rarely appear and whose merits are equal in spite of their appearance in different lands (clean and unclean) to teach and convert living beings. "Ananda, you can see different Buddha lands (i.e. clean and unclean) but you see no difference in space which is the same everywhere. Likewise, the physical bodies of Buddhas differ from one another but their omniscience is the same. "Ananda, the (underlying) nature of the physical bodies of the Buddhas, their discipline, serenity, liberation and full knowledge of liberation, their (ten) powers, their (four) fearlessnesses, their eighteen unsurpassed characteristics, their boundless kindness and compassion, their dignified deeds, their infinite lives, their preaching of the Dharma to teach and convert living beings and to purify Buddha lands are all the same. Hence, their titles of Samyaksambuddha, Tathagata and Buddha.

"Ananda, if I am to give you the full meaning of these three titles, you will pass the whole aeon without being able to hear it completely. Even if the great chilosom is full of living beings who are all good listeners and like you can hold in memory everything they hear about the Dharma, they will also pass the whole aeon without being able to hear my full explanation (of these three titles). For, Ananda, the Buddha's supreme enlightenment is boundless and his wisdom and power of speech are inconceivable." Ananda said: "From now on I dare no more claim to have heard much of the Dharma." The Buddha said: "Ananda, do not give way to backsliding. Why? Because I have said

that you have heard much more about the Dharma than the sravakas but not than the Bodhisattvas. Ananda, a wise man should not make a limited estimate of the Bodhisattva stage (because) the depths of the oceans can be measured but the Bodhisattva's serenity, wisdom, imperturbability, power of speech and all his merits cannot be measured. Ananda, let us put aside the Bodhisattva conduct. The transcendental powers which Vimalakirti has demonstrated today cannot be achieved by all sravakas and pratyeka-buddhas using their spiritual powers for hundreds and thousands of aeons." At that time, the visiting Bodhisattvas put their palms together and said to the Buddha: "World Honoured One, when we first saw this world we thought of its inferiority but we now repent of our wrong opinion. Why? Because the expedients (upaya) employed by all Buddhas are inconceivable; their aim being to deliver living beings they appear in different Buddha lands suitable for the purpose. World Honoured One, will you please bestow upon us some little Dharma so that when we return to our own land we can always remember you." The Buddha said to them: "There are the exhaustible and the inexhaustible Dharmas which you should study. What is the exhaustible? It is the active (yu wei or mundane) Dharma. What is the inexhaustible? It is the non-active (wu wei or supramundane) Dharma. As Bodhisattvas, you should not exhaust (or put an end to) the mundane (state); nor should you stay in the supramundane (state).

"What is meant by not exhausting the mundane (state)? It means not discarding great benevolence; not abandoning great compassion; developing a profound mind set on the quest of all-knowledge (sarvajna or Buddha knowledge) without relaxing for even an instant; relentless teaching and converting living beings; constant practice of the four Bodhisattva winning methods; upholding the right Dharma even at the risk of one's body and life; unwearied planting of all excellent roots; unceasing application of expedient devices (upaya) and dedication (parinamana); never-ending quest of the Dharma; unsparing preaching of it; diligent worship of all Buddhas; hence fearlessness when entering the stream of birth and death; absence of joy in honour and of sadness in disgrace; refraining from slighting non-practisers of the Dharma; respecting practisers of Dharma as if they were Buddhas; helping those suffering from klesa to develop the right

thought; keeping away from (desire and) pleasure with no idea of prizing such a high conduct; no preference for one's happiness but joy at that of others; regarding one's experience in the state of samadhi as similar to that in a hell; considering one's stay in samsara (i.e. state of birth and death) as similar to a stroll in a park; giving rise to the thought of being a good teacher of Dharma when meeting those seeking it; giving away all possessions to realize all-knowledge (sarvajna); giving rise to the thought of salvation when seeing those breaking the precepts; thinking of the (six) perfections (paramitas) as dear as one's parents; thinking of the (thirty-seven) conditions contributory to enlightenment as if they were one's helpful relatives; planting all excellent roots without any restrictions; gathering the glorious adornments of all pure lands to set up one's own Buddha land; unrestricted bestowal of Dharma to win all the excellent physical marks (of the Buddha); wiping out all evils to purify one's body, mouth and mind; developing undiminished bravery while transmigrating through samsara in countless aeons; untiring determination to listen to (an account of) the Buddha's countless merits; using the sword of wisdom to destroy the bandit of klesa (temptation) to take living beings out of (the realm of the five) aggregates (skandhas) and (twelve) entrances (ayatana) so as to liberate them for ever; using firm devotion to destroy the army of demons; unceasing search for the thought-free wisdom of reality; content with few desires while not running away from the world in order to continue the Bodhisattva work of salvation; not infringing the rules of respect-inspiring deportment while entering the world (to deliver living beings); use of the transcendental power derived from wisdom to guide and lead all living beings; controlling (dharani) the thinking process in order never to forget the Dharma; being aware of the roots of all living beings in order to cut off their doubts and suspicions (about their underlying nature); use of the power of speech to preach the Dharma without impediment; perfecting the ten good (deeds) to win the blessings of men and devas (in order to be reborn among them to spread the Dharma); practicing the four infinite minds (kindness, pity, joy and indifference) to teach the Brahma heavens; rejoicing at being invited to expound and extol the Dharma in order to win the Buddha's (skillful) method of preaching; realizing excellence of body, mouth and mind to win the Buddha's respect-

inspiring deportment; profound practice of good Dharma to make one's deeds unsurpassed; practicing Mahayana to become a Bodhisattva monk; and developing a never-receding mind in order not to miss all excellent merits. "This is the Bodhisattva not exhausting the mundane state.

"What is the Bodhisattva not staying in the supra-mundane state (nirvana)? It means studying and practicing the immaterial but without abiding in voidness; studying and practicing formlessness and inaction but without abiding in them; studying and practicing that which is beyond causes but without discarding the roots of good causation; looking into suffering in the world without hating birth and death (i.e. samsara); looking into the absence of the ego while continuing to teach all living beings indefatigably (relentlessly); looking into nirvana with no intention of dwelling in it permanently; looking into the relinquishment (of nirvana) while one's body and mind are set on the practice of all good deeds; looking into the (non-existing) destinations of all things while the mind is set on practicing excellent actions (as true destinations); looking into the unborn (i.e. the uncreate) while abiding in (the illusion of) life to shoulder responsibility (to save others); looking into passionlessness without cutting off the passion-stream (in order to stay in the world to liberate others); looking into the state of non-action while carrying out the Dharma to teach and convert living beings; looking into nothingness without forgetting about great compassion; looking into the right position (of nirvana) without following the Hinayana habit (of staying in it); looking into the non-reality of all phenomena which are neither firm nor have an independent nature, and are egoless and formless, but since one's own fundamental vows are not entirely fulfilled, one should not regard merits, serenity and wisdom as unreal and so cease practicing them. "This is the Bodhisattva not staying in the non-active (wu wei) state. "Further, to win merits, a Bodhisattva does not stay in the supramundane, and to realize wisdom he does not exhaust the mundane. Because of his great kindness and compassion, he does not remain in the supramundane, and in order to fulfill all his vows, he does not exhaust the mundane. To gather the Dharma medicines he does not stay in the supramundane, and to administer remedies he does not exhaust the mundane. Since he knows the illnesses of all living

beings he does not stay in the supramundane, and since he wants to cure their illnesses, he does not exhaust the mundane. “Virtuous Ones, a Bodhisattva practicing this Dharma neither exhausts the mundane nor stays in the supramundane. This is called the exhaustible and inexhaustible Dharma doors to liberation which you should study.” After hearing the Buddha expounding the Dharma, the visiting Bodhisattvas were filled with joy and rained (heavenly) flowers of various colours and fragrances in the great chiliocosm as offerings to the Buddha and His sermon. After this, they bowed their heads at the Buddha’s feet and praised His teaching which they had not heard before, saying: “How wonderful is Sakyamuni Buddha’s skillful use of expedient methods (upaya).” After saying this, they disappeared to return to their own land.

**Chapter Twelve—Seeing Aksobhya Buddha:** The Buddha then asked Vimalakirti: “You spoke of coming here to see the Tathagata, but how do you see Him impartially?” Vimalakirti replied: “Seeing reality in one’s body is how to see the Buddha. I see the Tathagata did not come in the past, will not go in the future, and does not stay in the present. The Tathagata is seen neither in form (rupa, the first aggregate) nor in the extinction of form nor in the underlying nature of form. Neither is He seen in responsiveness (vedana), conception (sanjna), discrimination (samskara) and consciousness (vijnana) (i.e. the four other aggregates), their extinction and their underlying natures. The Tathagata is not created by the four elements (earth, water, fire and air), for He is (immaterial) like space. He does not come from the union of the six entrances (i.e. the six sense organs) for He is beyond eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and intellect. He is beyond the three worlds (of desire, form and formlessness) for He is free from the three defilements (desire, hate and stupidity). He is in line with the three gates to nirvana and has achieved the three states of enlightenment (or three insights) which do not differ from (the underlying nature of) unenlightenment. He is neither unity nor diversity, neither selfness nor otherness, neither form nor formlessness, neither on this shore (of enlightenment) nor in mid-stream when converting living beings. He looks into the nirvanic condition (of stillness and extinction of worldly existence) but does not dwell in its permanent extinction. He is neither this nor that and cannot be

revealed by these two extremes. He cannot be known by intellect or perceived by consciousness. He is neither bright nor obscure. He is nameless and formless, being neither strong nor weak, neither clean nor unclean, neither in a given place nor outside of it, and neither mundane nor supramundane. He can neither be pointed out nor spoken of. He is neither charitable nor selfish; he neither keeps nor breaks the precepts; is beyond patience and anger, diligence and remissness, stillness and disturbance. He is neither intelligent nor stupid, and neither honest nor deceitful. He neither comes nor goes and neither enters nor leaves. He is beyond the paths of word and speech. He is neither the field of blessedness nor its opposite, neither worthy nor unworthy of worship and offerings. He can be neither seized nor released and is beyond 'is' and 'is not'. He is equal to reality and to the nature of Dharma (Dharmata) and cannot be designated and estimated, for he is beyond figuring and measuring. He is neither large nor small, is neither visible nor audible, can neither be felt nor known, is free from all ties and bondage, is equal to the All-knowledge and to the (underlying) nature of all living beings, and cannot be differentiated from all things. He is beyond gain and loss, free from defilement and troubles (klesa), beyond creating and giving rise (to anything), beyond birth and death, beyond fear and worry, beyond like and dislike, and beyond existence in the past, future and present. He cannot be revealed by word, speech, discerning and pointing. "World Honoured One, the body of the Tathagata being such, seeing Him as above-mentioned is correct whereas seeing Him otherwise is wrong."

Thereupon, Sariputra asked Vimalakirti: "Where did you die to be reborn here?" Vimalakirti asked back: "Is the (sravaka) Dharma which you have realized subject to death and rebirth?" Sariputra replied: "It is beyond death and birth." Vimalakirti asked: "If there is neither birth nor death, why did you ask me: 'Where did you die to be reborn here?' What do you think of illusory men and women created by an illusionist; are they subject to death and birth?" Sariputra replied: "They are not subject to death and birth. Have you not heard the Buddha say that all things are illusions?" Vimalakirti said: "Yes, if all things are illusions, why did you ask me where I died to be reborn here? Sariputra, death is unreal and deceptive, and means decay and destruction (to the worldly man), while life which is also unreal and deceptive means continuance



to him. As to the Bodhisattva, although he disappears (in one place) he does not put an end to his good (deeds), and although he reappears (in another) he prevents evils from arising.” At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra: “There is a (Buddha) land called the realm of Profound Joy whose Buddha is Aksobhya Buddha where Vimalakirti disappeared to come here.” Sariputra said: “It is a rare thing, World Honoured One, that this man could leave a pure land to come to this world full of hatred and harmfulness!” Vimalakirti asked Sariputra: Sariputra, what do you think of sunlight; when it appears does it unite with darkness?” Sariputra replied: “Where there is sunlight, there is no darkness.” Vimalakirti asked: “Why does the sun shine on Jambudvīpa (this earth)?” Sariputra replied: “It shines to destroy darkness.” Vimalakirti said: “Likewise, a Bodhisattva, although born in an unclean Buddha land, does not join and unite with the darkness of ignorance but (teaches and) converts living beings to destroy the obscurity of klesa.” As the assembly admired and wished to see the Immutable Tathagata, the Bodhisattvas and sravakas of the pure land of Profound Joy. The Buddha who read their thoughts said to Vimalakirti: “Virtuous man, please show the Immutable Tathagata and the Bodhisattvas and sravakas of the land of Profound Joy to this assembly who want to see them.” Vimalakirti thought that he should, while remaining seated, take with his hand the world of Profound Joy with its iron enclosing mountains, hills, rivers, streams, ravines, springs, seas, Sumerus, sun, moon, stars, planets, palaces of heavenly dragons, ghosts, spirits and devas, Bodhisattvas, sravakas, towns, hamlets, men and women of all ages, the Immutable Tathagata, his bo-tree (bodhi-tree) and beautiful lotus blossoms, which were used to perform the Buddha work of salvation in the ten directions, as well as the tree flights of gemmed steps linking Jambudvīpa (our earth) with Trayastrimsas by which the devas descended to earth to pay reverence to the Immutable Tathagata and to listen to his Dharma, and by which men ascended to Trayastrimsas to see the devas. All this was the product of countless merits of the realm of Profound Joy, from the Akanistha heaven above to the seas below and was lifted by Vimalakirti with his right hand with the same ease with which a potter raises his wheel, taking everything to earth to show it to the assembly as if showing his own head-dress. Vimalakirti then entered the state of samadhi and used his

supramundane power to take with his right hand the world of Profound Joy which he placed on earth. The Bodhisattvas, sravakas and some devas who had realized supramundane said to their Buddha: “World Honoured One, who is taking us away? Will you please protect us?”

The Immutable Buddha said: “This is not done by me but by Vimalakirti who is using his supramundane power.” But those who had not won supramundane powers neither knew nor felt that they had changed place. The world of Profound Joy neither expanded nor shrank after landing on the earth which was neither compressed nor straitened, remaining unchanged as before. At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha said to the assembly: “Look at the Immutable Tathagata of the land of Profound Joy which is majestic, where the Bodhisattvas live purely and the (Buddha’s) disciples are spotless.” The assembly replied: “Yes, we have seen.” The Buddha said: “If a Bodhisattva wishes to live in such a pure and clean Buddha land, he should practise the path trodden by the Immutable Tathagata.” When the pure land of Profound Joy appeared fourteen nayutas of people in this saha world developed the mind set on supreme enlightenment, and vowed to be reborn in the realm of Profound Joy. Sakyamuni Buddha then prophesied their coming rebirth there. After the (visiting Bodhisattvas had done their) work of salvation for the benefit of living beings in this world, the pure land of Profound Joy returned to its original place. And this was seen by the whole assembly. The Buddha then said to Sariputra: “Have you seen the world of Profound Joy and its Immutable Tathagata?” Sariputra replied: “Yes, World Honoured One, I have. May all living beings win a pure land similar to that of the Immutable Buddha and achieve supramundane powers like those of Vimalakirti!”

World Honoured One, we shall soon realize a great benefit resulting from our meeting and paying obeisance to this man now. And living beings, hearing this sutra now or after the Buddha’s nirvana, will also realize a great benefit; how much more so, if after hearing it, they believe, understand, receive and uphold it or read, recite, explain and preach it, and practice its Dharma accordingly? He who receives this sutra with both hands, will in reality secure the treasure of the Dharma-gem; if, in addition, he reads, recites and understands its meaning and practices it accordingly, he will be blessed and protected by all Buddhas. Those making offerings to this man (Vimalakirti), will

through him automatically make offerings to all Buddhas. He who copies this sutra to put it into practice, will be visited by the Tathagata who will come to his house. He who rejoices at hearing this sutra, is destined to win all knowledge (sarvajna). And he who can believe and understand this sutra, or even (any of) its four-line gathas and teaches it to others, will receive the (Buddha's) prophecy of his future realization of supreme enlightenment."

**Chapter Thirteen—The Offering of Dharma:** Thereupon, Sakra who was in the assembly, said to the Buddha: "World Honoured One, although I have listened to hundreds and thousands of sutras expounded by you and Manjusri, I did not hear of this inconceivable sutra of supramundane sovereign power and absolute reality. As I understand from your present preaching, if living beings listening to the Dharma of this sutra, believe, understand, receive, uphold, read and recite it, they will surely realize this Dharma. How much more so if someone practices it as expounded; he will shut all doors to evil destinies and will open up all doors to blessing; will win the Buddha's perfection; will overcome heresy; destroy the demons; cultivate bodhi; set up a place of enlightenment (bodhimandala) and follow in the Tathagata's footsteps.

World Honoured One, if there are people who receive, uphold, read, recite and practice this sutra, I and my followers will provide them with all the necessities of life. If this sutra is kept in a town or a hamlet, in a grove or a desert, I and my followers will come to the place of the preacher to listen to its Dharma. I shall cause the unbelievers to develop faith in this sutra. As to the believers of it I shall protect them."

The Buddha said: "Excellent, Sakra, excellent; it is gratifying to hear what you have just said. This sutra gives a detailed exposition of the inconceivable supreme enlightenment realized by past, future and present Buddhas. "Therefore, Sakra, if a virtuous man or woman receives, keeps, reads, recites and reveres this sutra, such an attitude is equal to making offering to past, future and present Buddhas. Sakra, if the great chiliocosm were full of countless Tathagatas as many as the sugar canes, bamboos, reeds, recites grains and hemp seeds in its fields; and if a virtuous man or woman who has passed either a whole aeon or decreasing kalpa to revere, honour, praise, serve and make

offerings to these Buddhas, and then after their nirvana (death) should build with relics from their bodies a seven-gemmed stupa as large as the four deva-heavens (put together) and of a height reaching the Brahma heaven with a majestic spire, to which he or she will make offerings of flowers, incense, strings of precious stones, banners and melodious music, during either a whole kalpa or in a decreasing one, Sakra, what do you think of his or her merits? Are they many?”

Sakra replied: “Very many, World Honoured One, and it is impossible to count his or her merits for hundreds and thousands of aeons.” The Buddha said: “Sakra, you should know that if another virtuous man or woman, after hearing this sutra of inconceivable liberation, believes, understands, receives, keeps, reads, recites and practices this sutra, his or her merits will surpass those of the former man or woman. Why? Because the bodhi (enlightenment) of all Buddhas originates from this Dharma, and since enlightenment is beyond all measuring, the merits of this sutra cannot be estimated.” The Buddha continued: “Long before an uncountable number of aeons in the past there was a Buddha called Bhaisajya-rajā (whose titles are:) Tathagata, Arhat, Samyaksambuddha, Vidya-Carana-Sampanna, Sugata, Lokavid, Anuttara, Purusa-Damya-Sarathi, Sasta Devamanusyanam, and Buddha-lokanatha or Bhagavan. His world was called Mahavyuha and the then aeon Alamkarakalpa. The Buddha Bhaisajya-rajā lived for twenty small kalpas. The number of sravakas reached thirty-six nayutas and that of Bodhisattvas twelve lacs. There, Sakra, was a heavenly ruler (cakravarti) called Precious Canopy who possessed all the seven treasures and was the guardian of four heavens. He had a thousand sons who were respectable and brave and had overcome all opposition.

“At the time Precious Canopy and his retinue had worshipped and made offerings to the Tathagata Bhaisajya-rajā for five aeons after which he said to his thousand sons: ‘You should respectfully make offerings to the Buddha as I have done.’ Obeying their father’s order they made offerings to the Tathagata Bhaisajya for five-aeons after which one of the sons called Lunar Canopy, while alone, thought: ‘Is there some other form of offering surpassing what we have made up to now? Under the influence of the Buddha’s transcendental power a deva in the sky said: “Virtuous man, the offering of Dharma surpasses

all other forms of offering.” Lunar Canopy asked: ‘What is this offering of Dharma?’ The deva replied: ‘Go to the Tathagata Bhaisajya who will explain it fully.’ Thereupon, Lunar Canopy came to the Tathagata Bhaisajya, bowed his head at his feet and stood at his side, asking: ‘World Honoured One, (I have heard that) the offering of Dharma surpasses all other forms of offering; what is the offering of Dharma?’

“The Tathagata replied: ‘Virtuous one, the offering of Dharma is preached by all Buddhas in profound sutras but it is hard for worldly men to believe and accept it as its meaning is subtle and not easily detected, for it is impeacable in its purity and cleanness. It is beyond the reach of thinking and discriminating; it contains the treasure of the Bodhi-sattva’s Dharma store and is sealed by the Dharani-symbol; it never backslides for it achieves the six perfections (paramitas); discerns the difference between various meanings; is in line with the bodhi Dharma; is at the top of all sutras; helps people to enter upon great kindness and great compassion; to keep from demons and perverse views, and to conform with the law of causality and the teaching on the unreality of an ego; a man, a living being and life and on voidness, formlessness, non-creating and non-uprising. It enables living beings to sit in a bodhimandala to turn the wheel of the law. It is praised and honoured by heavenly dragons, gandharvas, etc. It can help living beings to reach the Buddha’s Dharma store and gather all knowledge (sarvajna realized by) saints and sages, preach the path followed by all Bodhisattvas; rely on the reality underlying all things; proclaim the (doctrine of) impermanence, suffering; voidness and absence of ego and nirvana. It can save all living beings who have broken the precepts and keep in awe all demons, heretics and greedy people. It is praised by the Buddhas, saints and sages for it wipes out suffering from birth and death; proclaims the joy in nirvana as preached by past; future and present Buddhas in the ten directions. “If a listener after hearing about this sutra, believes, understands, receives, upholds, reads and recites it and uses appropriate methods (upaya) to preach it clearly to others, this upholding of the Dharma is called the offering of Dharma.

“Further, the practice of all Dharmas as preached; to keep in line with the doctrine of the twelve links in the chain of existence; to wipe out all heterodox views; to achieve the patient endurance of the

uncreate (anutpatti-dharma-ksanti) (as beyond creation); to settle once for all the unreality of the ego and the non-existence of living beings; and to forsake all dualities of ego and its objects without deviation from and contradiction to the law of causality and retribution for good and evil; by trusting to the meaning rather than the letter; to wisdom rather than consciousness; to sutras revealing the whole truth rather than those of partial revelation; and to the Dharma instead of the man (i.e. the preacher); to conform with the twelve links in the chain of existence (nidanas) that have neither whence to come nor wither to go; beginning from ignorance (avidya) which is fundamentally non-existent, and conception (samskara) which is also basically unreal, down to birth (jati) which is fundamentally non-existent; and old age and death (jaramarana) which are equally unreal. Thus, contemplated, the twelve links in the chain of existence are inexhaustible, thereby putting an end to the (wrong) view of annihilation. This is the unsurpassed offering of Dharma.”

The Buddha then said to Sakra: “Lunar Canopy, after hearing the Dharma from the Buddha Bhaisajya (the Buddha of Medicine), realized (only) the patience of Meekness and took off his precious robe to offer it to that Buddha, saying: “World Honoured One, after your nirvana, I shall make offerings of Dharma to uphold the right doctrine; will your awe-inspiring majestic help me to overcome the demons and to practise the Bodhisattva line of conduct?””

The Buddha Bhaisajya knew of his deep thought and prophesied: “Until the last moment you will guard the Dharma protecting citadel.” Sakra, at that time Lunar Canopy perceived the pure and clean Dharma, and after receiving the Buddha’s prophecy, believed it and left his home to join the order. He practiced the Dharma so diligently that he soon realized the five transcendental powers. In his Bodhisattvas development, he won the endless power of speech through his perfect control (dharani- of all external influences). After the nirvana of the Buddha Bhaisajya, he used this power of speech to turn the wheel of the law, spreading the Dharma widely for ten small aeons. Lunar Canopy was indefatigable (untiring) in his preaching of the Dharma and converted a million lacs of people who stood firm in their quest of supreme enlightenment, fourteen nayutas of people who set their minds on achieving the sravaka and pratyeka-buddha stages,

and countless living beings who were reborn in the heavens. Sakra, who was that Royal Precious Canopy? He is now a Buddha called the Tathagata Precious Flame and his one thousand sons are the thousand Buddhas of the (present) Bhadrakalpa (the virtuous aeon) whose first Buddha was Krakucchanda and last Buddha was Rucika. Bhikṣu Lunar Canopy was myself. Sakra, you should know that the offering of Dharma is the highest form of offering. Therefore, Sakra, you should make the offering of Dharma as an offering to all Buddhas.”

**Chapter Fourteen—Injunction to Spread This Sutra:** The Buddha then said: to Maitreya: “Maitreya, I now entrust you with the Dharma of supreme enlightenment which I have collected during countless aeons. In the third (and last) period of the Buddha kalpa you should use transcendental power to proclaim widely in Jambuvipa (the earth) (profound) sutras such as this one, without allowing them to be discontinued. For in future generations there will be virtuous men and women, as well as heavenly dragons, ghosts, spirits, gandharvas, and raksasas who will take pleasure in the great Dharma and will set their minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment; if they do not hear about such sutras they will miss a great advantage. For these people are fond of and believe in these sutras, which they will readily accept by placing them on their heads and which they will widely proclaim for the profit of living beings.

Maitreya, you should know that there are two categories of Bodhisattvas: those who prefer proud words and a racy style, and those who are not afraid (of digging out) the profound meanings which they can penetrate. Fondness of proud words and a racy style denotes the superficiality of a newly initiated Bodhisattva; but he who, after hearing about the freedom from infection and bondage as taught in profound sutras, is not afraid of their deep meanings which he strives to master, thereby developing a pure mind to receive, keep, read, recite and practise (the Dharma) as preached is a Bodhisattva who has trained for a long time.

Maitreya, there are two classes of newly initiated Bodhisattvas who cannot understand very deep Dharmas: those who have not heard about profound sutras and who, giving way to fear and suspicion, cannot keep them but indulge in slandering them, saying: ‘I have never heard about them; where do they come from?’, and those who refuse to

call on, respect and make offerings to the preachers of profound sutras or who find fault with the latter; these are two classes of newly initiated Bodhisattvas who cannot control their minds when hearing the deep Dharma, thereby harming themselves.

Maitreya, further, there are two categories of Bodhisattvas who harm themselves and fail to realize the patient endurance of the uncreate in spite of their belief and understanding of the deep Dharma: they are (firstly) those who belittle newly initiated Bodhisattva and do not teach and guide them; and (secondly) those who, despite their faith in the deep Dharma, still give rise to discrimination between form and formlessness.”

After hearing the Buddha expound the Dharma, Maitreya said: “World Honoured One, I have not heard all this before. As you have said, I shall keep from these evils and uphold the Dharma of supreme enlightenment which the Tathagata has collected during countless aeons. In future, if there are virtuous men and women who seek for Mahayana, I shall see to it that this sutra will be placed in their hands, and shall use transcendental power to make them remember it so that they can receive, keep, read, recite and proclaim it widely. “World Honoured One, in the coming Dharma ending age, if there are those who can receive, keep, read and recite this sutra and expound it widely, they will do so under the influence of my transcendental power.”

The Buddha said: “Excellent, Maitreya, excellent; as you have said, I will help you achieve this great joy.”

At that, all the Bodhisattvas in the assembly brought their palms together and said to the Buddha: After your nirvana, we will also proclaim this Dharma of supreme enlightenment widely in the ten directions and will guide preachers of Dharma to obtain this sutra.”

The four kings of devas said to the Buddha: “World Honoured One, in all towns and villages, in the groves and wilderness, and where there is this sutra and people reading, reciting, explaining and proclaiming it, I will lead local officials to go to their places to listen to the Dharma and to protect them so that no one dares to one within one hundred yojanas of their places to trouble them.”

The Buddha then said to Ananda: “Ananda, you too should receive, keep and spread this sutra widely.”



Ananda said: “Yes, World Honoured One, I have received this sutra and will keep it. What is its title?”

The Buddha said: “Ananda, its title is ‘The Sutra spoken by Vimalakirti’, or ‘The Inconceivable Door to Liberation’, under which you should receive and keep it.”

After the Buddha had expounded this sutra, the old upasaka Vimalakirti, Manjusri, Sariputra, Ananda and others as well as devas, asuras and all those present were filled with joy; believed, received and kept it; paid reverence and went away.



***Part Three***  
***Essential Summaries of***  
***the Quintessence of***  
***the Vimalakirti Sutra***



## *Chapter Fourteen*

### *Bodhisattvas in the Buddhaland In the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *II. A Summary of Buddhas' Lands:*

According to Buddhist traditions, there are many different Buddhas' lands in this universe. The first Buddha Land is the Eastern Paradise which is presided by Maitreya, the Coming Buddha. The Eastern Paradise is also the name of the Tusita heaven, the fourth devaloka in the six passion-realms (dục giới), or desire realms, the Delightful Realm, the abode of Bodhisattvas in their last existence before attaining Buddhahood. This heaven is between the Yama and Nirmanarati heavens. This heaven consists of an inner and an outer court. Its inner department is the Pure Land of Maitreya who, like Sakyamuni and all Buddhas, is reborn there before descending to earth as the next Buddha; his life there is 4,000 Tusita years, or (each day there is equal to 400 earth-years) 584 million such years. The second Buddha land is the Sukhavati or the Western Paradise. Sukhavati means the Western Land of Amitabha Buddha, the highest joy, name of the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha in the west. The Western Paradise which is outside the triple realm and beyond samsara and retrogression. The Western Paradise is one of the most important of the Buddha-fields to appear in the Mahayana. Amitabha Buddha created the Pure Land by his karmic merit. The Pure Land sect believes that through faithful devotion to Amitabha and through recitation of his name, one would be reborn there and lead a blissful life until entering Nirvana. However, the term Buddhaksetra, Buddha realm, land or country is absent from Hinayana. In Mahayana it is spiritual realm acquired by one who reaches perfect enlightenment, where he instructs all beings born there, preparing them for enlightenment.

For those who are currently cultivating enlightenment to becoming a Buddha, the Dharma Realm of Buddhas also means the universal Buddha, i.e. the dharmakaya. The Avatamsaka Sutra teaches: "The myriad dharmas are made from the mind alone." The Buddha is created by our mind. If our mind cultivates the Buddha-dharma, then

we will accomplish the Buddha Way. If our mind cultivates the Bodhisattva Path, eventually we will become a Bodhisattva. If our mind wishes to fall into the hells, we will surely head in the direction of the hells. That is why it is said, “The Ten Dharma Realms are not beyond this mind.” The Dharma Realm of Buddhas is not small because it comprises the three thousand great chiliocosmos, but at the same time, the Dharma Realm of Buddhas is not great either because in that Dharma realm, there are no arrogance, no pride, and no ego. The Buddha’s Dharma-body reaches to the ends of space and pervades throughout the Dharma Realm. It is nowhere present and yet nowhere absent. If we say it goes, then to where does it go? If we say it comes, then to where does it come? As a matter of fact, the Buddha’s Dharma-body is universally pervasive; it is not only in this world, but in worlds as many as tiny specks of dust. Limitlessly and boundlessly many worlds are all the Buddha’s Dharma-body; that is why it is said to be in worlds as many as motes of dust. The light emitted by the Buddhas in this Dharma Realm shines on the Buddhas in other Dharma Realms; and the light of the Buddhas in those other Dharma realms also shines on this Dharma Realm. Buddhas in the universe still emit lights to shine one another and these lights mutually unite, why not us, ordinary people? Buddhist disciples should unite our lights. There should not be any clashes between ordinary people. This shining means your light shines on me, and my light shines on you. Our lights should shine on one another throughout our way of cultivation to eliminate our ignorance.

### ***III. Bodhisattvas in the Buddhaland According to the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, the Buddha said: “Ratna-rasi, all species of living beings are the Buddha land sought by all Bodhisattvas. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva wins the Buddha land, according to the living beings converted by him (to the Dharma); according to the living beings tamed by him; according to the country (where they will be reborn to) realize the Buddha-wisdom and in which they will grow the Bodhisattva root. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva wins the pure land solely for the benefit of all living beings. For instance, a man can build palaces and houses on vacant

ground without difficulty, but he will fail if he attempts to build them in (empty) space. So, a Bodhisattva, in order to bring living beings to perfection seeks the Buddha land which cannot be sought in (empty) space.

Also according to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, Chapter On the Buddha Land, all Bodhisattvas in the Buddhaland were well known for having achieved all the perfections that lead to the great wisdom. They had received instructions from many Buddhas and formed a Dharma-protecting citadel. By upholding the right Dharma, they could fearlessly give the lion's roar to teach sentient beings; so their names were heard in the ten directions. They were not invited but came to the assembly to spread the teaching on the Three Treasures to transmit it in perpetuity. They had overcome all demons and defeated heresies; and their six faculties, karmas of deeds, words and thoughts were pure and clean; being free from the (five) hindrances and the (ten) bonds. They had realized serenity of mind and had achieved unimpeded liberation. They had achieved right concentration and mental stability, thereby, acquiring the uninterrupted power of speech. They had achieved all the (six) paramitas: charity (dana), discipline (sila), patience (ksanti), devotion (virya), serenity (dhyana) and wisdom (prajna), as well as the expedient method (upaya) of teaching which completely benefit self and others. However, to them, these realizations did not mean any gain whatsoever for themselves, so, that they were in line with the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti). They were able to turn the wheel of the Law that never turns back. Being able to interpret the (underlying nature of) phenomena, they knew very well the roots (propensities) of all living beings; they surpassed them all and realized fearlessness.

They had cultivated their minds by means of merits and wisdom, with which they embellished their physical features which were unsurpassable, thus, giving up all earthly adornments. Their towering reputation exceeded the height of Mount Sumeru. Their profound faith (in the uncreate) was unbreakable like a diamond. Their treasures of the Dharma illuminated all lands and rained down nectar. Their speeches were profound and unsurpassed. They entered deep into all (worldly) causes but cut off all heretical views, for they were already free from all dualities and had rooted out all (previous) habits. They

were fearless and gave the lion's roar to proclaim the Dharma, their voices being like thunder. They could not be gauged, for they were beyond all measures. They had amassed all treasures of the Dharma and acted like (skillful) seafaring pilots. They were well versed in the profound meanings of all Dharmas. They knew very well the mental states of all living beings and their comings and goings (within the realms of existence). They had reached the state near the unsurpassed sovereign wisdom of all Buddhas, having acquired the ten fearless powers (dasabala) giving complete knowledge and the eighteen different characteristics (of a Buddha as compared with Bodhisattvas (avenikadharma). Although they were free from (rebirth in ) evil existences, they appeared in five mortal realms as royal physicians to cure all ailments, prescribing the right medicine in each individual case, thereby, winning countless merits to embellish countless Buddha lands. Each living being derived great benefit from seeing and hearing them, for their deeds were not in vain. Thus, they had achieved all excellent merits.

Their names were: the Bodhisattva Beholding All Things As Equal, the Bodhisattva Beholding All Things As Unequal, the Bodhisattva Beholding All Things As Equal Yet As Unequal, the Bodhisattva of Sovereign Serenity, the Bodhisattva of Sovereign Dharma, the Bodhisattva of Dharma-aspects, the Bodhisattva of Light, the Bodhisattva of Glorious Light, the Bodhisattva of Great Majesty, the Bodhisattva Store of Treasures, the Bodhisattva Store of Rhetoric, the Bodhisattva of Precious Hands, the Bodhisattva of Precious Mudra, the Hand Raising Bodhisattva, the Hand Lowering Bodhisattva, the Always Grieved Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva Root of Joy, the Bodhisattva Prince of Joy, the Bodhisattva Discerner of Sound, the Bodhisattva Womb of Space, the Bodhisattva Holding the Precious Torch, the Bodhisattva of Precious Boldness, the Bodhisattva of Precious Insight, the Bodhisattva of Indra-jala, the Bodhisattva Net of Light, the Bodhisattva of Causeless Contemplation, the Bodhisattva of Accumulated Wisdom, the Bodhisattva Precious Conqueror, the Bodhisattva King of Heavens, the Bodhisattva Destroyer of Demons, the Bodhisattva with Lightning Merits, the Bodhisattva of Sovereign Comfort, the Bodhisattva of Majestic Merits, the Bodhisattva of the Lion's Roar, the Bodhisattva of Thundering Voice, the Bodhisattva



with a Voice like Rocks Knocking One Another, the Bodhisattva Fragrant Elephant, the Bodhisattva White Fragrant Elephant, the Bodhisattva of Constant Devotion, the Bodhisattva of Unremitting Care, the Bodhisattva of Wonderful Rebirth, the Bodhisattva Garland, the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasthama, the Bodhisattva Brahma-jala, the Bodhisattva of Precious Staff, the Unconquerable Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of Majestic Land, the Bodhisattva with a Golden Topknot, the Bodhisattva with a Pearl in His Topknot, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Bodhisattva Manjusri and other Bodhisattvas numbering in all thirty-two thousand.

There were also ten thousand Brahma-devas including Mahadeva Sikkhin, coming from the four quarters to hear about the Dharma. There were as well twelve thousand kings of heavens who came from the four quarters to sit in the assembly. There were also other devas of awe-inspiring majesty, dragons, spirits, yaksas, gandharas, asuras, garudas, kin-naras and mahoragas who came to sit in the assembly. Many bhiksus, bhiksunis, upasakas and upasikas also came to the assembly. Thus, surrounded by an incalculable number of people circumambulating to pay their respects, the Buddha was about to expound the Dharma. Like the towering Mount Sumeru emerging from the great ocean. He sat comfortably on the lion throne eclipsing the imposing assembly. A son of an elder (grhapati), called Ratna-rasi, came with five hundred sons of elders, with canopies decorated with the seven gems to pay respect and offer them to Him. By using His transcendental powers, the Buddha transformed all the canopies into a single one which contained the great chiliocosm. With Mount Sumeru and all the concentric ranges around it, great seas, rivers, streams, the sun, the moon, planets and stars, and the palaces of devas, dragons, and holy spirits appeared in the precious canopy, which also covered all the Buddhas who were expounding the Dharma in the ten directions.



## *Chapter Fifteen*

### *Practitioner Who Searches for the Dharma In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. Who Is A Practitioner in Buddhism?:*

According to Buddhist teachings, there is no need to avoid the world by seeking nirvana elsewhere. This is because first, all beings have Buddha-nature already, and second, when they realize emptiness, they will see that cyclic existence and nirvana are not different. In Buddhism, especially in the Zen Sect, is accurately aware of the limitations of language, and gears its practice to transcend it. When we cultivate we seek to turn to within and to discover our true nature. We do not look above, we do not look below, we do not look to the east or to the west, or to the north, or to the south; we look into ourselves, for within ourselves and there alone is the center upon which the whole universe turns. Therefore, in Buddhism, experience is stressed, not mere intellectual learning. Buddhist cultivation, especially meditation is one of the best methods to tame our bodies and to regulate our minds. Taming the body keeps it from acting in random, impulsive ways. Regulating the mind means not allowing it to indulge in idle thoughts, so it is always pure and clear. Then wherever we go, to the ends of space or the limits of the Dharma Realm, we are still right within our self-nature. Our inherent nature contains absolutely everything. Nothing falls outside of it. It is just our fundamental Buddha-nature.

Practitioners can be anybody, monks, nuns or lay people, Buddhists or non-Buddhists. So long as the practitioner is the one who tries to practice to attain partial or complete enlightenment. When cultivating, the practitioner can realize that this body is not real, that wishful thinking is also not real. Once realizing this falsity is understanding the Buddha's teaching of no self. The Buddha became enlightened from cultivation, especially practicing meditation; other masters also followed his step and attained their enlightenment as well. Then, do we have any other paths to follow if we want to become enlightenment? Devout Buddhists, especially lay people, should always remember that

the true spirit of Buddhist cultivation including practicing meditation is to use wisdom to see the truth; the body and mind are not real. When we are able to see the truth, we can then forsake greed and anger; our mind then will be calm and mindful, and we shall see the truth within ourselves; that is emancipation through wisdom. The Buddha can only provide us with guidelines of cultivation. It is up to us to apply these techniques in our daily life. Therefore, a practitioner is the one who is practicing Buddhist teachings in each moment of his life. Perhaps he has attained partial or complete enlightenment. When cultivating, the practitioner can realize that this body is not real, that the so-called mind is impermanent, that wishful thinking is also not real, that all things are without a so-called 'self'.

Buddhist Zen Patriarchs always say, "The Sutra is the Buddha's mouth, and cultivation is the Buddha's heart. The Buddha's mouth and heart are not two, not different." The Buddha's words come from his mind; thus how can cultivation and sutra be two different things? Talking about the Buddhist Zen School, many people still misinterpret the special concepts of cultivation, saying that Zen is an outside sect, not Buddhism because its instruction or teaching from outsiders, its special transmission outside of the teaching, its transmission is from mind to mind. This intuitive school which does not rely on texts or writings. However, after thorough understanding, we will see that Zen and sutra are not different at all. The Buddha became enlightened from cultivation, especially practicing Zen; other masters also followed his step and attained their enlightenment as well. Then, we practice meditation means we only follow the Buddha's path to enlightenment, not any other paths. The true spirit of Buddhist cultivation is to use wisdom to see the truth; the body and mind are not real. When we are able to see the truth, we can then forsake robbers: greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconducts, and lying which are always waiting to harm and to destroy completely our path of cultivation; then our mind then will be calm, and we shall see the truth within ourselves; that is emancipation through wisdom. Besides, when cultivating, especially practicing Zen, we also see the truth within ourselves; that is emancipation through wisdom. The Buddha can only provide us with guidelines of cultivation

and practicing Zen. It is completely up to us to apply these techniques in our daily life.

## ***II. Practitioner Who Searches for the Dharma:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Six, when arriving at Vimalakirti's home, Sariputra saw no seats in the room and thought: "Where do the Bodhisattvas and chief disciples sit?" Vimalakirti knew of Sariputra's thought and asked him: "Virtuous One, do you come here for a seat or for the Dharma?" Sariputra replied: "I come here for the Dharma and not for a seat." Vimalakirti said: "Hey Sariputra, he who searches for the Dharma does not even cling to his body and life, still less to a seat, for the quest of Dharma is not related to (the five aggregates): form (rupa), sensation (vedana), conception (sanjna), discrimination (samskara) and consciousness (vijnana); to the eighteen fields of sense (dhatu: the six organs, their objects and their perceptions); to the twelve entrances (ayatana: the six organs and six sense data that enter for or lead to discrimination); and to the worlds of desire, form and beyond form. Sariputra, a seeker of the Dharma, does not cling to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. A seeker of the Dharma does not hold the view of suffering, of cutting off all the accumulated causes, thereof, to put an end to it by treading the path to nirvana (i.e. the four noble truths). Why is it so? Because the Dharma is beyond all sophistry. For if one says: 'Because I see suffering, I cut off its accumulated causes to wipe it out by treading the path thereto', this is mere sophistry and is not the quest of the Dharma. "Sariputra, the Dharma is called nirvana (the condition of complete serenity and ultimate extinction of reincarnation); if you give rise to (the concept of) birth and death, this is a search for birth and death and is not the quest of Dharma. The Dharma is (absolute and) immaculate, but if you are defiled by the (thought of) Dharma and even that of nirvana, this is pollution which runs counter to the quest of Dharma. Dharma cannot be practiced and if it is put into practice, this implies something (i.e. an object) to be practiced and is not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is beyond grasping and rejecting, and if you grasp or reject it, this is grasping or rejecting (something else) but not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is beyond position but if you give it a place, this is clinging to space but not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is formless but if you rely

on form to conceive the Dharma, this is search for form but not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is not an abode but if you want to stay in it this is dwelling in (an objective) Dharma, but not the quest of (absolute) Dharma. Dharma can be neither seen, nor heard nor felt nor known but if you want to see, hear, feel and know it, this is the functioning of your (discriminatory) seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing but not the quest of Dharma. Dharma is (transcendentally) inactive (wu wei) but if you are set on worldly activities, this is a search for the worldly way of life but not the quest of Dharma. Therefore, Sariputra, the quest of Dharma does not imply seeking anything whatsoever.”

## *Chapter Sixteen*

### *Bodhi Mandala For Cultivation In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

According to Buddhism, Bodhi-mandala is a place, or seat where Buddha attained enlightenment. Bodhi-mandala is also a place of truth practitioners, where we strive in pursuit of the truth. A place for teaching, learning, or practising religion. Usually, the training of a Zen practitioner takes place at the Bodhi-mandala which also means the "seat of perfect wisdom" specifically built for this purpose. In reality, "Bodhi-mandala" has lost its original meaning and is nowadays used to designate any place of training; however, it still retains its primary connotation when it is applied to the Zen monastery. In Japan, a Bodhi-mandala is generally attached to all the principal Zen temples, used as the training place for Zen monks. He was allowed to teach Zen to his disciples. In Japan, all Zen monks who are ordained after the rite of the Zen school of Buddhism are supposed once in their life to enter a Dojo (Bodhi-mandala). A Zen master is no Zen master unless he goes through at least a few years of severe discipline at a so called Bodhi-mandala. A Zen master is no Zen master unless he goes through at least a few years of severe discipline at a so called Dojo. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Four, Glorious Light told the Buddha: "World Honoured One, once while I was leaving Vaisali, I met Vimalakirti who was entering it. I saluted and asked him 'Where does the Venerable Upasaka come from? Vimalakirti replied: 'From a bodhimandala (a holy site).' I asked him: 'Where is this bodhimandala?' Vimalakirti replied: 'The straightforward mind is the bodhimandala, for it is free from falsehood. The initiated mind is the bodhimandala, for it can keep discipline. The profound mind is the bodhimandala, for it accumulates merits. The enlightened mind is the bodhimandala, for it is infallible. Charity (dana) is the bodhimandala, for it does not expect reward. Discipline (sila) is the bodhimandala, for it fulfills all vows. Patience (ksanti) is the bodhimandala for it has access to the minds of all living beings. Zeal (viryā) is the bodhimandala, for it is free from being remiss. Serenity (dhyana) is the

bodhimandala, because of its harmonious mind. Wisdom (prajna) is the bodhimandala, for it discerns all things. Kindness (maitri) is the bodhimandala, for it treats all living beings on an equal footing. Compassion (karuna) is the bodhimandala, because of its great forbearance. Joy (mudita) is the bodhimandala, for it is pleasant. Indifference (upeksa) is the bodhimandala, for it wipes out both love and hate. Transcendental efficiency is the bodhimandala, for it perfects all the six supernatural powers (sadabhijna). Liberation is the bodhimandala, for it turns its back to all phenomenal conditions. Expedient devices (upaya) are the bodhimandala, for they teach and convert living beings. The four winning actions of a Bodhisattva are the bodhimandala, for they benefit all living beings. Wide knowledge through hearing the Dharma is the bodhimandala, for its practice leads to enlightenment. Control of the mind is the Bodhimandala, because of its correct perception of all things. The thirty-seven contributory stages to enlightenment are the bodhimandala, for they keep from all worldly activities. The four noble truths are the bodhimandala, because they do not deceive. The twelve links in the chain of existence are the bodhimandala, because of their underlying nature which is infinite. Troubles (klesa) are the bodhimandala, for their underlying nature is reality. Living beings are the bodhimandala, because they are (basically) egoless. All things are the bodhimandala, for they are empty. The defeat of demons is the bodhimandala, for it is imperturbable. The three realms (of desire, form and beyond form) are the bodhimandala, for fundamentally they lead to no real destination. The lion's roar is the bodhimandala, because of its fearlessness. The ten powers (dasabla), the four kinds of fearlessness and the eighteen unsurpassed characteristics of the Buddha are the bodhimandala, for they are without fault. The three insights are the bodhimandala, for they are free from all remaining hindrances. The knowledge of all things in the time of a thought is the bodhimandala, for it brings omniscience (sarvajna) to perfection. Thus, son of good family, a Bodhisattva should convert living beings according to the various modes of perfection (paramitas) and all his acts, including the raising or lowering of a foot, should be interpreted as coming from the seat of learning (bodhimandala); he should thus stay within the Buddha Dharma.'



## ***Chapter Seventeen***

### ***Pure Lands of Bodhisattvas In the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. An Overview of Pure Lands In Buddhist Point of View:***

The Pure Land is described as a place in which there is no suffering, no gender, and in which conditions are optimal for attainment of Buddhahood. The central doctrine of the Pure Land sects is that all who evoke the name of Amitabha with sincerity and faith in the saving grace of his vow will be reborn in his Pure Land of peace and bliss. Thus, the most important practice of contemplation in the Pure Land sects is the constant voicing of the words “Namo Amitabha Buddha” or “I surrender myself to Amitabha Buddha.” Pure Land is a paradise without any defilements. For the sake of saving sentient beings, through innumerable asankhya, all Buddhas cultivated immeasurable good deeds, and established a Pure Land to welcome all beings. Beings in this paradise strive to cultivate to attain Buddhahood. The Pure Land is described as a place in which there is no suffering, no gender, and in which conditions are optimal for attainment of Buddhahood.

#### ***II. Pure Lands of Bodhisattvas In the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, after chanting the gatha, Ratna-rasi said to the Buddha: “World Honoured One, these five hundred sons of elders have set their minds on seeking supreme enlightenments (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi); they all wish to know how to win the pure and clean land of the Buddha. Will the World Honoured One teach us the Bodhisattva deeds that leads to the realization of the Pure Land?” The Buddha said: “Excellent, Ratna-rasi, it is good that you can ask on behalf of these Bodhisattvas about deeds that lead to the realization of the Buddha’s Pure Land. Listen carefully and ponder over all what I now tell you.” At that time, Ratna-rasi and the five hundred sons of elders listened attentively to His instruction. The Buddha said: “Ratna-rasi, all species of living beings are the Buddha land sought by all Bodhisattvas. Why is it so? Because

a Bodhisattva wins the Buddha land, according to the living beings converted by him (to the Dharma); according to the living beings tamed by him; according to the country (where they will be reborn to) realize the Buddha-wisdom and in which they will grow the Bodhisattva root. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva wins the pure land solely for the benefit of all living beings. For instance, a man can build palaces and houses on vacant ground without difficulty, but he will fail if he attempts to build them in (empty) space. So, a Bodhisattva, in order to bring living beings to perfection seeks the Buddha land which cannot be sought in (empty) space.

Then, the Buddha told Bodhisattva Ratna-rasi: “You should know that the straightforward mind is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he realizes Buddhahood, beings who do not flatter will be reborn in his land. The profound mind is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he realizes Buddhahood, living beings who have accumulated all merits will be reborn there. The Mahayana (Bodhi) mind is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood all living beings seeking Mahayana will be reborn there. Charity (dana) is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who can give away (to charity) will be reborn there. Discipline (sila) is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he realizes Buddhahood, living beings who have kept the ten prohibitions will be reborn there. Patience (ksanti) is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings endowed with the thirty-two excellent physical marks will be reborn there. Devotion (virya) is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who are diligent in their performance of meritorious deeds will be reborn there. Serenity (dhyana) is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings whose minds are disciplined and unstirred will be reborn there. Wisdom (prajna) is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have realized samadhi will be reborn there. The four boundless minds (catvari apramanani) are the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have practiced and perfected the four infinities: kindness, compassion, joy and indifference, will be reborn there. The four persuasive actions (catuh-samgraha-vastu) are the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living

beings who have benefited from his helpful persuasion will be reborn there. The expedient methods (upaya) of teaching the absolute truth are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings conversant with upaya will be reborn there. The thirty-seven contributory states to enlightenment (bodhipaksika-dharma) are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have successfully practised the four states of mindfulness (smṛtyu-paśṭhāna), the four proper lines of exertion (samyakpra-hāna), the four steps towards supramundane powers (rddhipada), the five spiritual faculties (panca indriyani), the five transcendental powers (panca balani), the seven degrees of enlightenment (sapta bodhyanga) and the eightfold noble path (asta-marga) will be reborn in his land. Dedication (of one's merits to the salvation of others) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, his land will be adorned with all kinds of meritorious virtues. Preaching the ending of the eight sad conditions is the Buddhahood his land will be free from these evil states. To keep the precepts while refraining from criticizing those who do not is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, his country will be free from people who break the commandments. The ten good deeds are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, he will not die young, he will be wealthy, he will live purely, his words are true, his speech is gentle, his encourage will not desert him because of his gift of conciliation, his talk is profitable to others and living beings free from envy and anger and holding right views will be reborn in his land. So, Ratna-rasi, because of his straightforward mind, a Bodhisattva can act straightforwardly; because of his straightforward deeds, he realizes the profound mind; because of his profound mind his thoughts are kept under control; because of his controlled thoughts, his acts accord with the Dharma (he has heard); because of his deeds in accord with the Dharma, he can dedicate his merits to the benefit of others; because of this dedication, he can make use of expedient methods (upaya); because of his expedient methods, he can bring living beings to perfection; because he can bring them to perfection, his Buddha land is pure; because of his pure Buddha land, his preaching of the Dharma is pure; because of his pure preaching, his wisdom is pure; because of his pure wisdom, his mind is pure, and because of his pure mind, all his

merits are pure. Therefore, Ratna-rasi, if a Bodhisattva wants to win the pure land, he should purify his mind and because of his pure mind, the Buddha land is pure.”

As Sariputra was fascinated by the Buddha’s awe-inspiring majesty, he thought: “If the Buddha land is pure, because of the Bodhisattva’s pure mind, is it because the mind of the World Honoured One was not pure when He was still in the Bodhisattva stage, that this Buddha land (i.e. this world) is so unclean (as we see it now)?” The Buddha knew of his thought and said to Sariputra: “Are the sun and the moon not clean when a blind man does not see their cleanliness?” Sariputra said: “World Honoured One, this is the fault of the blind man and not that of the sun and the moon.” The Buddha said: “Sariputra, because of their (spiritual) blindness, living beings do not see the imposing majesty of the Tathagata’s pure land; this is not the fault of the Tathagata. Sariputra, this land of mine is pure but you do not see its purity.” Thereupon, Brahma with a tuft of hair on his head (resembling a conch) said to Sariputra: “Don’t think this Buddha land is impure. Why? Because I see that the land of Sakyamuni Buddha is pure and clean, like a heavenly palace.” Sariputra said: “I see that this world is full of hills, mountains, pits, thorns, stones and earth, which are all unclean.” Brahma said: “Because your mind is up and down and disagrees with the Buddha-wisdom, you see that this land is unclean. Sariputra, because a Bodhisattva is impartial towards all living beings and his profound mind is pure and clean in accord with the Buddha Dharma, he can see that this Buddha land is (also) pure and clean.” At that time, the Buddha pressed the toes of His (right ) foot on the ground and the world was suddenly adorned with hundreds and thousands of rare and precious gems of the great chiliocosm, like the precious Majestic Buddha’s pure land adorned with countless precious merits, which the assembly praised as never seen before; in addition each person present found himself seated on a precious lotus throne. The Buddha said to Sariputra: “Look at the majestic purity of this Buddha land of mine.” Sariputra said: “World Honoured One, I have never seen and heard of this Buddha land in its majestic purity.” The Buddha said: “This Buddha land of mine is always pure, but appears filthy so that I can lead people of inferior spirituality to their salvation. This is like the food of devas which takes various colours according to the

merits of each individual eater. So, Sariputra, the man whose mind is pure sees this world in its majestic purity.” When this Buddha land (i.e. the world) appeared in its majestic purity, the five hundred sons of elders, who came with Ratna-rasi, realized the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti), and eighty-four thousand people developed their minds set on Supreme Enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi). The Buddha then stopped pressing His toes on the ground and the world returned to its previous (filthy) condition. Thirty-two thousand devas and men aspiring to the sravaka stage understood the impermanence of all phenomena, kept from earthly impurities and achieved the Dharma-eye (which sees the truth of the four noble truths); eight thousand bhiksus kept from phenomena and succeeded in putting an end to the stream of transmigration (thus realizing arhatship).



## ***Chapter Eighteen***

### ***Meditation Practices & Sitting Meditation In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. Meditation Practices & Sitting Meditation in Buddhism:***

***A Summary of Meditation Practices in Buddhism:*** Zen is the Japanese pronunciation of the Chinese word “Ch’an” which in turn is the Chinese pronunciation of the Sanskrit technical term Dhyana, meaning meditation. The distinctive characteristic of the Buddha’s practice at the time of his enlightenment was his inner search. For this reason, many people believe that they meditate to become a Buddha. Yes, they’re right. The final goal of any Buddhist is becoming a Buddha; however, meditation itself will not turn any beings to a Buddha. Zen is the method of meditation and contemplation, the method of keeping the mind calm and quiet, the method of self-realization to discover that the Buddha-nature is nothing other than the true nature. However, the contemplative traditions of Buddhism are not simple like that. What distinguishes Buddhism from the contemplative traditions of other religions is the fact that, for Buddhism, meditation by itself is not enough. We might say that, for Buddhism, meditation is like sharpening a knife. We sharpen a knife for a purpose, let’s say, in order to cut something easily. Similarly, by means of meditation, we sharpen the mind for a definite purpose, in the case of cultivation in Buddhism, the purpose is wisdom. The wisdom that’s able us to eliminate ignorance and to cut off sufferings and afflictions. Before the moment of ‘Enlightenment’, the Buddha practiced the inward way for forty-nine days until suddenly He experienced enlightenment and became the Buddha. By turning inward upon Himself, he discovered His true nature, or Buddha-nature. This is the ultimate aim of Zen. Zen in Buddhism differs from meditation in other religions. Most other religions place a supreme God above man and then ask that man should pray to God and worship Him, implying that reality is to be sought externally. While Zen in Buddhism holds that reality is to be gotten hold of, not externally, but inwardly. Zen practice means trying to have a mind unmoved while living in this continuously moving

world. Zen practice means trying to be like the water, not like waves or bubbles. The water is unmoved, uncreated and unconditioned while the waves rise and fall, and the bubbles form and pop endlessly. Zen practitioners should always remember that our mind is like an endless stream of thoughts, Zen practice means to try to watch the mind continuously, and be like water, which equally flows all things thrown into that stream. According to Buddhism, every living being has within himself the Buddha-nature, and to become a Buddha is simply to turn inward to discover this Buddha-nature. This Buddha-nature is always present within, and eternally shining. It is like the sun and the moon. The sun and the moon continually shine and give forth light, but when the clouds cover them, we cannot see the sunlight or the moonlight. The goal of any Zen practitioner is to eliminate the clouds, for when the clouds fly away, we can see the light again. In the same way, human beings always have within ourselves the Buddha-nature, but when our desires, attachments and afflictions cover it up, it does not appear. In Buddhism, meditation functions the job of a torch which gives light to a dark mind. Suppose we are in a dark room with a torch in hand. If the light of the torch is too dim, or if the flame of the torch is disturbed by drafts of air, or if the hand holding the torch is unsteady, it's impossible to see anything clearly. Similarly, if we don't meditate correctly, we can't never obtain the wisdom that can penetrate the darkness of ignorance and see into the real nature of existence, and eventually cut off all sufferings and afflictions. It is obvious that the essentials of Buddhism or Zen focus on the practice with wisdom, not on ignorance. If our purpose to practice Zen is to gain supernatural powers, i.e., to release our soul from our body, and so forth, we are not practicing Zen Buddhism. To cultivate Zen in Buddhism, we have to realize our true nature and live in it. Therefore, sincere Buddhists should always remember that meditation is only a means, one of the best means to obtain wisdom in Buddhism. Furthermore, owing to obtaining the wisdom, one can see right from wrong and be able to avoid the extremes of indulgence in pleasures of senses and tormenting the body.

***A Summary of Sit in Meditation in Buddhism:*** To sit in dhyana (abstract meditation, fixed abstraction, contemplation). Its introduction to China is attributed to Bodhidharma, though it came earlier, and its



extension to T'ien-T'ai. We, Zen practitioners, should sit in meditation until our state is such that 'inside we have no body and mind,' outside we have no word, and afar there are no objects. This state is also described as "Thoughts of the past cannot be obtained, thoughts of the present cannot be obtained, and thoughts of the future cannot be obtained." Practice has been sitting and counting exhalations to ten. This is only one of many methods in Zen. It is possible to practice this way when we are sitting, but when we are driving, when we are talking, when we are watching television, when we are working and when we are playing, and so forth, how is it possible to count our breaths then? Remember! Sitting is only a small part of practicing Zen. The true meaning of sitting Zen is cut off all thinking and to keep not-moving mind. Zen practitioners should always remember the 'before thinking' method in all other activities in our daily life. To sit in dhyana (abstract meditation, fixed abstraction, contemplation). Its introduction to China is attributed to Bodhidharma, though it came earlier, and its extension to T'ien-T'ai. In fact, Zen has nothing to do with any particular posture. At its highest level, meditation is practiced in the midst of all sorts of activities, walking, standing, working, driving, etc. In the history of Zen, many masters attained enlightenment while washing dishes, cooking, carrying water, and collecting fuel. So whatever we do, we do with concentrated mind, we are meditating. If the mind is kept under control and the adept remains mindful of what he is doing, even washing dishes can become a vehicle of self-realization. However, sitting meditation is the main religious practice in all Zen traditions. It is also considered to be the primary means by which students attain realization and in most Zen monasteries it is practiced for several hours every day. Ideally, sitting meditation is practiced in a state of mind free from grasping or striving, and not focused on any particular object. The practice is based on the notion that all beings are already buddhas, and so during the practice of "sitting meditation," one attempts to drop off accumulated conceptions and analytical thinking in order to allow this fundamental buddha-nature to manifest spontaneously. We must be patient when practicing sitting meditation. We must learn to bear the pain in our back and legs because when we first practice to sit in meditation, we are unaccustomed to sitting that way and we will surely experience "hard

to bear” pain. The only way to overcome the pain is “patience.” Besides, we should not hope for anything, even hoping for enlightenment because the thought of hoping for enlightenment is itself deluded. We cannot expect to sit in just several sessions of meditation or to sit today and get enlightened tomorrow. Thus, while in sitting meditation, try not to expect anything, try not to do it fast. Devout Buddhists should always remember that quiet sitting is very important, but true sitting does not depend on whether or not the body is sitting. We already know the story about Ma-Tsu doing hard sitting and Nan-Jue picking up the tile and polishing it. Remember that the words enlightenment, clear mind, red, white, and so on, are more or less names. If we say enlightenment is clear mind, then, what is clear mind? Clear mind is only a name; and enlightenment is also a name. All these names are nothing. In short, true sitting means to cut off all thinking and to keep not-moving mind. True meditation means to become clear. Beautiful words and hard sitting are important, but attachment to them is very dangerous, for once we are attached to the beautiful words, we will not be able to understand true sitting meditation.

## ***II. Meditation Practices In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

To practice meditation daily will help purify both the body and the mind at this very moment of life as the Buddha taught: “Pure Minds-Pure Lands.” To practice meditation daily will help tame the deluded mind at this very moment of life. According to the Buddhist Zen, to tame the deluded mind we must not have any thing in it (take the mind of non-existence or the empty mind). According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, the Buddha reminded Ratna-rasi Bodhisattva: “Ratna-rasi! Because of his straightforward mind, a Bodhisattva can act straightforwardly; because of his straightforward deeds he realizes the profound mind; because of his profound mind his thoughts are kept under control; because of his controlled thoughts his acts accord with the Dharma (he has heard); because of his deeds in accord with the Dharma he can dedicate his merits to the benefit of others; because of this dedication he can make use of expedient methods (upaya); because of his expedient methods he can bring living beings to perfection; because he can bring them to perfection his Buddha land is pure; because of his pure Buddha land his preaching of the Dharma is

pure; because of his pure preaching his wisdom is pure; because of his pure wisdom his mind is pure, and because of his pure mind all his merits are pure. Therefore, Ratna-rasi, if a Bodhisattva wants to win the pure land he should purify his mind, and because of his pure mind the Buddha land is pure.” When Upasaka Vimalakirti was sick; obeying the Buddha’s command, Manjusri Bodhisattva called on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health. Manjusri asked: “How does a sick Bodhisattva control his mind?” Vimalakirti replied: “A sick Bodhisattva should think thus: ‘My illness comes from inverted thoughts and troubles (klesa) during my previous lives but it has no real nature of its own. Therefore, who is suffering from it? Why is it so? Because when the four elements unite to form a body, the former are ownerless and the latter is egoless. Moreover, my illness comes from my clinging to an ego; hence I should wipe out this clinging.’” Vimalakirti added: “Now that he knows the source of his illness, he should forsake the concept of an ego and a living being. He should think of things (dharma) thus: ‘A body is created by the union of all sorts of dharmas (elements) which alone rise and fall, without knowing one another and without announcing their rise and fall.’ In order to wipe out the concept of things (dharmas) a sick Bodhisattva should think thus: ‘This notion of dharma is also an inversion which is my great calamity. So I should keep from it.’ What is to be kept from? From both subject and object. What does this keeping from subject and object mean? It means keeping from dualities. What does this keeping from dualities mean? It means not thinking of inner and outer dharmas (i.e. contraries) by the practice of impartiality. What is impartiality? It means equality (of all contraries e.g.) ego and nirvana. Why is it so? Because both ego and nirvana are void. Why are both void? Because they exist only by names which have no independent nature of their own. “When you achieve this equality you are free from all illnesses but there remains the conception of voidness which also is an illusion and should be wiped out as well.”” A sick Bodhisattva should free himself from the conception of sensation (vedana) when experiencing any one of its three states (which are painful, pleasurable and neither painful nor pleasurable feeling). Before his full development into Buddhahood (that is before delivering all living beings in his own mind) he should not wipe out vedana for his own benefit with a view to

attaining nirvana for himself only. Knowing that the body is subject to suffering he should think of living beings in the lower realms of existence and give rise to compassion (for them). Since he has succeeded in controlling his false views, he should guide all living beings to bring theirs under control as well. He should uproot their (inherent) illnesses without (trying to) wipe out non-existence dharmas (externals for sense data). For he should teach them how to cut off the origin of illness. What is the origin of illness? It is their clinging which causes their illness. What are the objects of their clinging? They are the three realms (of desire, form and beyond form). By what means should they cut off their clinging? By means (of the doctrine that) nothing whatsoever can be found, and (that) if nothing can be found there will be no clinging. What is meant by 'nothing can be found? It means (that) apart from dual views (There is nothing else that can be had). What are dual views? They are inner and outer views beyond which there is nothing." Vimalakirti added: "Manjusri, this is how a sick Bodhisattva should control his mind. To wipe out suffering from old age, illness and death is the Bodhisattva's bodhi (enlightened practice). If he fails to do so his practice lacks wisdom and is unprofitable. For instance, a Bodhisattva is (called) courageous if he overcomes hatred; if in addition he wipes out (the concept of) old age, illness and death he is a true Bodhisattva. A sick Bodhisattva should again reflect: Since my illness is neither real nor existing, the illnesses of all living beings are also unreal and non-existent. But while so thinking if he develops a great compassion derived from his love for living beings and from his attachment to this false view, he should (immediately) keep from these feelings. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva should wipe out all external causes of troubles (klesa) while developing great compassion. For (this) love and (these) wrong views result from hate of birth and death. If he can keep from this love and these wrong views he will be free from hatred, and wherever he may be reborn he will not be hindered by love and wrong views. His next life will be free from obstructions and he will be able to expound the Dharma to all living beings and free them from bondage. As the Buddha has said, there is no such thing as untying others when one is still held in bondage for it is possible to untie others only after one is free from bonds." Vimalakirti concluded: "Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should thus

control his mind while dwelling in neither the (state of) controlled mind nor its opposite, that of uncontrolled mind. For if he dwells in (the state of) uncontrolled mind, this is stupidity and if he dwells in (that of) controlled mind, this is the sravaka stage. Hence a Bodhisattva should not dwell in either and so keep from both; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. When staying in the realm of birth and death he keeps from its impurity, and when dwelling in nirvana he keeps from (its condition of) extinction of reincarnation and escape from suffering; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. That which is neither worldly nor saintly is Bodhisattva development (into Buddhahood). That which is neither impure nor pure is Bodhisattva practice. Although he is beyond the demonic state he appears (in the world) to overcome demons; this is Bodhisattva conduct. In his quest of all knowledge (sarvajna) he does not seek it at an inappropriate moment; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into the uncreated he does not achieve Buddhahood; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into nidana (or the twelve links in the chain of existence) he enters all states of perverse views (to save living beings); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he helps all living beings he does not give rise to clinging; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps from the phenomenal he does not lean on the voidness of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he passes through the three worlds (of desire, form and beyond form) he does not injure the Dharmata; this is the Bodhisattva conduct. Although he realizes the voidness (of thing) he sows the seeds of all merits; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he dwells in formlessness he continues delivering living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he refrains from (creative) activities he appears in his physical body; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps (all thoughts) from rising he performs all good deeds; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the six perfections (paramitas) he knows all the mental states of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he possesses the six supernatural powers he refrains from putting an end to all worldly streams; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four infinite states of mind, he does not wish to be reborn in the Brahma heavens, this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices meditation, serenity (dhyana), liberation and samadhi, he does not avail himself of these to

be reborn in dhyana heavens; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practice the four states of mindfulness he does not keep for ever from the karma of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four right efforts he persists in physical and mental zeal and devotion; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four Hinayana steps to supernatural powers he will continue doing so until he achieves all Mahayana supernatural powers; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five spiritual faculties of the sravaka stage he discerns the sharp and dull potentialities of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five powers of the sravaka stage he strives to achieve the ten powers of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the seven Hinayana degrees of enlightenment he discerns the Buddha's all-wisdom (sarvajna); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the eightfold noble truth (of Hinayana) he delights in treading the Buddha's boundless path; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices samathavipasyana which contributes to the realization of bodhi (enlightenment) he keeps from slipping into nirvana; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the doctrine of not creating and not annihilating things (dharma) he still embellishes his body with the excellent physical marks of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he appears as a sravaka or a pratyeka-buddha, he does not stray from the Buddha Dharma; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has realized ultimate purity he appears in bodily form to do his work of salvation; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he sees into all Buddha lands which are permanently still like space, he causes them to appear in their purity and cleanness; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has reached the Buddha stage which enables him to turn the wheel of the Law (to preach the Dharma) and to enter the state of nirvana, he does not forsake the Bodhisattva path; this is bodhisattva conduct."

### ***III. Sitting Meditation Helps Build A Peacefully Dwelling & Tranquil Mind***

Zen does not encourage practitioners to involve worshipping or praying to some supernatural being, but seeing into our true nature and realizing that our true nature is Buddha-nature. To arrive at this insight

we must cultivate ourselves, we must practice. How can we discover our true nature if we blindly cling to the scriptures and do not practice for ourselves? If we go to a meditation center and speak with a Zen master, sometimes he may answer our questions with silence. This is the silence of knowledge. It does not mean that the Zen master does not know how to answer; rather it means that he is trying to communicate that there are some things which cannot be explained in words, things which will ever remain in the dark until we discover them through our own experience. This is one of the three flavors taught by the Buddha. To sit in dhyana (abstract meditation, fixed abstraction, contemplation). Its introduction to China is attributed to Bodhidharma, though it came earlier, and its extension to T'ien-T'ai.

Vimalakirti wondered why the great compassionate Buddha did not take pity on him as he was confined to bed suffering from an indisposition. The Buddha knew of his thought and said to Sariputra: "Go to Vimalakirti to enquire after his health on my behalf." Sariputra said: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and enquire after his health. The reason is that once, as I was sitting in meditation under a tree in a grove, Vimalakirti came and said: 'Sariputra, meditation is not necessarily sitting. For meditation means the non-appearance of body and mind in the three worlds (of desire, form and no form); giving no thought to inactivity when in nirvana while appearing (in the world) with respect-inspiring deportment; not straying from the Truth while attending to worldly affairs; the mind abiding neither within nor without; being imperturbable to wrong views during the practice of the thirty-seven contributory stages leading to enlightenment: and not wiping out troubles (klesa) while entering the state of nirvana. If you can thus sit in meditation, you will win the Buddha's seal.'

We, Buddhist followers, should always see this, so that we can practice meditation on a regular basis to purify our body and mind. The exposition of meditation as it is handed down in the early Buddhist writings is more or less based on the methods used by the Buddha for his own attainment of enlightenment and Nirvana, and on his personal experience of mental development. The word meditation really is no equivalent for the Buddhist term "bhavana" which literally means 'development' or 'culture,' that is development of the mind, culture of

the mind, or ‘making-the-mind become.’ It is the effort to build up a calm, concentrated mind that sees clearly the true nature of all phenomenal things and realizes Nirvana, the ideal state of mental health. Meditation as practiced and experienced by the Buddha is twofold: Concentration of the mind (samatha or samadhi) that is one-pointedness or unification of the mind, and insight (vipassana, skt—vipasyana or vidarsana). Of these two forms, samatha or concentration has the function of calming the mind, and for this reason the word samatha or samadhi, in some contexts, is rendered as calmness, tranquility or quiescence. Calming the mind implies unification or “one-pointedness” of the mind. Unification is brought about by focussing the mind on one salutary object to the exclusion of all others. Meditation begins with concentration. Concentration is a state of undistractedness. What is concentration? What is its marks, requisites and development? Whatever is unification of mind, this is concentration; the four setting-up of mindfulness are the marks of concentration; the four right efforts are the requisites for concentration; whatever is the exercise, the development, the increase of these very things, this is herein the development of concentration. This statement clearly indicates that three factors of the samadhi group, namely, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration function together in support of each other. They comprise real concentration. It must be mentioned that the development of concentration or calm (samath or bhavana) as taught in Buddhism, is not exclusively Buddhist. Practitioners, before the advent of the Buddha, practiced different systems of meditation as they do now. India has always been a land of mysticism, but the Yoga then prevalent in India never went beyond a certain point. Meditation or Mental development, or to meditate upon the implications or disciplines of pain, unreality, impermanence, and the non-ego. Although different in forms and methods in different Buddhist schools, but has the same goal is to concentrate the mind of the cultivators, to calm and to clarify it as one would calm and clarify the surface of a turbulent body of water, so that the bottom of which can be seen. Once the surface of that turbulent water is pacified, one can see it’s bottom as when the mind is pacified, one can come to an experience or a state of awakening, liberation or enlightenment. In addition, diligent repetition of practice of meditation, if the cultivator



has not yet become one with the “absolute truth,” dualistic state of mind and distinction between subject and object disappeared in that person. Zen is also a process of concentration and absorption by which the mind is first tranquilized and brought to one-pointedness, and then awakened. The term “Dhyana” connotes Buddhism and Buddhist things in general, but has special application to the Zen (Ch’an) sects. As a Mahayana buddhist sect, Zen is a religious free of dogmas or creeds whose teachings and disciplines are directed toward self-consummation. For example, the full awakening that Sakyamuni Buddha himself experienced under the Bodhi-tree after strenuous self-discipline. In Vietnam, Zen sects comprise of Lin-Chi, T’ao-Tung, and Ch’u-Lin.



## *Chapter Nineteen*

### *Taming the Deluded Mind In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. Illusion-Mind In Buddhist Teachings:*

Illusion-mind is a mind results in complexity and confusion. This illusion (deluded, wrong, false, or misleading)-mind, which results in complexity and confusion in this world. To cultivate means to contemplate on this illusion-mind, which results in complexity and confusion. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that to tame the mind also called to cultivate the mind, or to maintain and watch over the mind, not letting it get out of control, become egotistical, self-centered, etc. In the beginning of Zen practice, most of us find that the primary thing we must work with is our busy and chaotic mind. However, we must be firm in our practice until our mind becomes clear and balanced, and is no longer caught by external objects, that is the time of a big change in our cultivation. At that time, we may be able to realize who we really are. A man who does not know how to adjust his mind according to circumstances would be like a corpse in a coffin. Turn your mind to yourself, and try to find pleasure within yourself, and you will always find therein an infinite source of pleasure ready for your enjoyment. Only when your mind is under control and put in the right path, it will be useful for yourself and for society. An unwholesome mind is not only danger to yourself, but also to the whole society. Remember all man-made calamities in the world is created by men who have not learned the way of mind control or men who don't know how to tame their minds. According to the Buddhist Zen, to tame the deluded mind we must not have any thing in it (take the mind of non-existence or the empty mind). In Buddhism, cultivating is simply transforming the mind, it is to say that we use some kind of inner discipline to transform the heart. In our daily life, we usually experience two contrary states of mind (that have direct bearing on human mind): happiness and suffering. Even though we don't want to further discuss about the consciousness in this subtitle, we all recognize that besides our concrete body we still have another part that

dominates the body. We all agree that the experiences of suffering and happiness do not originate or stem from the body itself, they originate from an inner abstract place which Buddhism calls “mind”. According to Buddhism, powerful mental experiences under the forms of thoughts and emotions are so strong that they have the capability to dominate all physical levels of experience. This is the key point in Buddhism, for from this point of view, we recognize that cultivating is transforming the mind, and transforming the mind means cultivating. And from this very viewpoint, we agree that our state of mind, including our attitudes, thoughts and emotions, plays a crucial role in our experiences of happiness and suffering.

## ***II. Taming the Deluded Mind In Accordance With Buddhist Teachings:***

One of the main purposes of meditation is to tame the deluded thoughts. When we are able to stay perfectly clear by cutting off all thinking and yet not falling into a trance-like sleep, this is called ‘quiet sitting’. When inside and outside become one, and no circumstances can hinder us, this is Zen. When we understand the real meaning of sitting Zen, we understand ourselves. In our mind there is a diamond sword. If we want to understand ourselves, take it and cut off good and bad, long and short, coming and going, high and low, Buddha and demons, etc. Let’s cut off all things. If we are not thinking, we are one with our action. We are the tea that we are drinking. We are the brush that we are painting with. Not-thinking is before thinking. When there exists “not-thinking”, we are the whole universe; the universe is us. This is exactly the Zen mind, absolute mind. It is beyond space and time, beyond the dualities of self and other, good and bad, life and death. The truth is just what it is. The truth is just verse is present in the tip of his brush. In fact, true freedom is freedom from thinking, freedom from all attachments, desires, and deluded thoughts, freedom from even from life and death.

In transforming the mind, Buddhists should remember that there’s no discipline can be used to force our mind. It must be done on the basis of voluntary acceptance. However, this voluntary acceptance or voluntary follow a spiritual discipline happens only after we ourselves have recognized that certain attitudes, thoughts, emotions and ways of

life are beneficial to us and to others. And the spiritual path is the only way that will help us transform our minds. However, to be able to transform our minds we must understand the way our attitudes, thoughts and emotion work. We must understand the differences between “wholesome” and “unwholesome”. In Buddhism, speaking is in no way cultivating, cultivating means practicing with our own energy and sincerity. If we say in order to reduce greed, hatred, ignorance, pride, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, lying, etc., we must have the mind of loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and renunciation. This is only an empty word. It is not enough to recognize that this is what is required to obtain a wholesome mind. It is not enough simply to wish that we should have more loving-kindness, more compassion, more joy or more renunciation. On the contrary, Buddhists must make an on going effort, again and again, to cultivate the positive aspects within us. The key for transforming the mind is a sustained effort and sincerity. To be able to step on the way of transforming the mind, Buddhists have no other choice but observing the rules and contemplating the way to examine how attitudes, thoughts and emotions arise in us through introspection. These will give us the real wisdom that can help us understand clearly what we should do and what we should not do with the wholesome and the unwholesome. This is the real way of transforming of the mind of a Buddhist.

In Buddhist teachings, control or regulate one’s mind also called to tame the mind or to cultivate the mind, or to maintain and watch over the mind, not letting it get out of control, become egotistical, self-centered, etc. A man who does not know how to adjust his mind according to circumstances would be like a corpse in a coffin. Turn your mind to yourself, and try to find pleasure within yourself, and you will always find therein an infinite source of pleasure ready for your enjoyment. Only when your mind is under control and put in the right path, it will be useful for yourself and for society. An unwholesome mind is not only danger to yourself, but also to the whole society. Remember all man-made calamities in the world is created by men who have not learned the way of mind control or men who don’t know how to tame their minds. As a matter of fact, Outside the mind, there is no other thing. Mind, Buddha, and all the living, these three are not different (the Mind, the Buddha and sentient beings are not three

different things). Zen practitioners should always remember that if the mind is allowed to function viciously and indulge in unwholesome thoughts, it can cause disaster, can even cause one's death. But on the other hand, a mind imbued with wholesome thoughts can cure a sick body. When the mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and right understanding, the effects it can produce are immense. Thus a mind with pure and wholesome thoughts leads to a healthy and relaxed life. Mind is such a subtle and intricate phenomenon that it is impossible to find two men of the same mind. Man's thoughts are translated into speech and action. Repetition of such speech and action gives rise to habits and finally habits form character. Character is the result of man's mind-directed activities and so the characters of human beings vary. Thus to understand the real nature of life, one has to explore the innermost recesses of one's mind which can only be accomplished by deep self-introspection based on purity of conduct and meditation. The Buddhist point of view is that the mind or consciousness is the core of our existence. Of all forces the force of mind is the most potent. It is the power by itself. All our psychological experiences, such as pain and pleasure, sorrow and happiness, good and evil, life and death, are not attributed to any external agency. They are the result of our own thoughts and their resultant actions. To tame the mind means to try to guide our minds to follow the wholesome path and to stay away from the unwholesome path. According to Buddhism teachings, training the mind doesn't mean to gain union with any supreme beings, nor to bring about any mystical experiences, nor is it for any self-hypnosis. It is for gaining tranquility of mind and insight for the sole purpose of attaining unshakable deliverance of the mind. For a long long period of time, we all talk about air, land and environment pollution, what about our mind pollution? Should we do something to prevent our minds from wandering far deep into the polluted courses? Yes, we should. We should equally protect and cleanse our mind. The Buddha once taught: "For a long time has man's mind been defiled by greed, hatred and delusion. Mental defilements make beings impure; and only mental cleansing can purify them." Devout Buddhists should always keep in mind that our daily life is an intense process of cleansing our own action, speech and thoughts. And we can only achieve this kind of cleansing through practice, not philosophical

speculation or logical abstraction. Remember the Buddha once said: “Though one conquers in battle thousand times thousand men, yet he is the greatest conqueror who conquers himself.” This is nothing other than “training of your own monkey mind,” or “self-mastery,” or “control your own mind.” It means mastering our own mental contents, our emotions, likes and dislikes, and so forth. Thus, “self-mastery” is the greatest empire a man can aspire unto, and to be subject to our own passions is the most grievous slavery. Zen practitioners should always remember that nothing exists outside the mind (consciousness), since all phenomena are projections of consciousness. The purpose of practicing meditation to take hold of our mind and to obtain the mindfulness of the mind. If the practitioner knows his own mind, he will not waste his time and effort, otherwise, his time and effort will be useless. To know your mind, you should always observe and recognize everything about it. This must be practiced at all times, while you are walking, standing, lying, sitting, speaking, or even when you are not speaking. The most important thing is to try not to be dominated by the distinction between extremes of good and bad, wholesome and unwholesome, just and unjust, etc. Whenever a wholesome thought arises, acknowledge it: “A wholesome thought has just arisen.” If an unwholesome thought arises, acknowledge it as well: “An unwholesome thought has just arisen.” Don’t dwell on it or try to get rid of it. To acknowledge it is enough. If they are still there, acknowledge they are still there. If they have gone, acknowledge they have gone. That way the practitioner is able to hold of his mind and to obtain the mindfulness of the mind. According to the Buddhist Zen, to tame the deluded mind we must not have any thing in it (take the mind of non-existence or the empty mind). In other words, in regulating our mind, everything must be dropped outside including the ten robbers: greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconducts, and lying are always waiting to harm and to destroy completely our path of cultivation. To be able to do all these, our life will have more peace, mindfulness, and happiness.

According to the Satipatthana Sutta in the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha taught on taming the deluded mind and cultivation of the mind and consciousnesses as follows: “Bhikkhus, does a Bhikhu abide contemplating mind as mind? Here a Bhikhu understands mind affected

by lust as mind affected by lust, and mind unaffected by lust as mind unaffected by lust. He understands mind affected by hate as mind affected by hate, and mind unaffected by hate as mind unaffected by hate. He understands mind affected by delusion as mind affected by delusion, and mind unaffected by delusion as mind unaffected by delusion. He understands contracted mind as contracted mind, and distracted mind as distracted mind. He understands exalted mind as exalted mind, and unexalted mind as unexalted mind. He understands surpassed mind as surpassed mind, and unsurpassed mind as unsurpassed mind. He understands concentrated mind as concentrated mind, and unconcentrated mind as unconcentrated mind. He understands liberated mind as liberated mind, and unliberated mind as unliberated mind. In this way he abides contemplating mind as mind internally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind externally, or he abides contemplating mind as mind both internally and externally. Or else, he abides contemplating in mind its arising factors, or he abides contemplating in mind its vanishing factors, or he abides contemplating in mind both its arising and vanishing factors. Or else mindfulness that ‘there is mind’ is simply established in him to the extent necessary for bare knowledge and mindfulness. And he abides independent, not clinging to anything in the world. That is how a Bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind.”

### ***III. Taming the Deluded Mind In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Buddhist Zen, to tame the deluded mind we must not have any thing in it (take the mind of non-existence or the empty mind). According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Upasaka Vimalakirti was sick; obeying the Buddha’s command, Manjusri Bodhisattva called on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health. Manjusri asked: “How does a sick Bodhisattva control his mind?” Vimalakirti replied: “A sick Bodhisattva should think thus: ‘My illness comes from inverted thoughts and troubles (klesa) during my previous lives but it has no real nature of its own. Therefore, who is suffering from it? Why is it so? Because when the four elements unite to form a body, the former are ownerless and the latter is egoless. Moreover, my illness comes from my clinging to an ego; hence I should wipe out this clinging.’ Now that



he knows the source of his illness, he should forsake the concept of an ego and a living being. He should think of things (dharma) thus: 'A body is created by the union of all sorts of dharmas (elements) which alone rise and all, without knowing one another and without announcing their rise and fall.' In order to wipe out the concept of things (dharmas) a sick Bodhisattva should think thus: 'This notion of dharma is also an inversion which is my great calamity. So I should keep from it.' What is to be kept from? From both subject and object. What does this keeping from subject and object mean? It means keeping from dualities. What does this keeping from dualities mean? It means not thinking of inner and outer dharmas (i.e. contraries) by the practice of impartiality. What is impartiality? It means equality (of all contraries e.g.) ego and nirvana. Why is it so? Because both ego and nirvana are void. Why are both void? Because they exist only by names which have no independent nature of their own. "When you achieve this equality you are free from all illnesses but there remains the conception of voidness which also is an illusion and should be wiped out as well.' A sick Bodhisattva should free himself from the conception of sensation (vedana) when experiencing any one of its three states (which are painful, pleasurable and neither painful nor pleasurable feeling). Before his full development into Buddhahood (that is before delivering all living beings in his own mind) he should not wipe out vedana for his own benefit with a view to attaining nirvana for himself only. Knowing that the body is subject to suffering he should think of living beings in the lower realms of existence and give rise to compassion (for them). Since he has succeeded in controlling his false views,, he should guide all living beings to bring theirs under control as well. He should uproot theirs (inherent) illnesses without (trying to) wipe out non-existence dharmas (externals for sense data). For he should teach them how to cut off the origin of illness. What is the origin of illness? It is their clinging which causes their illness. What are the objects of their clinging? They are the three realms (of desire, form and beyond form). By what means should they cut off their clinging? By means (of the doctrine that) nothing whatsoever can be found, and (that) if nothing can be found there will be no clinging. What is meant by 'nothing can be found? It means (that) apart from dual views (There is nothing else that can be had). What are

dual views? They are inner and outer views beyond which there is nothing. Manjusri, this is how a sick Bodhisattva should control his mind. To wipe out suffering from old age, illness and death is the Bodhisattva's bodhi (enlightened practice). If he fails to do so his practice lacks wisdom and is unprofitable. For instance, a Bodhisattva is (called) courageous if he overcomes hatred; if in addition he wipes out (the concept of) old age, illness and death he is a true Bodhisattva. A sick Bodhisattva should again reflect: Since my illness is neither real nor existing, the illnesses of all living beings are also unreal and non-existent. But while so thinking if he develops a great compassion derived from his love for living beings and from his attachment to this false view, he should (immediately) keep from these feelings. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva should wipe out all external causes of troubles (klesa) while developing great compassion. For (this) love and (these) wrong views result from hate of birth and death. If he can keep from this love and these wrong views he will be free from hatred, and wherever he may be reborn he will not be hindered by love and wrong views. His next life will be free from obstructions and he will be able to expound the Dharma to all living beings and free them from bondage. As the Buddha has said, there is no such thing as untying others when one is still held in bondage for it is possible to untie others only after one is free from bonds. Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should thus control his mind while dwelling in neither the (state of) controlled mind nor its opposite, that of uncontrolled mind. For if he dwells in (the state of) uncontrolled mind, this is stupidity and if he dwells in (that of) controlled mind, this is the sravaka stage. Hence a Bodhisattva should not dwell in either and so keep from both; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. When staying in the realm of birth and death he keeps from its impurity, and when dwelling in nirvana he keeps from (its condition of) extinction of reincarnation and escape from suffering; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. That which is neither worldly nor saintly is Bodhisattva development (into Buddhahood). That which is neither impure nor pure is Bodhisattva practice. Although he is beyond the demonic state he appears (in the world) to overcome demons; this is Bodhisattva conduct. In his quest of all knowledge (sarvajna) he does not seek it at an inappropriate moment; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into the uncreated he

does not achieve Buddhahood; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into nidana (or the twelve links in the chain of existence) he enters all states of perverse views (to save living beings); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he helps all living beings he does not give rise to clinging; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps from the phenomenal he does not lean on the voidness of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he passes through the three worlds (of desire, form and beyond form) he does not injure the Dharmata; this is the Bodhisattva conduct. Although he realizes the voidness (of thing) he sows the seeds of all merits; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he dwells in formlessness he continues delivering living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he refrains from (creative) activities he appears in his physical body; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps (all thoughts) from rising he performs all good deeds; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the six perfections (paramitas) he knows all the mental states of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he possesses the six supernatural powers he refrains from putting an end to all worldly streams; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four infinite states of mind, he does not wish to be reborn in the Brahma heavens, this Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices meditation, serenity (dhyana), liberation and samadhi, he does not avail himself of these to be reborn in dhyana heavens; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practice the four states of mindfulness he does not keep for ever from the karma of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four right efforts he persists in physical and mental zeal and devotion; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four Hinayana steps to supernatural powers he will continue doing so until he achieves all Mahayana supernatural powers; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five spiritual faculties of the sravaka stage he discerns the sharp and dull potentialities of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five powers of the sravaka stage he strives to achieve the ten powers of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the seven Hinayana degrees of enlightenment he discerns the Buddha's all-wisdom (sarvajna); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the eightfold noble truth (of Hinayana) he delights in treading

the Buddha's boundless path; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices samathavipasyana which contributes to the realization of bodhi (enlightenment) he keeps from slipping into nirvana; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the doctrine of not creating and not annihilating things (dharma) he still embellishes his body with the excellent physical marks of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he appears as a sravaka or a pratyeka-buddha, he does not stray from the Buddha Dharma; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has realized ultimate purity he appears in bodily form to do his work of salvation; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he sees into all Buddha lands which are permanently still like space, he causes them to appear in their purity and cleanness; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has reached the Buddha stage which enables him to turn the wheel of the Law (to preach the Dharma) and to enter the state of nirvana, he does not forsake the Bodhisattva path; this is Bodhisattva conduct." While Vimalakirti was expounding the Dharma, all the eight thousand sons of devas who had come with Manjusri, developed the profound mind set on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi).

In short, according to Buddhist scriptures, especially according to the Vimalakirti Sutra a deluded mind is the mental processes of living beings on greed, hatred and stupidity. Polluted thoughts comprise a wide range of thoughts. If we are greedy for delicious food, we have polluted thoughts on food. If we wish to listen to fine sounds, we have polluted thoughts on sounds. If we wish to experience sensual pleasures, we have polluted thoughts on sensual pleasures, and so on. If we practice meditation we can stop our idle thoughts and cultivate the Way with our true mind, then our merit and virtue will be measureless and boundless. But if we do not take time to cultivate, there is no use just talking dharma. According to the Study of Mind-Only, false thoughts are simply the objects of the six senses. If we understand this, we can reject false thoughts as soon as they appear. As a matter of fact, if we are determined to keep our mind clear of any thought, false thoughts automatically disappear. This is the simplest way of practicing meditation. When we are walking, standing, sitting or lying down, whenever a thought arises, we recognize it, but do not follow it, that is practicing of meditation. We do not have to wait for the

time to sit down in meditation to practice meditation. Thus, for Buddhist practitioners, we can practice meditation at any time, anywhere, while at work or at home, just realize the truth. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that it is very crucial that we maintain a clear mind to gain wisdom and remove ignorance. We must use our perfect wisdom to realize that delusions are false, illusory, and they will automatically disappear, and the most effective way to tame our deluded minds is that if we are able to disregard when false thoughts arise in our deluded minds, these delusive thoughts will naturally vanish.



## ***Chapter Twenty***

### ***Real Deva Eye In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. An Overview of Divine Eye In Buddhist Teachings:***

Divine eye or heavenly eye or unlimited eye means the eye of celestial beings, which is attainable by men in dhyana. It is to say, with the celestial eye, practitioners can see the minds of all sentient beings. Divine eyes, the first abhijna. Divine sight is unlimited vision which all things are open to it, large and small, near and distant, the destiny of all beings in future rebirths. It may be obtained among men by their human eyes through the practice of meditation, and as a reward or natural possession by those born in the deva heavens. This also means the viewpoint from which we investigate matters theoretically and discern their essential qualities. This is the scientific way of looking at things. When we take this view, we realize that water is formed by the combination of oxygen and hydrogen. From such a point of view, we can foretell when there will be a conjunction of light between two stars down to the year, month, day, hour, minute, and second. At the same time, we can estimate exactly how many millions of tons of petroleum are buried underground. Such a person, who has the ability of seeing things that an ordinary man cannot see, was called a clairvoyant in ancient times. A person who has divine eyes means eyes that see one thousand miles away, i.e., an extraordinary vision or knowledge. In Buddhism, clear vision of the saint, or supernatural insight which enables him to know the future rebirths of himself and all beings (future mortal conditions), one of the three enlightenments. The wisdom obtained by the deva eye. According to the Kosa sastra, the wisdom or knowledge that can see things as they really are is the complete universal knowledge and assurance of the deva eye. Divyacakṣu or Celestial (Divine) Eye, one of the six supernatural powers, which can see death and rebirth or the power to see anywhere any time, the eye with which we can see very distant things, the ability to see things and events at great distance, the ability to see the births and deaths of sentient beings everywhere.

## ***II. Real Deva Eye In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Three, Chapter on Disciples, the Buddha said to Aniruddha: “You call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Aniruddha said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health. For once when I was walking about while meditating to prevent sleepiness, a Brahma called, ‘The Gloriously Pure’, together with an entourage of ten thousand devas sent off rays of light, came to my place, bowed their heads to salute me and asked: ‘How far does your deva eye see?’ I replied: ‘Virtuous one, I see the land of Sakyamuni Buddha in the great chiliocosm like an amala fruit held in my hand.’ Vimalakirti (suddenly) came and said: ‘Hey, Aniruddha, when your deva eye sees, does it see form or formlessness? If it sees form, you are no better than those heretics who have won five supernatural powers. If you see formlessness, your deva eye is non-active (wu wei) and should be unseeing.’ “World Honoured One, I kept silent. And the devas praised Vimalakirti for what they had not heard before, They then paid reverence and asked him: ‘Is there anyone in this world who has realized the real deva eye?’ Vimalakirti replied: ‘There is the Buddha who has realized the real deva eye; He is always in the state of samadhi and sees all Buddha lands without (giving rise to) the duality (of subjective eye and objective form).’ At that time, Brahma and five hundred of his relatives developed the anuttara-samyak-sambodhi mind; they bowed their heads at Vimalakirti’s feet and suddenly disappeared. This is why I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health.”



## *Chapter Twenty-One*

### *Dharmas of Sameness in Ten Directions In the Spirit Of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. An Overview of Dharma In Buddhist Teachings:*

Generally speaking, dharma means things, events, and phenomena. Dharma also means duty, law or doctrine. The Dharma also means the cosmic law which is underlying our world, but according to Buddhism, this is the law of karmically determined rebirth. The Dharma that is the law of beginningless and endless becoming, to which all phenomena are subject according to causes and conditions. When dharma means phenomenon, it indicates all phenomena, things and manifestation of reality. All phenomena are subject to the law of causation, and this fundamental truth comprises the core of the Buddha's teaching. Dharma is a very troublesome word to handle properly and yet at the same time it is one of the most important and essential technical terms in Buddhism. Dharma has many meanings. A term derived from the Sanskrit root "dhr," which means "to hold," or "to bear"; there seems always to be something of the idea of enduring also going along with it. Originally, it means the cosmic law which underlying our world; above all, the law of karmically determined rebirth. The teaching of the Buddha, who recognized and regulated this law. In fact, dharma (universal truth) existed before the birth of the historical Buddha, who is no more than a manifestation of it. Today, "dharma" is most commonly used to refer to Buddhist doctrine and practice. Dharma is also one of the three jewels on which Buddhists rely for the attainment of liberation, the other jewels are the Buddha and the Samgha. Etymologically, it comes from the Sanskrit root "Dhri" means to hold, to bear, or to exist; there seems always to be something of the idea of enduring also going along with it. The most common and most important meaning of "Dharma" in Buddhism is "truth," "law," or "religion." Secondly, it is used in the sense of "existence," "being," "object," or "thing." Thirdly, it is synonymous with "virtue," "righteousness," or "norm," not only in the ethical sense, but in the intellectual one also. Fourthly, it is occasionally used in a most

comprehensive way, including all the senses mentioned above. In this case, we'd better leave the original untranslated rather than to seek for an equivalent in a foreign language.

According to Buddhism, dharma means Buddhist doctrine or teachings. The teaching of the Buddhas which carry or hold the truth. The way of understanding and love taught by the Buddha doctrine. The Buddha taught the Dharma to help us escape the sufferings and afflictions caused by daily life and to prevent us from degrading human dignity, and descending into evil paths such as hells, hungry ghosts, and animals, etc. The Dharma is like a raft that gives us something to hang onto as we eliminate our attachments, which cause us to suffer and be stuck on this shore of birth and death. The Buddha's dharma refers to the methods of inward illumination; it takes us across the sea of our afflictions to the other shore, nirvana. Once we get there, even the Buddha's dharma should be relinquished. The Dharma is not an extraordinary law created by or given by anyone. According to the Buddha, our body itself is Dharma; our mind itself is Dharma; the whole universe is Dharma. By understanding the nature of our physical body, the nature of our mind, and worldly conditions, we realize the Dharma. The Dharma that is the law of beginningless and endless becoming, to which all phenomena are subject according to causes and conditions. The Dharma, which comprises the spoken words and sermons of Sakyamuni Buddha wherein he elucidated the significance of the Unified Three Treasures and the way to its realization. The Dharma, the teaching imparted by the Buddha. All written sermons and discourses of Buddhas (that is, fully enlightened beings) as found in the sutras and other Buddhist texts still extant.

To Buddhist theories, nothing is real and permanent, the five aggregates make up beings, pillars and rafters make a house, etc. All is temporal and merely phenomenal, fallacious, and unreal. Names are only provisional symbol or sign. All dharmas are empirical combinations without permanent reality. All things are false and fictitious and unreal names, i.e. nothing has a name of itself, for all names are mere human appellations. In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha reminded Mahamati: "Mahamati! As they are attached to names, images, and signs, the ignorant allow their minds to wander away." Things which exist only in name, i.e. all things are

combinations of other things and are empirically named. All things or phenomena are combinations of elements without permanent reality, phenomena, empirical combinations without permanent reality. The phenomenal which no more exists than turtle's hair or rabbit's horns.

According to the Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra, the basic characteristic of all dharmas is not arising, not ceasing, not defiled, not immaculate, not increasing, not decreasing. The Buddha says: "He who sees the Dharma sees me." Dharma means the teaching of the Buddha. Dharma also means the doctrine of understanding and loving. Dharma means the doctrines of Buddhism, norms of behavior and ethical rules including pitaka, vinaya and sila. Dharma also means reflection of a thing in the human mind, mental content, object of thought or idea. Dharma means factors of existence which the Hinayana considers as bases of the empirical personality. According to Prof. Junjiro Takakusu in *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, the word "Dharma" has five meanings. First, dharma would mean 'that which is held to,' or 'the ideal' if we limit its meaning to mental affairs only. This ideal will be different in scope as conceived by different individuals. In the case of the Buddha it will be Perfect Enlightenment or Perfect Wisdom (Bodhi). Secondly, the ideal as expressed in words will be his Sermon, Dialogue, Teaching, Doctrine. Thirdly, the ideal as set forth for his pupils is the Rule, Discipline, Precept, Morality. Fourthly, the ideal to be realized will be the Principle, Theory, Truth, Reason, Nature, Law, Condition. Fifthly, the ideal as realized in a general sense will be Reality, Fact, Thing, Element (created and not created), Mind-and-Matter, Idea-and-Phenomenon, reflection of a thing in the human mind, mental content, object of thought or idea, and factors of existence which the Hinayana considers as bases of the empirical personality. According to the *Madhyamakas*, Dharma is a protean word in Buddhism. In the broadest sense it means an impersonal spiritual energy behind and in everything. There are four important senses in which this word has been used in Buddhist philosophy and religion. First, dharma in the sense of one ultimate Reality. It is both transcendent and immanent to the world, and also the governing law within it. Second, dharma in the sense of scripture, doctrine, religion, as the Buddhist Dharma. Third, dharma in the sense of righteousness,

virtue, and piety. Fourth, dharma in the sense of ‘elements of existence.’ In this sense, it is generally used in plural.

## ***II. Dharmas of Sameness in Ten Directions In the Spirit Of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Three, the Buddha asked Mahakasyapa: “Go to Vimalakirti to enquire after his health on my behalf.” Mahakasyapa said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health. The reason is that once when I went begging for food in a lane inhabited by poor people, Vimalakirti came and said: “Hey, Mahakasyapa, you are failing to make your kind and compassionate mind all-embracing by begging from the poor while staying away from the rich. Mahakasyapa, in your practice of impartiality, you should call on your donors in succession (regardless of whether they are poor or rich). You should beg for food without the (ulterior) idea of eating it. To wipe out the concept of rolling (food into a ball in the hand), you should take it by the hand (i.e. without the idea of how you take it). You should receive the food given without the idea of receiving anything. When entering a village, you should regard it as void like empty space. When seeing a form, you should remain indifferent to it. When you hear a voice, you should consider it (as meaningless as) an echo. When you smell an odor, take it for the wind (which has no smell). When you eat, refrain from discerning the taste. Regard all touch as if you were realizing wisdom (which is free from feelings and emotions). You should know that all things are illusory, having neither nature of their own nor that of something else, and that since fundamentally, they are not self-existent, they cannot now be the subject of annihilation. Mahakasyapa, if you can achieve all eight forms of liberation without keeping from the eight heterodox ways (of life), that is by identifying heterodoxy with orthodoxy (both as emanating from the same source), and if you can make an offering of your (own) food to all living beings as well as to all Buddhas and all members of the Sangha, then you can take the food. Such a way of eating is beyond the troubles (of the worldly man) and the absence of the troubles of Hinayana men); above the state of stillness (in which Hinayana men abstain from eating) and the absence of stillness (of Mahayana men who eat while in the state of serenity);

and beyond both dwelling in the worldly state or in nirvana, while your donors reap neither great nor little merits, what they give being neither beneficial nor harmful. This is correct entry upon the Buddha path without relying on the small way of sravakas. Mahakasyapa, if you can so eat the food given you, your eating shall not be in vain.”

Also according to The Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Three, the Disciples, when the Buddha asked Subhuti to go to visit Vimalakirti on his behalf, Subhuti said to the Buddha as follows: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and enquire after his health. The reason is that once when I went to his house begging for food, he took my bowl and filled it with rice, saying: ‘Subhuti, if your mind set on eating is in the same state as when confronting all (other) things, and if this uniformity as regards all things equally applies to (the act of) eating, you can then beg for food and eat it. Subhuti, if without cutting off carnality, anger and stupidity you can keep from these (three) evils: if you do not wait for the death of your body to achieve the oneness of all things; if you do not wipe out stupidity and love in your quest of enlightenment and liberation; if you can look into (the underlying nature of) the five deadly sins to win liberation, with at the same time no idea of either bondage or freedom; if you give rise to neither the four noble truths nor their opposites; if you do not hold both the concept of winning and not winning the holy fruit; if you do not regard yourself as a worldly or unworldly man, as a saint or not as a saint; if you perfect all Dharmas while keeping away from the concept of Dharmas, then can you receive and eat the food. Subhuti, if you neither see the Buddha nor hear the Dharma; if the six heterodox teachers, Purana-kasyapa, Maskari-gosaliputra, Yanjaya-vairatiputra, Ajita-kesakambala, Kakuda-katyayana and Nirgrantha-jnatiputra are regarded impartially as your own teachers and if, when they induce leavers of home into heterodoxy, you also fall with the latter; then you can take away the food and eat it. If you are (unprejudiced about) falling into heresy and regard yourself as not reaching the other shore (of enlightenment); if you (are unprejudiced about) the eight sad conditions and regard yourself as not free from them; if you (are unprejudiced about) defilements and relinquish the concept of pure living; if when you realize samadhi in which there is absence of debate or disputation, all living beings also achieve it; if your donors of food

are not regarded (with partiality) as (cultivating) the field of blessedness; if those making offerings to you (are partially looked on as also) falling into the three evil realms of existence; if you (impartially regard demons as your companions without differentiating between them as well as between other forms of defilement; if you are discontented with all living beings, defame the Buddha, break the law (Dharma), do not attain the holy rank, and fail to win liberation; then you can take away the food and eat it. World Honoured One, I was dumbfounded when I heard his words which were beyond my reach and to which I found no answer. Then I left the bowl of rice and intended to leave his house, but Vimalakirti said: “Hey, Subhuti, take the bowl of rice without fear. Are you frightened when the Tathagata makes an illusory man ask you questions? I replied: ‘No.’ He then continued: ‘All things are illusory and you should not fear anything. Why? Because words and speech are illusory. So all wise men do not cling to words and speech, and this is why they fear nothing. Why? Because words and speech have no independent nature of their own, and when they are no more, you are liberated. This liberation will free you from all bondage.’ When Vimalakirti expounded the Dharma two hundred sons of devas realized the Dharma eye. Hence I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health.”

According to Buddhist teachings, the Buddha’s attitude is universal, impartial and equal towards all beings. Impartiality is a weapon of enlightening beings, removing all discrimination. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can annihilate the afflictions, bondage, and compulsion accumulated by all sentient beings in the long night of ignorance. The Buddha’s attitude is universal, impartial and equal towards all beings. According to The Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha taught: “We talk of this in the assembly because of the secret teaching of fourfold sameness, that I was in ancient days the Buddha Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, or Kasyapa.” Four sorts of sameness for those who discipline themselves in religious life. *First*, by “sameness in letters” is meant that the title Buddha is equally given to all Tathagatas, no distinction being made among them as far as these letter BUDDHA go. *Second*, by “sameness in words” is meant that all the Tathagatas speak in sixty-four different notes or sounds with the language of Brahma is pronounced, and that their language sounding

like the notes of Kalavinka bird is common to all the Tathagatas. *Third*, by “sameness in body” is meant that all the Tathagatas show no distinction as far as their Dharmakaya, their corporal features (rupalakshana) and their secondary marks of excellence are concerned. They differ, however, when they are seen by a variety of beings whom they have the special design to control and discipline. *Fourth*, by “sameness in the truth” is meant that all Tathagatas attain to the same realization by means of the thirty-seven divisions of enlightenment.





## ***Chapter Twenty-Two***

### ***Things That Offend Against the Law In the Point of View of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. An Overview of Offences In Buddhist Point of View:***

According to Buddhist teachings, offense means that which is blameworthy and brings about bad karma; entangled in the net of wrong-doing. Also according to Buddhism, sentient beings born have without any feeling of guilt in the sense of fear of a God who will punish him for his wrong-doing. However, they feel guilty by the law of karma. When you do some wrong-doing, you will receive the effects of your wrong-doing and in this way suffer the effect of your own sin. Offense also means the retribution of sin, its punishment in suffering. The root of sin, i.e. unenlightenment or ignorance. In Buddhist cultivation, the veil or barrier of sin, which hinders the obtaining of good karma. The barrier of sin, which also hinders the obedient hearing of the truth. The karma of offenses produce subsequent suffering. Ancient virtues always taught: Sinfulness and blessedness have no lord, or governor, i.e. we induce them ourselves. Sins that are such according to natural law, apart from Buddha's teaching, i.e. murder, stealing, etc. Offense which not wrong in itself, i.e. taking alcohol, but forbidden by the Buddha for the sake of the other commandments. In Buddhism, when committing a sin, an ordained person requiring open confession before the assembly for absolution or riddance. Failing confession means dismissal from the order.

#### ***II. A Summary of Vinaya in Buddhism:***

At the time of the Buddha, in the beginning a follower was accepted into the Sangha, the Buddha talked to them with the simple words "Ehi-bhikkhu" (Come, O monk)! But as numbers grew and the community dispersed, regulations were established by the Buddha. Every Buddhist undertakes the "Five Precepts" in the cultivation of the moral life, and monks and nuns follow five additional precepts,

which are elaborated as training rules and referred to collectively as the “Pratimoksa.” The five additional precepts are to abstain from eating after midday, from dancing and singing, from personal adornments, from using high seats or beds, and from handling gold or silver. Later, situations arised so the number of rules in the “Pratimoksa” varies among the different traditions, although there is a common core of approximately 150. Nowadays, in Mahayana and Sangha Bhiksu traditions, there are about 250 rules for monks and 348 for nuns; while in the Theravadin tradition, there are 227 rules for monks and 311 for nuns. In all traditions, both Mahayana, including Sangha Bhiksu and Theravada, every fortnight these rules are recited communally, providing an occasion for the members of the Sangha to confess and breaches.

The worldly way is outgoing exuberant; the way of the devoted Buddhist’s life is restrained and controlled. Constantly work against the grain, against the old habits; eat, speak, and sleep little. If we are lazy, raise energy. If we feel we can not endure, raise patience. If we like the body and feel attached to it, learn to see it as unclean. Virtue or following precepts, and concentration or meditation are aids to the practice. They make the mind calm and restrained. But outward restraint is only a convention, a tool to help gain inner coolness. We may keep our eyes cast down, but still our mind may be distracted by whatever enters our field of vision. Perhaps we feel that this life is too difficult, that we just can not do it. But the more clearly we understand the truth of things, the more incentive we will have. Keep our mindfulness sharp. In daily activity, the important point is intention. ; know what we are doing and know how we feel about it. Learn to know the mind that clings to ideas of purity and bad karma, burdens itself with doubt and excessive fear of wrongdoing. This, too, is attachment. We must know moderation in our daily needs. Robes need not be of fine material, they are merely to protect the body. Food is merely to sustain us. The Path constantly opposes defilements and habitual desires.

Basic precepts, commandments, discipline, prohibition, morality, or rules in Buddhism. Precepts are designed by the Buddha to help Buddhists guard against transgressions and stop evil. Transgressions spring from the three karmas of body, speech and mind. Observe moral

precepts develops concentration. Concentration leads to understanding. Continuous Understanding means wisdom that enables us to eliminate greed, anger, and ignorance and to obtain liberation, peace and joy. Rules and ceremonies, an intuitive apprehension of which, both written and unwritten, enables devotees to practice and act properly under all circumstances. Precepts mean vows of moral conduct taken by lay and ordained Buddhists. There are five vows for lay people, 250 for fully ordained monks, 348 for fully ordained nuns, 58 for Bodhisattvas (48 minor and 10 major). The Buddha emphasized the importance of morals as a means to achieve the end of real freedom for observing moral precepts develops concentration. Concentration leads to understanding. Continuous understanding means wisdom that enables us to eliminate greed, anger, and ignorance and to advance and obtain liberation, peace and joy.

Secondary commandments, deriving from the mandate of Buddha, i.e. against drinking wine, as opposed to a commandment based on the primary laws of human nature, i.e., against murder. The moral code taught in Buddhism is very vast and varied and yet the function of Buddhist morality is one and not many. It is the control of man's verbal and physical actions. All morals set forth in Buddhism lead to this end, virtuous behavior, yet moral code is not an end in itself, but a means, for it aids concentration (samadhi). Samadhi, on the other hand, is a means to the acquisition of wisdom (panna), true wisdom, which in turn brings about deliverance of mind, the final goal of the teaching of the Buddha. Virtue, Concentration, and Wisdom therefore is a blending of man's emotions and intellect. The Buddha points out to his disciples the ways of overcoming verbal and physical ill behavior. According to the Majjhima Nikaya, the Buddha taught: "Having tamed his tongue, having controlled his bodily actions and made himself pure in the way he earns his living, the disciple establishes himself well in moral habits. Thus he trains himself in the essential precepts of restraint observing them scrupulously and seeing danger in the slightest fault. While thus restraining himself in word and deed he tries to guard the doors of the senses, for if he lacks control over his senses unhealthy thoughts are bound to fill his mind. Seeing a form, hearing a sound, and so on, he is neither attracted nor repelled by such sense objects, but maintains balance, putting away all likes and dislikes."

The code of conduct set forth by the Buddha is not a set of mere negative prohibitions, but an affirmation of doing good, a career paved with good intentions for the welfare of happiness of mankind. These moral principles aim at making society secure by promoting unity, harmony and mutual understanding among people. This code of conduct is the stepping-stone to the Buddhist way of life. It is the basis for mental development. One who is intent on meditation or concentration of mind should develop a love of virtue that nourishes mental life makes it steady and calm. This searcher of highest purity of mind practises the burning out of the passions. He should always think: "Other may harm, but I will become harmless; others may slay living beings, but I will become a non-slayer; others may wrongly take things, but I will not; others may live unchaste, but I will live pure; other may slander, talk harshly, indulge in gossip, but I will talk only words that promote concord, harmless words, agreeable to the ear, full of love, heart pleasing, courteous, worthy of being borne in mind, timely, fit to the point; other may be covetous, but I will not covet; others may mentally lay hold of things awry, but I will lay mental hold of things fully aright." In fact, observation of morality also means cultivation or exercise of right thoughts of altruism, loving-kindness and harmlessness; observation of morality also means cultivation of the right speech because that enables one to control one's mischievous tongue; right action by refraining from killing sentient beings, and from sexual misconduct; and right livelihood which should be free from exploitation misappropriation or any illegal means of acquiring wealth or property.

### ***III. An Overview & Meanings of Breaking Precepts In Buddhism:***

According to Buddhism, breaking precepts means to violate or to break religious commandments. Breaking precepts also means to turn one's back on the precepts. To offend against or break the moral or ceremonial laws of Buddhism. The Buddha taught in the thirty-sixth of the forty-eight secondary precepts in the Brahma-Net Sutra: "I vow that I would rather pour boiling metal in my mouth than allow such a mouth ever to break the precepts and still partake the food and drink offered by followers. I would rather wrap my body in a red hot metal net than

allow such a body to break the precepts and still wear the clothing offered by the followers.” What can be called “Breaking-Precepts” in Buddhism? In Buddhism, non-ethical behaviors are serious forms of “Breaking Precepts”. Nonvirtuous actions that can cause harm to ourselves or to others. There are three kinds of nonvirtuous actions. We can only restrain such nonvirtuous acts once we have recognized the consequences of these actions: nonvirtuous acts done by the body which compose of three different kinds: killing, stealing and sexual misconduct; nonvirtuous acts by speech which compose of lying, divisive, offensive, and senseless speeches; and nonvirtuous thoughts which compose of covetousness, malice and wrong views. To break the monastic rule of the time for meals, for which the punishment is hell, or to become a hungry ghost like with throats small as needles and distended bellies, or become an animal.

Sanghabheda is another form of breaking precepts. To disrupt the harmony of the community of monks and cause schism by heretical opinions, e.g. by heretical opinions. According to the Buddha, causing a split in the Sangha was one of the six heinous crimes. This is the most serious violation in all violations in Buddhism. This demonstrates the Buddha’s concerns of the Sangha and the future of Buddhism. However, it is not necessarily the case that all such splits were intentional or adversarial in origin, and it seems likely that geographical isolation, possibly resulting from the missionary activities may have played its part in generating differences in the moralities recited by various gatherings. After several Buddhist Councils, differences appeared and different sects also appeared. The differences were usually insignificant, but they were the main causes that gave rise to the origination of different sects. If we take a close look on these differences, we will see that they are only differences in Vinaya concerning the Bhiksus and Bhiksunis and had no relevance for the laity. Besides, to break (disrupt or destroy) a monk’s meditation or preaching as in the case of Devadatta is also considered as breaking precepts.

There are four metaphors addressed by the Buddha to monks and nuns about he who breaks the vow of chastity. *The first metaphor:* He who breaks the vow of chastity is as a needle without an eye. *The second metaphor:* As a dead man. *The third metaphor:* As a broken

stone which cannot be united. *The fourth metaphor:* As a tree cut in two which cannot live any longer. According to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta and the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five dangers to the immoral through lapsing from morality (bad morality or failure in morality). *The first danger:* He suffers great loss of property through neglecting his affairs. *The second danger:* He gets bad reputation for immorality and misconduct. *The third danger:* Whatever assembly he approaches, whether of Khattiyas, Bramins, Ascetics, or Householders, he does so differently and shyly. *The fourth danger:* At the end of his life, he dies confused. *The fifth danger:* After death, at the breaking up of the body, he arises in an evil state, a bad fate, in suffering and hell.

#### ***IV. Things That Offend Against the Law In the Point of View of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

At the time of the Buddha, there were two bhiksus who broke the prohibitions, and being shameful of their sins they dared not call on the Buddha. They came to ask Upali and said to him: “Upali, we have broken the commandments and are ashamed of our sins, so we dare not ask the Buddha about this and come to you. Please teach us the rules of repentance so as to wipe out our sins.” Upali then taught them the rules of repentance. At that time, Vimalakirti came to Upali and said: “Upali, do not aggravate their sins which you should wipe out at once without further disturbing their minds. Why? Because the nature of sin is neither within nor without, nor in between. As the Buddha has said, ‘living beings are impure because their mind are impure; if their minds are pure they are all pure.’ And mind also is neither within nor without, nor in between. Their minds being such, so are their sins. Likewise all things do not go beyond (their ) suchness. Upali, when your mind is liberated, is there any remaining impurity?” Upali replied: “There will be no more.” Vimalakirti said: “Likewise, the minds of all living beings are free from impurities. Upali, false thoughts are impure and the absence of false thought is purity. Inverted (ideas) are impure and the absence of inverted (ideas) is purity. Clinging to ego is impure and non-clinging to ego is purity. Upali, all phenomena rise and fall without staying (for an instant) like an illusion and lightning. All phenomena do not wait for one another and do not stay for the time of

a thought. They all derive from false views and are like a dream and a flame, the moon in water, and an image in a mirror for they are born from wrong thinking. He who understands this is called a keeper of the rules of discipline and he who knows it is called a skillful interpreter (of the precepts).” At that “time, the two bhiksus declared: ‘What a supreme wisdom which is beyond the reach of Upali who cannot expound the highest principle of discipline and morality?’” Upali said: ‘Since I left the Buddha I have not met a sravaka or a Bodhisattva who can surpass his rhetoric for his great wisdom and perfect enlightenment have reached such a high degree.’ Thereupon, the two bhiksus got rid of their doubts and repentance, set their mind on the quest of supreme enlightenment and took the vow that make all living beings acquire the same power of speech.





## ***Chapter Twenty-Three***

### ***Buddha's Affairs In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. Buddha-Work In Buddhist Scriptures:***

According to Buddhist teachings, Buddha's work means the work of salvation and transforming all beings. Doing Buddha-work (Buddha-kiccam (p), i.e. prayers and worship, etc. According to The Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapters 27 and 33, there are ten kinds of Buddha-work in all worlds in all times of the Buddhas. When Great Enlightening Beings have caused sentient beings to attain these ten kinds of fulfillment, they also perform ten kinds of Buddha-work for sentient beings. *The first kind of Buddha-work:* If there are sentient beings who think of them single-mindedly, the Buddhas appear before them. *The second kind of Buddha-work:* If there are sentient beings whose minds are unruly, they explain the Teaching to them. *The third kind of Buddha-work:* If there are sentient beings able to develop pure faith, they will surely cause them to acquire immeasurable roots of goodness. *The fourth kind of Buddha-work:* If there are sentient beings able to enter the ranks of truth, they will appear to testify to it, so that they know all. *The fifth kind of Buddha-work:* They teach and influence sentient beings tirelessly. *The sixth kind of Buddha-work:* They travel to all Buddha-lands, coming and going without impediment. *The seventh kind of Buddha-work:* With great compassion, they do not abandon sentient beings. *The eighth kind of Buddha-work:* They manifest transfigured emanation bodies, coming forever. *The ninth kind of Buddha-work:* Their exercise of spiritual powers is ceaseless. *The tenth kind of Buddha-work:* They abide in the cosmos of reality, able to observe everywhere. Also according to The Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapters 27 and 33, there are other ten kinds of great Buddha-work, immeasurable, boundless, inconceivable, which is unknowable to all celestial and human worldlings, unknowable even to the past, future and present Buddhist disciples and self-enlightened ones, except by the spiritual power of the Buddhas. *The first great Buddha-work:* All Buddhas appear to be born in the heavens of contentment in all worlds

throughout the cosmos, carrying out enlightening practices and performing great Buddha-works in the sphere of operation of infinite forms, infinite powers, infinite lights, infinite sounds, infinite verbal expressions, infinite concentration, and infinite knowledge. Taking in all celestials, humans, demons, monks, priests, titans, and so on their great kindness uninhibited, their great compassion ultimate; impartially aiding and benefiting all living beings. Buddhas always enable beings to be born in heaven or in the human realm; purifying their senses; turning their mind. Sometimes Buddhas explain three different vehicles of salvation for them. Sometimes also explain the complete full unitary vehicle for them; save and liberate all, enable them to get out of birth and death. *The second great Buddha-work:* All Buddhas descend spiritually from the heaven of contentment into the mother's womb. By means of ultimate concentration Buddhas observe the phenomenon of taking on life as like an illusion, like a phantom, like a reflection, like space, like mirage. Buddhas take on life however they wish, without bound, without hindrance. Buddhas enter the state of noncontention. Buddhas develop knowledge without attachment; free from desire, clear and pure. Buddhas develop a vast treasury of wondrous adornments. Buddhas take on their final embodiment; live in a great jewel-adorned mansion and perform Buddha-work. They may do Buddha-work by spiritual powers; or by right recollection; or by showing miracles; or by manifesting the sun of knowledge; or by revealing the enormous spheres of Buddhahood; or by showing the immeasurable lights of the Buddhas; or by entering countless great concentrations; or by manifesting emergence from concentration. The Buddhas, at that time, in the mother's womb, wishing to benefit all worldlings, show all kinds of appearances to do Buddha-work. They may appear to be born; or appear as children; or appear as princes; or appear as leaving home; or they may show the appearance of attaining true enlightenment; or show the appearance of turning the wheel of the Teaching; or show the appearance of entering final extinction. In this way, all of them, by various means, perform Buddha-work in all regions, all networks, all circles, all systems, in all worlds. *The third great Buddha-work:* All good works of all Buddhas are already pure, and their knowledge of all life is clear and immaculate. So by birth they lead and guide the deluded, causing them to open up in

understanding and practice all that is good. For the sake of sentient beings they appear to be born in a royal palace. All Buddhas have already abandoned all materialistic desires for palaces and pleasures; they have no craving or obsession. Buddhas always reflect upon the emptiness and essencelessness of all existents, that all comforts and delights are not truly real; keeping the pure precepts of Buddhas, ultimately fulfilling them; observing the palace ladies and attendants, they develop great compassion; observing that all sentient beings are unreal, they develop great kindness; observing that there is nothing enjoyable in the world, they develop great joy. Their minds gaining freedom in the midst of all things, they develop great relinquishment; imbued with the qualities of Buddhahood, they manifest birth in the phenomenal realm, their physical features perfect, their associates pure, yet they have no attachment to anything; with voices adapting to types, they explain the truth to the masses, causing them to become disillusioned with worldly things; they point out to them the results of what they are doing. Also they use expedient means to teach in accord with needs, causing the immature to develop maturity, causing the mature to attain liberation. Doing Buddha-work for them to cause them not to regress. Also by virtue of heart of universal love and compassion they continually explain all kinds of principles to sentient beings and also manifest the powers of diagnosis, prescription and occult influence for them, to enable them to awaken to attain purity of mind. Though the Buddhas be in the inner palace, seen by all the people, yet they are performing Buddha-work in all worlds. By means of great knowledge and energy they manifest the various powers of Buddhas, unhindered, inexhaustible. Buddhas always continue three kinds of skillful expedient action: their physical activity is ultimately pure, their verbal activity is always carried out in accord with knowledge, and their mental activity is exceedingly profound and has no blockage or inhibition; by these means they benefit living beings. *The fourth great Buddha-work:* All Buddhas show analytix examination and disenchantment while living in a palace of all kinds of adornments, thereupon giving it up and leaving home, wishing to let sentient beings realize that things of the world are all illusions, impermanent, and perishable, and become deeply disillusioned, avoid creating attachments, forever cut off the affliction of worldly craving, cultivate

purifying practices, and benefit living beings. When the Buddhas leave home, they give up conventional manners, abide in noncontention, and fulfill the immeasurable virtues of their fundamental vow. By the light of great knowledge they destroy the darkness of delusion of the world. Become unexcelled fields of blessings for all beings. They always extol the virtues of Buddhas for the benefit of sentient beings, causing them to plant roots of goodness with the Buddhas. They see truth with the eye of wisdom. They also extol renunciation for the benefit of sentient beings, its purity and blamelessness. They are eternally emancipated and are forever lofty paragons of wisdom for the world.

*The fifth great Buddha-work:* All Buddhas have omniscience and already know and see infinite realities. Attaining perfect enlightenment under the Tree of Enlightenment, vanquishing all demons. Their majesty supreme, their bodies fill all worlds; their deeds of spiritual power are boundless and inexhaustible. They attain mastery of all meanings in the sphere of omniscience. They have cultivated virtues to consummation. Their seats of enlightenment are fully adorned and pervade all worlds in the ten directions. The Buddhas sit on them and turn the wheel of the sublime Teaching; explaining all the undertakings of enlightening beings; revealing the infinite realms of the Buddhas causing the Enlightening Beings to awaken to and enter to them. They carry out all kinds of pure practices. They are able to direct and guide all living beings cause them to plant roots of goodness; cause them to be born in the ground of equality of The Enlightened; cause them to continue in the boundless good practices of Enlightening Beings; cause them to develop all the most excellent qualities. To Perform Buddha-work based on the following: The Buddhas know perfectly all worlds, all beings, all Buddha-lands, all phenomena, all Enlightening Beings, all teachings, all pasts-presents-futures, all disciplines, all mystic transformations. The inclinations of all sentient beings' minds, and based on this knowledge perform Buddha-work.

*The sixth great Buddha-work:* All Buddhas turn the irreversible wheel of the Teaching, to cause the Enlightening Beings not to backslide. They turn the immeasurable wheel of the Teaching to cause all worldlings to know. They turn the wheel of the Teaching, awakening all, because they can fearlessly roar the lion's roar. They turn the wheel of the Teaching, which is a treasury of knowledge of all truths, to open the door of the

treasury of truth and remove the obstacle of obscurity. They turn the unobstructed wheel of the Teaching, being equal to space. They turn the wheel of Teaching of non-attachment, because they see that all things are neither existent nor nonexistent. They turn the world-illuminating wheel of Teaching, to cause all sentient beings to purify their vision of reality. They turn the wheel of teaching revealing all knowledge, pervading all things in all times. They turn the wheel of Teaching, which is the same one of all Buddhas because all Buddha teachings are not mutually opposed or contradictory. All Buddhas, by means of measureless, countless hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of such wheels of Teaching, perform Buddha-work inconceivably according to the differences in mental patterns of sentient beings. *The seventh great Buddha-work:* All Buddhas enter into all capital cities and perform Buddha-work for the beings. These capitals are Human capitals, Celestial capitals, Capitals of water spirits, capital of the Monster, capital of the Cherubium, capital of the Titans, capital of the Birds, capital of the Hongoblins, capital of the Serpents, capital of the Goblins, capital of the Demons, and so on. When they enter the gates of the city, the Earth trembles, light shines everywhere; the blind gain vision; the deaf are able to hear; the insane regain their sanity; the naked are clothed, the troubled and suffering all gain peace and happiness. All musical instruments spontaneously play, all adornments, used or not, emit marvelous sounds that delight all hearers. The Buddhas' physical forms are pure and clean, fully endowed with the marks and refinements of greatness, so that none ever tire of seeing them. They are able to do Buddha-work for the benefit of sentient beings: whether looking, examining, stretching; walking or standing still, sitting or reclining; silent or speaking; whether manifesting occult powers; or explaining principles; or giving instructions. In all these, they are performing Buddha-work for the benefit of sentient beings. All Buddhas, in all the countless worlds, in the midst of the oceans of mental inclinations of all kinds of sentient beings urge them to remembrance the Buddhas; always diligently considering and planting roots of goodness; cultivating the practices of Enlightening Beings; praising the subtlety and supremacy of the Buddhas' appearance, which is hard for any living being to get to meet. If beings see Buddhas and are inspired with faith, when they produced

all the immeasurable good qualities and amass the virtues of Buddhas, all pure. Thus, having extolled the virtues of Buddhas, they multiply their bodies to go to all worlds in the ten directions to let the sentient beings behold them; meditate on them and contemplate them; attend and serve them; plant roots of goodness, gain the good graces of the Buddhas; increase the family of Buddhas, all beings certain to attain Buddhahood. By these actions, they perform Buddha-work: sometimes manifesting physical bodies for sentient beings; sometimes making sublime utterances; sometimes just smiling; causing them to believe, honor, praise, and behave courteously. All Buddhas, by means of innumerable, untold, inconceivable such Buddha-works of all kinds, in all worlds, according to the inclinations of sentient beings' minds, teach them expediently, by the power of their original vows, the power of great love and compassion, and the power of omniscience, causing them all to be civilized. *The eighth great Buddha-work:* All Buddhas may do Buddha-work: While dwelling in forest retreats. Or in quiet places, or in desolate places. Or in Buddhas' dwelling place. Or they may do Buddha-work while in samadhi. Or while alone in a grove. Or while concealing themselves from views. Or while abiding in knowledge of the ultimate profundity. Or while dwelling in the incomparable realm of the Buddhas. Or they may do Buddha-work while carrying on various imperceptible physical actions, adapting to sentient beings' mentalities, predilections, and understandings to teach them as is expedient, without cease. Or they may do Buddha-work seeking omniscience in the form of celestial beings. Or they may do Buddha-work seeking omniscience in the form of water spirits, goblins, cherubim, titans, birds, serpents, humans, subhumans, and so on. They may do Buddha-work by seeking omniscience in the form of Listeners, Solitary Illuminates, or Enlightening Beings. Sometimes, they do Buddha-work saying there is one Buddha, sometimes saying there are many Buddhas. Sometimes they do Buddha-work saying practices and all vows of Enlightening Beings are one practice and vow; sometimes they do Buddha-work saying one practice and vow of Enlightening Beings are infinite practices and vows. Sometimes they do Buddha-work saying the realm of Buddhahood is the world. Sometimes they do Buddha-work saying the world is the realm of Buddhahood. Sometimes they do Buddha-work saying the realm of Buddhahood is not the world.

Sometimes they remain for a day, or a night, or a fortnight, or a month, or a year, or up to untold eons to do Buddha-work for the benefit of sentient beings. *The ninth great Buddha-work:* All Buddhas are mines that produce pure roots of goodness, causing sentient beings to engender pure faith and resolution in the Buddha-teachings, so their faculties are tamed and they forever detach from the world. They cause Enlightening Beings to be full of knowledge, wisdom and clarity in regard to the way of enlightenment and not depend on another for understanding. Sometimes they do Buddha-work manifesting nirvana. Sometimes they do Buddha-work showing the evanescence of all in the world. Sometimes they do Buddha-work explaining the Buddha-bodies. Sometimes they do the Buddha-work explaining the flawless fulfillment of virtuous qualities. Sometimes they do Buddha-work explaining the extirpation of the roots of all existences. Sometimes they do Buddha-work causing sentient beings to turn away from the world to follow the Buddha-mind. Sometimes they do the Buddha-work explaining the inevitable ending of life. Sometimes they do Buddha-work explaining that there is nothing enjoyable in the world. Sometimes they do Buddha-work preaching the eternal service of Buddhas. Sometimes they do Buddha-work explaining the Buddhas' turning of the wheel of pure Teaching, causing the hearers to become very joyful. Sometimes they do Buddha-work expounding the sphere of Buddhahood, inspiring people to cultivate spiritual practices. Sometimes they do Buddha-work expounding concentration and remembrance of Buddha, inspiring people to always delight in visions of Buddha. Sometimes they do Buddha-work expounding the purification of the senses, diligent search for the Buddha Way with unflagging spirit. Sometimes they do Buddha-work visiting all Buddha-lands and observing the various causes and conditions of their environments. Sometimes they do Buddha-work uniting all bodies of living beings into a Buddha-body, causing all lazy and self-indulgent sentient beings to abide by the pure precepts of The Enlightened. *The tenth great Buddha-work:* When Buddhas enter extinction, countless sentient beings mourn and weep, looking at each other in great grief and distress, they say, "The Buddha had great sympathy and compassion, mercifully aiding all worldly beings, a savior and a refuge for all living creatures. The emergence of a Buddha is difficult to

encounter, an unexcelled field of blessings, and now the Buddha has passed away forever.” Thus they use this to cause sentient beings to mourn and miss the Buddha, thereby doing Buddha-work. Also in order to transform and liberate all celestials, humans, spirits, goblins, titans, cherubim, and so on, according to their desires, they pulverize their own bodies to make countless relics, to cause sentient beings to develop faith, honor, respect, and joyfully reverence them, and cultivate virtues to complete fulfillment. They also build monuments, variously adorned, in the abodes of all kinds of creatures, for religious services; their teeth, nails, and hair are all used to make monuments, to cause those who see them to remember the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community, to believe with unswerving faith, sincerely respect and honor them, and make offerings to them wherever they are, and cultivate virtues so that by this merit they may be born in heaven or among humans or of noble and properous families, with ample property, pure retinues, not enter into evil ways; always enter into wholesome ways; always get to see Buddhas, fulfill pure ways; quickly attain emancipation from the three realms of existence. Each attain the fruit of their own vehicle according to their aspiration; recognize and requite their debt to Buddhas; forever be a reliance for the world. Though the Buddhas be extinct, they are still inconceivable pure fields of blessings for living beings, with inexhaustible virtues, supreme fields of blessings, causing sentient beings roots of goodness to be complete and their virtue to be fully developed.

## ***II. Buddha’s Affairs In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Eleven, the Buddha told Ananda: “Ananda! There are Buddha lands where the Buddha light performs the work of salvation; where the Bodhisattvas perform it; where illusory men created by the Buddha do it; where the Bodhi-trees do it; where the Buddha’s robe and bedding do it; where the rice taken by the Buddha does it; where parks and temples do it; where (the Buddha’s) thirty-two physical marks and their eighty notable characteristics do it; where the Buddha’s body (rupa-kaya) does it; where empty space does it. Living beings practice discipline with success because of these causes. Also used for the same purpose are dream, illusion, shadow echo, the image in a mirror, the moon reflected



in water, the flame of a fire, sound, voice, word, speech and writing. The pure and clean Buddha land, silence with neither word nor speech, neither pointing, discerning, action nor activity. Thus, Ananda, whatever the Buddhas do by either revealing or concealing their awe-inspiring majesty, is the work of salvation. Ananda, because of the four basic delusions (in reference to the ego) divided into 84,000 defilements which cause living beings to endure troubles and tribulations, the Buddhas avail themselves of these trials to perform their works of salvation. This is called entering the Buddha's Dharma door to enlightenment (Dharmaparyaya). "When entering this Dharma door, if a Bodhisattva sees all the clean Buddha lands, he should not give rise to joy, desire and pride, and if he sees all the unclean Buddha lands he should not give rise to sadness, hindrance and disappointment; he should develop a pure and clean mind to revere all Tathagatas who rarely appear and whose merits are equal in spite of their appearance in different lands (clean and unclean) to teach and convert living beings. Ananda, you can see different Buddha lands (i.e. clean and unclean) but you see no difference in space which is the same everywhere. Likewise, the physical bodies of Buddhas differ from one another but their omniscience is the same. Ananda, the (underlying) nature of the physical bodies of the Buddhas, their discipline, serenity, liberation and full knowledge of liberation, their (ten) powers, their (four) fearlessnesses, their eighteen unsurpassed characteristics, their boundless kindness and compassion, their dignified deeds, their infinite lives, their preaching of the Dharma to teach and convert living beings and to purify Buddha lands are all the same. Hence, their titles of Samyaksambuddha, Tathagata and Buddha. Ananda, if I am to give you the full meaning of these three titles, you will pass the whole aeon without being able to hear it completely. Even if the great chiliocosm is full of living beings who are all good listeners and like you can hold in memory everything they hear about the Dharma, they will also pass the whole aeon without being able to hear my full explanation (of these three titles). For, Ananda, the Buddha's supreme enlightenment is boundless and his wisdom and power of speech are inconceivable." Ananda said: "From now on I dare no more claim to have heard much of the Dharma." The Buddha said: "Ananda, do not give way to backsliding. Why? Because I have said that you have heard much

more about the Dharma than the sravakas but not than the Bodhisattvas. Ananda, a wise man should not make a limited estimate of the Bodhisattva stage (because) the depths of the oceans can be measured but the Bodhisattva's serenity, wisdom, imperturbability, power of speech and all his merits cannot be measured. Ananda, let us put aside the Bodhisattva conduct. The transcendental powers which Vimalakirti has demonstrated today cannot be achieved by all sravakas and pratyeka-buddhas using their spiritual powers for hundreds and thousands of aeons." At that time, the visiting Bodhisattvas put their palms together and said to the Buddha: "World Honoured One, when we first saw this world we thought of its inferiority but we now repent of our wrong opinion. Why? Because the expedients (upaya) employed by all Buddhas are inconceivable; their aim being to deliver living beings they appear in different Buddha lands suitable for the purpose."

## ***Chapter Twenty-Four***

### ***Never-Receding Stage In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. An Overview of Never-Receding Stage In Buddhist Teachings:***

Non-backsliding means not to give up on or not to grow weary with current position, or not retreating, especially in terms of the Buddhist path of cultivation. When one has reached the level where one does not fall back or non-retrogression is another way of saying one will achieve Buddhahood in one lifetime. One who has reached the realization of emptiness (Tolerance and Non-birth) will never regress from the Buddha or Bodhisattva Paths. Never receding or turning back, always progressing and certainly reaching Nirvana. One who has reached the realization of emptiness (tolerance and non-birth) will never regress from the Buddha or Bodhisattva Paths. Non-regression sometimes simply denotes an advanced stage of aspiration and practice from which one will never retreat. The Sanskrit word “Avaivartika” means “not falling back.” There are three senses of “not falling back” that apply to sentient beings in the Pure Land. a) Do not fall back from their position: Having entered the holy stream or the four levels of sagehood culminating in Ahratship, they do not fall back to the levels of gods and men. b) Do not fall back from practice: As followers of the Bodhisattva path they continue to work for the salvation of all beings, and do not fall back to the level of Lesser Vehicles with their concern limited to individual salvation. c) Do not fall back from their mindfulness: From mind-moment to mind-moment, they flow into the ocean of all knowledge. In Buddhism, a person who never recedes means one who never reverts to a lower condition. One who never recedes in his progress towards Buddhahood, never retrogrades to a lower state than that to which he has attained (a Bodhisattva who is in the stage of non-backsliding). A Bodhisattva who, in his progress towards Buddhahood, never retrogrades to a lower state than that to which he has attained. According to The Amitabha Sutra, even those

who dwell in lowest level of the Pure Land, and have been born there bringing along their karmic burdens, do not fall back from their position, from their practice, or from their mindfulness. One who has reached the realization of emptiness (tolerance and non-birth) will never regress from the Buddha or Bodhisattva Paths. Non-regression sometimes simply denotes an advanced stage of aspiration and practice from which one will never retreat. Also according to the Amitabha Sutra, living beings burdened with heavy karma accumulated from time immemorial. They cannot escape Birth and Death in one lifetime, and are in danger of retrogression during. Thus the Buddha offered and recommended the Pure Land teachings, an easy method to escape Birth and Death in one lifetime through rebirth in the Pure Land, where practitioners can continue cultivating without fear of retrogression.

## ***II. Never-Receding Stage In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Four, the Buddha said to Maitreya Bodhisattva: “You go to Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Maitreya replied: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health. The reason is that once when I was expounding to the deva-king and his retinue in the Tusita heaven the never-receding stage (of Bodhisattva development into Buddhahood) Vimalakirti came and said to me: ‘Maitreya, when the World Honoured One predicted your future attainment of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-sayak-sambodhi) in one lifetime, tell me in which life, whether in the past, future or present, did or will you receive His prophecy? If it was in your past life, that has gone; if it will be in your future life, that has not yet come; and if it is in your present life, that does not stay. As the Buddha once said: ‘O bhiksus, you are born, are aging and are dying simultaneously at this very moment’; if you received His prophecy in a lifeless (state), the latter is prediction (of your future Buddhahood) nor realization of supreme enlightenment. How then did you receive the prediction of your attainment of Buddhahood in one lifetime? Or did you receive it in the absolute state (thatness or tathata) of either birth or death? If you receive it in the absolute state of birth, this absolute state is uncreated. If you receive it in the absolute state of death, this absolute state does not die. For (the underlying nature of) all living beings and of all things

is absolute; all saints and sages are in this absolute state, and so, also are you, Maitreya. So, if you, Maitreya, received the Buddhahood, all living beings (who are absolute by nature) should also receive it. Why? Because that which is absolute is non-dual and is beyond differentiation. If you, Maitreya, realize supreme enlightenment, so should all living beings. Why? Because they are the manifestation of bodhi (enlightenment). If you, Maitreya, win nirvana, they should also realize it. Why? Because all Buddhas know that every living being is basically in the condition of extinction of existence and suffering which is nirvana, in which there can be no further extinction of existence. Therefore, Maitreya, do not mislead the devas because there is neither development of supreme bodhi-mind nor its backsliding. Maitreya, you should instead urge them to keep from discriminating views about bodhi (enlightenment). Why? Because bodhi can be won by neither body nor mind. For bodhi is the state of calmness and extinction of passion (i.e. nirvana) because it wipes out all forms. Bodhi is unseeing, for it keeps from all causes. Bodhi is non-discrimination, for it stops memorizing and thinking. Bodhi cuts off ideation, for it is free from all views. Bodhi forsakes inversion, for it prevents perverse thoughts. Bodhi puts an end to desire, for it keeps from longing. Bodhi is unresponsive, for it wipes out all clinging. Bodhi complies (with self-nature), for it is in line with the state of suchness. Bodhi dwells (in this suchness), for it abides in (changeless) Dharma-nature (or Dharmata, the underlying nature of all things.) Bodhi reaches this suchness, for it attains the region of reality. Bodhi is non-dual, for it keeps from (both) intellect and its objects. Bodhi is impartial, for it is equal to boundless space. Bodhi is the non-active (wu wei) state, for it is above the conditions of birth, existence and death. Bodhi is true knowledge, for it discerns the mental activities of all living beings. Bodhi does not unite, for it is free from all confrontation. Bodhi disentangles, for it breaks contact with habitual troubles (klesa). Bodhi is that of which the position cannot be determined, for it is beyond form and shape, and is that which cannot be called by name for all names (have no independent nature and so) are void. Bodhi is like the mindlessness of an illusory man, for it neither accepts nor rejects anything. Bodhi is beyond disturbance, for it is always serene by itself. Bodhi is real stillness, because of its pure and clean nature. Bodhi is non-acceptance,

for it keeps from causal attachments. Bodhi is non-differentiating, because of its impartiality towards all. Bodhi is without compare, for it is indescribable. Bodhi is profound and subtle, for although unknowing, it knows all.' World Honoured One, when Vimalakirti so expounded the Dharma, two hundred sons of devas realized the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti). This is why I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health."

## *Chapter Twenty-Five*

### *The spirit of the Mind of Enlightenment in the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. The Mind of Enlightenment Is the Bodhicitta Itself In Buddhist Teachings:*

In Buddhist teachings, the mind of enlightenment is the Bodhicitta itself, the supreme state of enlightenment. Bodhi is the highest state of Samadhi in which the mind is awakened and illuminated. The term “Bodhi” is derived from the Sanskrit root “Budh,” meaning “knowledge,” “Understanding,” or “Perfect wisdom” and the practice of the four noble truths to eliminate sufferings. Bodhi is derived from the Sanskrit root “Budh,” meaning “knowledge,” “Understanding,” or “Perfect wisdom.” A term that is often translated as “enlightenment” by Western translators, but which literally means “Awakening.” Like the term BUDDHA, it is derived from the Sanskrit root buddh, “to wake up,” and in Buddhism it indicates that a person has “awakened” from the sleep of ignorance in which most beings spend their lives. According to Buddhist legend, the Buddha attained bodhi in the town of BODHGAYA while sitting in meditation under the Bodhi Tree or Bodhi-Vrksa. The word ‘Bodhi’ means ‘Perfect Wisdom’ or ‘Transcendental Wisdom,’ or ‘Supreme Enlightenment.’ Bodhi is the state of truth or the spiritual condition of a Buddha or Bodhisattva. The cause of Bodhi is Prajna (wisdom) and Karuna (compassion). The highest state of Samadhi in which the mind is awakened and illuminated. According to the Hinayana, bodhi is equated with the perfection of insight into and realization of the four noble truths, which means the cessation of suffering. According to the Mahayana, bodhi is mainly understood as enlightened wisdom. There are three kinds of bodhi: First, the enlightenment of sravakas. Second, the enlightenment of Pratyeka-buddhas. Third, the enlightenment of Buddhas. To talk about Bodhi-mind, there are three kinds of Bodhi-mind: First, to start out for bodhi-mind to act out one’s vows to save all living beings. Second, Bodhi-mind which is beyond description, and which surpasses

mere earthly ideas. And third, Samadhi-bodhi mind. Besides, there are five bodhi or stages of enlightenment: First, resolve on supreme bodhi: Phát tâm bồ đề. Second, mind control the passions and observance of the paramitas. Third, mental enlightenment, study and increase in knowledge and in the prajnaparamitas. Fourth, mental expansion, freedom from the limitations of reincarnation and attainment of complete knowledge. Fifth, attainment of a passionless condition and of supreme perfect enlightenment.

Bodhi is the highest state of Samadhi in which the mind is awakened and illuminated. The term “Bodhi” is derived from the Sanskrit root “Budh,” meaning “knowledge,” “Understanding,” or “Perfect wisdom.” A term that is often translated as “enlightenment” by Western translators, but which literally means “Awakening.” Like the term BUDDHA, it is derived from the Sanskrit root buddh, “to wake up,” and in Buddhism it indicates that a person has “awakened” from the sleep of ignorance in which most beings spend their lives. According to Buddhist legend, the Buddha attained bodhi in the town of BODHGAYA while sitting in meditation under the Bodhi Tree or Bodhi-Vrksa. According to the Avatamsaka Sutra, Bodhi (enlightenment) belongs to living beings. Without living beings, no Bodhisattva could achieve Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment. According to the Mahayana, bodhi is mainly understood as enlightened wisdom. The word ‘Bodhi’ also means ‘Perfect Wisdom’ or ‘Transcendental Wisdom,’ or ‘Supreme Enlightenment.’ Bodhi is the state of truth or the spiritual condition of a Buddha or Bodhisattva. The cause of Bodhi is Prajna (wisdom) and Karuna (compassion). According to the Hinayana, bodhi is equated with the perfection of insight into and realization of the four noble truths, which means the cessation of suffering.

Bodhicitta, or the ‘Thought of Enlightenment’ is an important concept in both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Though not directly mentioned, the idea is explicit in the Theravada Buddhism. It was in Mahayana, however, that the Bodhicitta concept developed along both ethical and metaphysical lines and this development is found in Vajrayana too, wherein it also came to be regarded as a state of ‘great bliss’. In Mahayana it developed along with pantheistic lines, for it was held that Bodhicitta is latent in all beings and that it is merely a manifestation of the Dharmakaya, or Bhutatathata in the human



heart. Though the term Bodhicitta does not occur in Pali, this concept is found in Pali canonical literature where, for example, we are told how Gautama after renouncing household life resolved to strive to put an end to all the sufferings. It is this comprehension that came to be known as the Enlightenment, and Gautama came to be known as the Enlightened One, the Buddha. Bodhi Mind, or the altruistic mind of enlightenment is a mind which wishes to achieve attainment of enlightenment for self, spontaneously achieve enlightenment for all other sentient beings. The spirit of Enlightenment, the aspiration to achieve it, the Mind set on Enlightenment. Bodhicitta is defined as the altruistic intention to become fully enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings. The attainment of enlightenment is necessary for not only in order to be capable of benefitting others, but also for the perfection of our own nature. Bodhi mind is the gateway to Enlightenment and attainment of Buddha. An intrinsic wisdom or the inherently enlightened heart-mind, or the aspiration toward perfect enlightenment. The Buddha taught: “All sentient beings are perfectly equal in that they all possess the Buddha nature. This means that we all have the Bodhi seed or the seed of kindness of a Buddha, and the compassion of a Buddha towards all living beings, and therefore the potential for enlightenment and for perfection lies in each one of us. “Bodhicitta” is a Sanskrit term means “Mind of Awakening.” In Mahayan Buddhism, this refers to Bodhisattva’s aspiration to attain Buddhahood in order to benefit other sentient beings (the aspiration of a bodhisattva for supreme enlightenment for the welfare of all). Therefore, the mind for or of Bodhi (the Mind of Enlightenment, the awakened or enlightened mind) is the mind that perceives the real behind the seeming, believes in moral consequences, and that all have the Buddha-nature, and aims at Buddhahood.

The spirit of enlightenment, the aspiration to achieve it, the mind set on Enlightenment. It involves two parallel aspects. First, the determination to achieve Buddhahood (above is to seek Bodhi). Second, the aspiration to rescue all sentient beings (below is to save or transform all beings). Mind of enlightenment, mind of love, mind of deepest request to realize oneself and work for the well-being of all. The mind of enlightenment or the aspiration of a Bodhisattva for supreme enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. It is often

divided into two aspects: 1) the intention to become awakened; and 2) acting on the intention by pursuing the path to awakening (Bodhi). According to Zen Master Suzuki in the *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*, Bodhicitta is the most important characteristic of Bodhisattva, thus on the basis of Nagarjuna's *Discourse on the Transcendentality of the Bodhicitta*, he gives a detailed description of Bodhicitta. First, the Bodhicitta is free from all determinations, the five skandhas, the twelve ayatanas, and the eighteen dhatus. It is not particular, but universal. Second, love is the essence of the Bodhicitta, therefore, all Bodhisattvas find their reason of being in this. Third, the Bodhicitta abides in the heart of sameness (samata) creates individual means of salvation (upaya). Fourth, evidently Maitreya exhausted his power of speech in order to extol the importance of the Bodhicitta in the career of a Bodhisattva, for without this being fully impressed on the mind of the young Buddhist pilgrim Sudhana, he could not have been led into the interior of the Tower of Vairocana. The Tower harbors all the secrets that belong to the spiritual life of the highest Buddhist. If the novice were not quite fully prepared for the initiation, the secrets would have no signification whatever. They may even be grossly misunderstood, and the result will be calamitous indeed. For this reason, Maitreya left not a stone unturned to show Sudhana what the Bodhicitta really meant.

According to the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, the Buddha taught: "Good Buddhists! In Bodhisattvas arise the Bodhi-mind, the mind of great compassion, for the salvation of all beings; the mind of great kindness, for the unity with all beings; the mind of happiness, to stop the mass misery of all beings; the altruistic mind, to repulse all that is not good; the mind of mercy, to protect from all fears; the unobstructed mind, to get rid of all obstacles; the broad mind, to pervade all universes; the infinite mind, to pervade all spaces; the undefiled mind, to manifest the vision of all Buddhas; the purified mind, to penetrate all knowledge of past, present and future; the mind of knowledge, to remove all obstructive knowledge and enter the ocean of all-knowing knowledge. Just as someone in water is in no danger from fire, the Bodhisattva who is soaked in the virtue of the aspiration for enlightenment or Bodhi mind, is in no danger from the fire of knowledge of individual liberation. Just as a diamond, even if cracked, relieves poverty, in the

same way the diamond of the Bodhi mind, even if split, relieves the poverty of the mundane whirl. Just as a person who takes the elixir of life lives for a long time and does not grow weak, the Bodhisattva who uses the elixir of the Bodhi mind goes around the mundane whirl for countless eons without becoming exhausted and without being stained by the ills of the mundane whirl. The Avatamsaka Sutra also says: “To neglect the Bodhi Mind when practicing good deeds is the action of demons.” This teaching is very true indeed. For example, if someone begins walking without knowing the destination or goal of his journey, isn’t his trip bound to be circuitous, tiring and useless? It is the same for the cultivator. If he expends a great deal of effort but forgets the goal of attaining Buddhahood to benefit himself and others, all his efforts will merely bring merits in the human and celestial realms. In the end he will still be deluded and revolved in the cycle of Birth and Death, undergoing immense suffering. If this is not the action of demons, what, then, is it? For this reason, developing the Supreme Bodhi Mind to benefit oneself and others should be recognized as a crucial step.

A Bodhisattva’s Bodhi mind vows not only to destroy the lust of himself, but also to destroy the lust for all other sentient beings. A Bodhisattva who makes the Bodhi mind always vows to be the rain of food and drink to clear away the pain of thirst and hunger during the aeon of famine (to change himself into food and drink to clear away human beings’ famine). That person always vows to be a good doctor, good medicine, or a good nurse for all sick people until everyone in the world is healed. That person always vows to become an inexhaustible treasure for those who are poor and destitute. For the benefiting of all sentient beings, the person with Bodhi mind is willing to give up his virtue, materials, enjoyments, and even his body without any sense of fatigue, regret, or withdrawal. That person always believes that Nirvana is nothing else but a total giving up of everything (giving up does not mean throwing away or discarding, but it means to give out for the benefit of all sentient beings). In daily life, that person always stays calm even though he may get killed, abused or beaten by others. That person always vows to be a protector for those who need protection, a guide for all travellers on the way, a bridge or a boat for those who wish to cross a river, a lamp for those who need light in a dark night.

Devout Buddhists should always have the Bodhi-mind that acts out the vows to save all living beings means to start out for bodhi-mind to act out one's vows to save all living beings (all beings possess Tathagata-garbha nature and can become a Buddha; therefore, vow to save them all). The Mahavairocana Sutra says: "The Bodhi Mind is the cause - Great Compassion is the root - Skillful means are the ultimate." For example, if a person is to travel far, he should first determine the goal of the trip, then understand its purpose, and lastly, choose such expedient means of locomotion as automobiles, ships, or planes to set out on his journey. It is the same for the cultivator. He should first take Supreme Enlightenment as his ultimate goal, and the compassionate mind which benefits himself and others as the purpose of his cultivation, and then, depending on his references and capacities, choose a method, Zen, Pure Land or Esoterism, as an expedient for practice. Expedients, or skillful means, refer, in a broader sense, to flexible wisdom adapted to circumstances, the application of all actions and practices, whether favorable or unfavorable, to the practice of the Bodhisattva Way. For this reason, the Bodhi Mind is the goal that the cultivator should clearly understand before he sets out to practice.

## ***II. In Buddhist Teachings Enlightened Mind Is the Buddha's Mind:***

According to Buddhism, understanding is not an accumulation of knowledge. To the contrary, it is the result of the struggle to become free of knowledge. Understanding shatters old knowledge to make room for the new that accords better with reality. When Copernicus discovered that the Earth goes around the sun, most of the astronomical knowledge of the time had to be discarded, including the ideas of above and below. Today, physics is struggling valiantly to free itself from the ideas of identity and cause effect that underlie classical science. Science, like the Way, urges us to get rid of all preconceived notions. Understanding, in human, is translated into concepts, thoughts, and words. Understanding is not an aggregate of bits of knowledge. It is a direct and immediate penetration. In the realm of sentiment, it is feeling. In the realm of intellect, it is perception. It is an intuition rather than the culmination of reasoning. Every now and again it is fully present in us, and we find we cannot express it in words, thoughts, or

concepts. “Unable to describe it,” that is our situation at such moments. Insights like this are spoken of in Buddhism as “impossible to reason about, to discuss, or to incorporate into doctrines or systems of thought.” Besides, understanding also means a shield to protect cultivator from the attack of greed, hatred and ignorance. A man often does wrong because of his ignorance or misunderstanding about himself, his desire of gaining happiness, and the way to obtain happiness. Understanding will also help cultivators with the ability to remove all defilements and strengthen their virtues.

Enlightenment means to enlighten or to wake up or the intuitive awareness or cognition of the Dharma-Nature, the realization of ultimate reality. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail. Enlightenment is a complete and deep realization of what it means to be a Buddha. Achieving a complete and deep realization of what it means to be a Buddha and how to reach Buddhahood. It is to see one’s Nature, comprehend the True Nature of things, the Truth. However, only after becoming a Buddha can one be said to have truly attained Supreme Enlightenment. “Awakening” is one of the three aims of meditation. Awakening or seeing into your True-nature and at the same time seeing into the ultimate nature of the universe and all things. It is the sudden realization that “I have been complete and perfect from the very beginning. How wonderful, how miraculous!” If it is true awakening, its substance will always be the same for whoever experiences it, whether he be the Sakyamuni Buddha, the Amitabha Buddha, or any one of you. But this does not mean that we can all experience awakening to the same degree, for in the clarity, the depth, and the completeness of the experience there are great difference. But Zen practitioners should always remember that enlightenment rests on your own shoulders. And each one of us has an equal opportunity to reach our own enlightenment.

Enlightened mind is one of the six points to develop a true Bodhi Mind. Sentient beings are used to grasping at this body as “me,” at this

discriminating mind-consciousness which is subject to sadness and anger, love and happiness, as “me.” However, this flesh-and-blood body is illusory; tomorrow, when it dies, it will return to dust. Therefore, this body, a composite of the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air) is not “me.” The same is true with our mind-consciousness, which is merely the synthesis of our perception of the six “Dusts” (form, sound, fragrance, taste, touch, and dharmas). For example, a person who formerly could not read or write, but is now studying Vietnamese or English. When his studies are completed, he will have knowledge of Vietnamese or English. Another example is a person who had not known Paris, but who later on had the opportunity to visit France and absorb the sights and sounds of that city. Upon his return, if someone were to mention Paris, the sights of that metropolis would appear clearly in his mind. That knowledge formerly did not exist; when the sights and sounds entered his subconscious, they “existed.” If these memories were not rekindled from time to time, they would gradually fade away and disappear, returning to the void. This knowledge of ours, sometimes existing, sometimes not existing, some images disappearing, other images arising, always changing following the outside world, is illusory, not real. Therefore, the mind-consciousness is not “me.” The ancients have said: “The body is like a bubble, the mind is like the wind; they are illusions, without origin or True Nature.” If we truly realize that body and mind are illusory, and do not cling to them, we will gradually enter the realm of “no-self,” escaping the mark of self. The self of our self being thus void, the self of others is also void, and therefore, there is no mark of others. Our self and the self of others being void, the selves of countless sentient beings are also void, and therefore, there is no mark of sentient beings. The self being void, there is no lasting ego; there is really no one who has “attained Enlightenment.” This is also true of Nirvana, ever-dwelling, everlasting. Therefore, there is no mark of lifespan. Here we should clearly understand: it is not that eternally dwelling “True Thusness” has no real nature or true self; it is because the sages have no attachment to that nature that it becomes void. Sentient beings being void, objects (dharmas) are also void, because objects always change, are born and die away, with no self-nature. We should clearly realize that this is not because objects, upon disintegration, become void and

non-existent; but, rather, because, being illusory, their True Nature is empty and void. Sentient beings, too, are like that. Therefore, ancient have said: "Why wait until flowers fall to understand that form is empty." Talking about the enlightened mind, the Buddha always reminded His disciples to let the mind be like a river receiving and flowing; or be like a fire receiving and burning all things thrown into. Nothing could be clung to in that river or fire because they would flow all things or burn all things. If we can keep our mind this way, we possess the so-called enlightened mind. Therefore, Zen practitioners should not have anything in mind, including the so-called Tathagata Store in our mind. Let's drop all we have. Gently drop even the so-called "Enlightened Mind". Just drop all we have, even if we think we have the so-called unborn mind. Just sit down, gently breathe in and out. The practitioner, having clearly understood that beings and dharmas are empty, can proceed to recite the Buddha's name with a pure, clear and bright mind, free from all attachments.

Awakening Mind is used in Zen for direct apprehension of truth. It literally means "seeing nature," and is said to be awareness of one's true nature in an insight that transcends words and conceptual thought. It is equated with "Satori" in some Zen contexts, but in others "kensho" is described as an initial awakening that must be developed through further training, while "satori" is associated with the awakening of Buddhas and the patriarchs of Zen. A monk asked Chao-chou to be instructed in Zen, Chao-chou said, "Have you had your rice soup or not?" The monk said, "Yes, master." Chao-chou said, "If so, have your dishes washed." These words at once opened the monk's mind to the truth of Zen. This is enough to show what a commonplace thing enlightenment is! At any rate, we could not say that Chao-chou had nothing to do with the monk's realization. But, how did Chao-chou make the monk's eye open by such a prosaic remark? Did the remark have any hidden meaning, however, which happened to coincide with the mental tone of the monk? How was the monk so mentally prepared for the final stroke of the master, whose service was just pressing the button, as it were? Zen practitioners should always remember that the whole history of the mental development leading up to an enlightenment; that is from the first moment when the disciple came to the master until the last moment of realization, with all the intermittent

psychological vicissitudes which he had to go through. But the conversation between the monk and Chao-chou just shows that the whole Zen discipline gains meaning when there takes place this turning of the mental hinge to a wider and deeper world. For when this wide and deeper world opens, Zen practitioners' everyday life, even the most trivial thing of it, grow loaded with the truths of Zen. On the one hand, therefore, enlightenment is a most prosaic and matter-of-fact thing, but on the other hand, when it is not understood it is something of a mystery. But after all, is not life itself filled with wonders, mysteries, and unfathomabilities, far beyond our discursive understanding?

### ***III. The spirit of the Mind of Enlightenment in the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, the illuminated mind or the mind of enlightenment is the original nature of man. The Mind of Enlightenment is always enlightened that this body is not ME (self) or MINE (self-belonging), but is only a temporary collaboration of the four great elements (land, water, fire, and wind). Of course, the systematic outline of the process in the texts is very clear and accurate, but the experience of the state of mind that we obtain in meditation is beyond textual study. Text books cannot tell us about the experience of ignorance arising, or how volition feels. A person with an enlightened mind will not attach to the words. He simply sees that all things are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and empty of self. He let go of everything. When things arise, he is aware of them, knows them, but not accompanies them to any where. Buddhists should always remember that once the mind is stirred up, the various mental formations, thought constructions, and reactions start arising from it. Therefore, the one who possesses an enlightened mind always sees according to the truth and does not become happy or sad according to changing conditions. This is true peace, free of birth, aging, sickness, and death, not dependent on causes, results, or conditions, beyond happiness and suffering, above good and evil. Nothing can be spoken about it. No other mind can be achieved! The discriminating mind is the same way; it is the result from the combination of the six elements



of form, sound, odor, flavor, touch and dharma. Therefore, it is also not ME or SELF-BELONGING either. If cultivators are able to penetrate and comprehend in this way, they will be able to eliminate that the two types of bondage of SELF and SELF-BELONGING. If there is no "Self" or "Self-belonging," then the Self-Form, or the characteristic of being attached to the concept of self will be eliminated immediately; The Other's Form or the characteristic of clinging to the concept of other people does not exist either; the Sentient Beings Form or the characteristic of clinging to the existence of all other sentient beings will no longer exist; the Recipient-Form is also eliminated. Because these four form-characteristics of sentient beings no longer exist, the practitioners will attain Enlightenment.

The spirit of freedom of Enlightenment in Zen, which is the power impelling Buddhism to break through its monastic shell and bringing forward the idea of Enlightenment ever vigorously before the masses, is the life-impulse of the universe; this hampered activity of spirit, and everything that interferes with it, is destined to be defated. The history of Buddhism is thus also a history of freedom in one's spiritual, intellectual, and moral life. The moral aristocracy and disciplinary formalism of primitive Buddhism could not bind our spirit for a very long period of time. As the doctrine of Enlightenment grew to be more and more inwardly interpreted, the spirit rose above the formalism of Buddhist discipline. It was of no absolute necessity for one to leave his home life and follow the footsteps of the wandering monks in order to reach the supreme fruit of Enlightenment. Inward purity, and not external piety, was the thing needed for the Buddhist life. The Upasakas were in this respect as good as the Bhiksus. The fact is most eloquently illustrated in the Vimalakirti Sutra. The chief character here is Vimalakirti, a lay philosopher, outside the pale of the Brotherhood. None of the Buddha's disciples were his matches in the depth, breadth, and subtleties of thought, and when the Buddha told them to visit his sick-room they all excused themselves for some reason or other, except Manjusri, who is Prajna incarnate in Mahayana Buddhism. Not only Zen practitioners, but also everyone must agree that the lay-devotee, Vimalakirti, accomplished even at a greater level than that of an Arhat.



## *Chapter Twenty-Six*

### *Vimalakirti's Gate of Nonduality*

#### *I. An Overview of Non-Dual Dharma-Door In Buddhist Point of View:*

The doctrine or wisdom of Buddha regarded as the door (method) to enlightenment. The teaching of the Buddha. The meaning is that the dharma is something like a gate, because through it sentient beings attain the enlightenment. As the living have 84,000 delusions, so the Buddha provides 84,000 methods of dealing with them. Knowing that the spiritual level of sentient beings is totally different from one another, the Buddha had allowed his disciples to choose any suitable Dharma they like to practice. A person can practice one or many dharmas, depending on his physical conditions, his free time, since all the dharmas are closely related. Practicing Buddhist Dharma requires continuity, regularity, faith, purpose and determination. Laziness and hurriedness are signs of failure. There is only one path leading to Enlightenment, but, since people differ greatly in terms of health, material conditions, intelligence, character and faith, the Buddha taught more than one path leading to different stages of attainment such as stage of Hearers, that of Pratyeka-buddhas, that of Bodhisattvas, that of laymen, and that of monks and nuns. All of these ways are ways to the Buddhahood. Nobody can reach final attainment without following a path, and no enlightenment can be reached without studying, understanding and practicing.

Most of us are still attached to duality and have not reconciled essence and marks, existence and non-existence, noumenon and phenomena. We embrace essence and reject marks, we embrace non-existence (emptiness) and reject existence and so on. This kind of wrong view creates a lot of disputes, doubts and perplexity. In fact, there is mutual identity between noumenon and phenomena, phenomena are noumenon, noumenon is phenomena. Buddhist cultivators should reconcile all things and eliminate this unnecessary attachment. Sincere cultivators should try to reconcile essence and marks, existence and non-existence, noumenon and phenomena. We

embrace essence and reject marks, we embrace non-existence (emptiness) and reject existence and so on. This kind of wrong view creates a lot of disputes, doubts and perplexity. In fact, there is mutual identity between noumenon and phenomena, phenomena are noumenon, noumenon is phenomena. Buddhist cultivators should reconcile all things and eliminate this attachment. The nonduality is the central Mahayana doctrine. The nonduality or non-differentiation of samsara and nirvana. Zen Master Huai-Hai taught: "The Diamond Sutra says: 'If their mind grasp the Dharma, they will still cling to the notion of an ego (a being and a life); if their minds grasp the non-Dharma, they will still cling to the notion of an ego. Therefore, we should not grasp at and hold onto the notions either of Dharma or of not-Dharma.' This is holding to the true Dharma. If you understand this doctrine, that is true deliverance, that, indeed, is reaching the gate of nonduality." According to the Heart Sutra, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva says that form is not different from emptiness and emptiness is not different from form. The other aggregates, too, are not different from emptiness, and emptiness is not different from the aggregates. Thus samsara and nirvana, the aggregates and emptiness, phenomena and conditioned, the conditioned and the transcendental are all alternatives that are relative to each other. They have no independent existence. Indeed, because they are relative to each other, they are, each of them, ultimately unreal and empty. Hence the duality of samsara and nirvana is dissolved in the vision of emptiness. Emptiness is the way out of all extremes, even the extremes of samsara and nirvana.

Practitioners should always remember that there is nothing wrong with duality itself, that is how our mind functions. But as long as we remain in the confinement of duality, we are swayed by such opposing values as right and wrong, good and bad. These are only temporary aspects. Something appears sometimes to be good or bad or right or wrong or long or short or big or small, and so forth. Duality includes two kinds: First, those who believe that things exist. Second, those who believe that nothing is self-existence or things cannot be said to exist. In cultivation, no matter how great the knowledge of any advanced aspirant, even if it is pure Buddhist knowledge in the form of direct vision, not mere intellection; this knowledge remains a bright mirror. A mirror implies reflection and original. A mirror invites someone to gaze

into it. Subtle duality remains. Only completely getting rid of this round mirror of all Buddhas, along with mental eye, heavenly eye, and even wisdom eye. There is no longer any separate organ of vision or object of vision, then one can open the way to omniconscious nonduality.

## ***II. Non-Dual Dharma-Door In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, chapter nine, Initiation into the Non-Dual Dharma, Upasaka Vimalakirti discussed with other Bodhisattvas about the Non-Dual Dharma. At that time, Vimalakirti said to the Bodhisattvas present: “Virtuous Ones, each of you please say something about the non-dual Dharma as you understand it.” In the meeting a Bodhisattva called “Comfort in the Dharma” said: “Virtuous Ones, birth and death are a duality but nothing is created and nothing is destroyed. Realization of this patient endurance leading to the uncreated is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva called “Guardian of the Three Virtues” said: “Subject and object are a duality for where there is ego there is also (its) object, but since fundamentally there is no ego, its object does not arise; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Never Winking” said: “Responsiveness (vedana, the second aggregate) and unresponsiveness are a duality. If there is no response to phenomena, the latter cannot be found anywhere; hence there is neither accepting nor rejecting (of anything), and neither karmic activity nor discrimination; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Highest virtue” said: “Impurity and purity are a duality. When the underlying nature of impurity is clearly perceived, even purity ceases to arise. Hence this cessation (of the idea of purity) is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Winner of Samadhi by Looking at the Star” said: “(External) disturbance and (inner) thinking are a duality; when disturbance subsides, thinking comes to an end and the absence of thought leads to non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Skilful Eye” said: “Monistic form and formlessness are a duality. If monistic form is realized as (fundamentally) formless, with relinquishment of formlessness in order to achieve impartiality, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Wonderful Arm” said: “The Bodhisattva mind and the Sravaka mind are a duality. If the mind is

looked into as void and illusory, there is neither Bodhisattva mind nor Sravaka mind; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva Pusya said: “Good and evil are a duality; if neither good nor evil arises so that formlessness is realized to attain Reality, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva Simha (Lion) said: “Weal and woe are a duality; if the underlying nature of woe is understood, woe does not differ from weal. If the diamond (indestructible) wisdom is used to look into this with neither bondage nor liberation (coming into play), this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Lion’s Fearlessness” said: “The mundane and supra-mundane are a duality. If all things are looked into impartially, neither the mundane nor the supra-mundane will arise, with no differentiation between form and formlessness, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Pure Interpretation” said: “Activity (ju wei) and non-activity (wu wei) are a duality, but if the mind is kept from all mental conditions it will be (void) like space and pure and clean wisdom will be free from all obstructions. This is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva Narayana said: “The mundane and the supra-mundane are a duality but the underlying nature of the mundane is void (or immaterial) and is but the supra-mundane which can be neither entered nor left and neither overflows (like the stream of transmigration) nor scatters (like smoke). This is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Skillful Mind” said: “Samsara and nirvana are a duality. If the underlying nature of samsara is perceived there exists neither birth nor death, neither bondage nor liberation, and neither rise nor fall. Such an understanding is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Direct Insight” said: “The exhaustible and the inexhaustible are a duality. If all things are looked into exhaustively, both the exhaustible and the inexhaustible cannot be exhausted; and the inexhaustible is identical with the void which is beyond both the exhaustible and the inexhaustible. Such an interpretation is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Upholder of Universality” said: “The ego and non-ego are a duality. Since the ego cannot be found, where can the non-ego be found? He who perceives the real nature of the ego will not give rise to dualities; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Lightning Perception” said:

“Enlightenment and unenlightenment are a duality, but the underlying nature of unenlightenment is enlightenment which should also be cast away; if all relativities are discarded and replaced by non-dual impartiality, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva Priyadarsana said: “Form (rupa) and voidness are a duality, (but) form is identical with voidness, which does not mean that form wipes out voidness, for the underlying nature of form is void of itself. So are (the other four aggregates) reception (vedana), conception (sanjna), discrimination (samskara) and consciousness (vijñana- in relation to voidness). “Consciousness and voidness are a duality (yet) consciousness is identical with voidness, which does not mean that consciousness wipes out voidness for the underlying nature of voidness is void of itself. A thorough understanding of this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Understanding the Four Elements” said: “The four elements (earth, water, fire and air) and their voidness are a duality (but) the underlying nature of the four elements is identical with that of voidness. Like the past (before the four elements came into being) and the future (when they scatter away) which are both void, the present (when they appear) is also void. Identical understanding of the underlying nature of all four elements is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Deep Thought” said: “Eyes and form are a duality (but) if the underlying nature of the eye is known with neither desire nor anger nor stupidity in relation to things seen, this is nirvana. “Likewise, the ear and sound, the nose and smell, the tongue and taste, the body and touch, and the mind and ideation are dualities (but) if the underlying nature of the mind is known with neither desire, anger and stupidity in relation to things (heard, smelt, tasted, touched and thought), this is nirvana. Resting in this state (of nirvana) is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Inexhaustible Mind” said: “Charity-perfection (dana-paramita) and the dedication (pariṇāmana) of its merits towards realizing the all-knowledge (sarvajña) are a duality, (but) the underlying nature of charity is dedication towards the All-knowledge. “Likewise, discipline perfection (śīla-paramita), patience-perfection, (kṣanti-paramita), zeal-perfection (vīrya-paramita), meditation-perfection (dhyāna-paramita) and wisdom-perfection (prajñā-paramita), with dedication to the All-knowledge, are (five) dualities,

but their underlying natures are but dedication to the All-knowledge, while realization of their oneness is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Profound Wisdom” said: “Voidness, formlessness and non-activity are (three different gates to liberation, and when each is compared to the other two there are) three dualities, (but) voidness is formless and formlessness is non-active. For when voidness, formlessness and non-activity obtain, there is neither mind, nor intellect nor consciousness, and liberation through either one of these three gates is identical with liberation through all the three. This is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Unstirred Sense Organs” said: “Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are three different treasures and when each is compared to the other two there are three dualities (but) Buddha is identical with Dharma, and Dharma is identical with Sangha. For the three treasures are non-active (wu wei) and are equal to space, with the same equality for all things. The realization of this (equality) is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Unimpeded Mind” said: “Body and its eradication (in nirvana) are a duality but body is identical with nirvana. Why? Because if the underlying nature of body is perceived, no conception of (existing) body and its nirvanic condition will arise, for both are fundamentally non-dual, not being two different things. The absence of alarm and dread when confronting this ultimate state is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Superior Virtue” said: “The three karmas (produced by) body, mouth and mind (are different when each is compared to the other two and make three) dualities (but) their underlying nature is non-active; so non-active body is identical with non-active mouth, which is identical with non-active mind. These three karmas being non-active, all things are also non-active. Likewise, if wisdom (prajna) is also non-active, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Field of Blessedness” said: “Good conduct, evil conduct and motionlessness are (different and when each is compared to the other two make three) dualities (but) the underlying nature of all three is voidness which is free from good, evil and motionlessness. The non-rising of these three is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Majestic Blossom” said: “The ego and its objective are a duality, (but) if the underlying nature of the ego is looked into, this duality vanishes. If duality is cast away there will



be no consciousness, and freedom from consciousness is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Treasure of Threefold Potency” said: “Realization implies subject and object which are a duality, but if nothing is regarded as realization, there will be neither grasping nor rejecting, and freedom from grasping and rejecting is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Moon in Midheaven” said: “Darkness and light are a duality. Where there is neither darkness nor light, this duality is no more. Why? Because in the state of samadhi resulting from the complete extinction of sensation and thought there is neither darkness nor light, while all things disappear. A disinterested entry into this state is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva Ratna Mudra (Precious Symbol) said: Joy in nirvana and sadness in samsara are a duality which vanishes when there is no longer joy and sadness. Why? Because where there is bondage, there is also (desire for) liberation, but if fundamentally there is no bondage nor liberation, there will be neither joy nor sadness; this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Gem on the Head” said: “Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are a duality, (but) he who dwells in (i.e. realizes) orthodoxy does not discriminate between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Keeping from these two extremes is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” The Bodhisattva “Joy in Reality” said: “Reality and unreality are a duality, (but) he who realizes reality does not even perceive it, still less unreality. Why? Because reality is invisible to the ordinary eyes and appears only to the eye of wisdom. Thus (realization of) the eye of wisdom, which is neither observant nor unobservant, is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” After the Bodhisattva had spoken, they asked Manjusri for his opinion on the non-dual Dharma. Manjusri said: “In my opinion, when all things are no longer within the province of either word or speech, and of either indication or knowledge, and are beyond questions and answers, this is initiation into the non-dual Dharma.” At that time, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “All of us have spoken; please tell us what is the Bodhisattva’s Initiation into the Non-Dual Dharma?” Vimalakirti kept silent without saying a word. At that, Manjusri exclaimed: “Excellent, excellent; can there be true initiation into the non-dual Dharma until words and speech are no longer written or spoken? After this initiation into the non-dual Dharma had been

expounded, five thousand Bodhisattvas at the meeting were initiated into it thereby realizing the patient endurance of the uncreated.

In short, Non-duality is the unity of all things. The nature of Non-dual is equality. Under the eye of the Buddha's wisdom, all existing things, animate or inanimate, have the absolute value and so are undifferentiated. In other words, all things are the one and undivided truth. There is no difference from this one to the other. The Non-dual Truth represents No-Self and No-Dharma. The nonduality is the central Mahayana doctrine. The nonduality or non-differentiation of samsara and nirvana. According to the Heart Sutra, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva says that form is not different from emptiness and emptiness is not different from form. The other aggregates, too, are not different from emptiness, and emptiness is not different from the aggregates. Thus samsara and nirvana, the aggregates and emptiness, phenomena and conditioned, the conditioned and the transcendental are all alternatives that are relative to each other. They have no independent existence. Indeed, because they are relative to each other, they are, each of them, ultimately unreal and empty. Hence the duality of samsara and nirvana is dissolved in the vision of emptiness. Emptiness is the way out of all extremes, even the extremes of samsara and nirvana. In Buddhist Zen, the concept of nonduality usually goes with the concept of emptiness, and they are brought together in a well-known koan. In Bodhidharma's famous interview with Emperor Wu, Wu asked Bodhidharma what merit had been obtained by all Wu's good works of building stupas and places of practice. Bodhidharma replied, 'No merit whatsoever. All empty.' He was referring to the concept that nothing has any value, that everything is empty and without definition. The emperor didn't get it at all. So he said, 'Who is it that stands before me?' and Bodhidharma said, 'I don't know.' This koan alludes to emptiness and to the intimacy of not knowing, of nonseparation."

### ***III. Zen Schools & Vimalakirti's Gate of Nonduality:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter 9, Initiation Into the Non-Dual Dharma, Vimalakirti asked Manjusri, "What is a Bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?" Manjusri said, "According to what I think, in all things, no words, no speech, no demonstration and no recognition, to leave behind all questions and

answers; this is entering the Dharma gate of nonduality." Then Manjusri asked Vimalakirti, "We have each already spoken. Now you should tell us, good man, what is a Bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?" Hsueh Tou said, "What did Vimalakirti say?" He also said, "Completely exposed." Later, many generations after Vimalakirti's time, according to example 84 of the Pi-Yen-Lu, when Vimalakirti had the various great Bodhisattvas each speak on the Dharma gate of nonduality. At the time, the thirty-two Bodhisattvas all took dualistic views of doing and nondoing, of the two truths, real and conventional, and merged them into a monistic view which they considered to be the Dharma gate of nonduality. Finally he asked Manjusri. Manjusri said, "According to what I think, in all things, no words, no speech, no demonstration and no recognition, to leave behind all questions and answers; this is entering the Dharma gate of nonduality." Since the other thirty-two had used words to dispense with words. At once he swept everything away, not wanting anything, and considered this to be the Dharma gate of nonduality. He certainly didn't realize that this was the sacred tortoise dragging its tail, that in wiping away the tracks he was making traces. It's just like a broom sweeping away dust; though the dust is removed, the tracks of the broom still remain. Since in the end, as before, some traces were left, Manjusri the asked Vimalakirti, "We have each already spoken. Now you should tell us, good man, what is a Bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?" Vimalakirti was silent. If you're alive, you'll never go sink into the dead water. If you make up such dead views, you're like a mad dog chasing a clod of earth. Hsueh Tou didn't say that Vimalakirti kept silent, nor did he say that he sat silently on his seat. Hsueh Tou just went to the critical point and said, "What did Vimalakirti say?" Just when Hsueh Tou spoke this way, did he see Vimalakirti? He hadn't seen him even in a dream. Vimalakirti was an ancient Buddha of the past, who also had a family and household. He helped the Buddha Sakyamuni teach and transform. He had inconceivable intelligence, inconceivable perspective, inconceivable supernatural powers and the wondrous use of them. Inside his own room he accommodated thirty-two thousand jeweled lion thrones and a great multitude of eighty thousand, without it being too spacious or too crowded. But tell me, what principle is this? Can it be called the wondrous function of

supernatural powers? Don't misunderstand; if it is the Dharma gate of nonduality, only by attaining together and witnessing together can there be common mutual realization and knowledge. Only Manjusri was able to give a reply. Even so, was he able to avoid Hsueh Tou's censure? Hsueh Tou, talking as he did, also had to meet with these two men Vimalakirti and Manjusri. Hsueh Tou said, "What did Vimalakirti say?" and "Completely exposed." You tell me, where was the exposure? This little bit has nothing to do with gain and loss, nor does it fall into right or wrong. It's like being up on a ten thousand fathom cliff; if you can give up your life and leap off, you may see Vimalakirti in person. If you cannot give it up, you're like a ram caught in a fence. Hsueh Tou was a man who had abandoned his life, so he can see Vimalakirti in person. Later, the Buddha taught in the Diamond Sutra: If their mind grasp the Dharma, they will still cling to the notion of an ego (a being and a life); if their minds grasp the non-Dharma, they will still cling to the notion of an ego. Therefore, we should not grasp at and hold onto the notions either of Dharma or of not-Dharma.' This is holding to the true Dharma. If practitioners understand this doctrine, that is true deliverance, that, indeed, is reaching the gate of nonduality. Most of us, Zen practitioners, are still attached to duality and have not reconciled essence and marks, existence and non-existence, noumenon and phenomena. We embrace essence and reject marks, we embrace non-existence (emptiness) and reject existence and so on. This kind of wrong view creates a lot of disputes, doubts and perplexity. In fact, there is mutual identity between noumenon and phenomena, phenomena are noumenon, noumenon is phenomena. Buddhist cultivators should reconcile all things and eliminate this unnecessary attachment. Sincere cultivators should try to reconcile essence and marks, existence and non-existence, noumenon and phenomena. We embrace essence and reject marks, we embrace non-existence (emptiness) and reject existence and so on. This kind of wrong view creates a lot of disputes, doubts and perplexity. In fact, there is mutual identity between noumenon and phenomena, phenomena are noumenon, noumenon is phenomena. Buddhist cultivators should reconcile all things and eliminate this attachment.

## *Chapter Twenty-Seven*

### *The Conversation on Meditation Between Vimalakirti and Manjusri Bodhisattva*

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Upasaka Vimalakirti was sick; obeying the Buddha's command, Manjusri Bodhisattva called on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health. Manjusri asked: "How does a sick Bodhisattva control his mind?" Vimalakirti replied: "A sick Bodhisattva should think thus: 'My illness comes from inverted thoughts and troubles (klesa) during my previous lives but it has no real nature of its own. Therefore, who is suffering from it? Why is it so? Because when the four elements unite to form a body, the former are ownerless and the latter is egoless. Moreover, my illness comes from my clinging to an ego; hence I should wipe out this clinging.' Vimalakirti added: Now that he knows the source of his illness, he should forsake the concept of an ego and a living being. He should think of things (dharma) thus: 'A body is created by the union of all sorts of dharmas (elements) which alone rise and all, without knowing one another and without announcing their rise and fall.' In order to wipe out the concept of things (dharmas) a sick Bodhisattva should think thus: 'This notion of dharma is also an inversion which is my great calamity. So I should keep from it.' What is to be kept from? From both subject and object. What does this keeping from subject and object mean? It means keeping from dualities. What does this keeping from dualities mean? It means not thinking of inner and outer dharmas (i.e. contraries) by the practice of impartiality. What is impartiality? It means equality (of all contraries e.g.) ego and nirvana. Why is it so? Because both ego and nirvana are void. Why are both void? Because they exist only by names which have no independent nature of their own. "When you achieve this equality you are free from all illnesses but there remains the conception of voidness which also is an illusion and should be wiped out as well.'" A sick Bodhisattva should free himself from the conception of sensation (vedana) when experiencing any one of its three states (which are painful, pleasurable and neither painful nor pleasurable feeling). Before his full development into

Buddhahood (that is before delivering all living beings in his own mind) he should not wipe out vedana for his own benefit with a view to attaining nirvana for himself only. Knowing that the body is subject to suffering he should think of living beings in the lower realms of existence and give rise to compassion (for them). Since he has succeeded in controlling his false views,, he should guide all living beings to bring theirs under control as well. He should uproot their (inherent) illnesses without (trying to) wipe out non-existence dharmas (externals for sense data). For he should teach them how to cut off the origin of illness. What is the origin of illness? It is their clinging which causes their illness. What are the objects of their clinging? They are the three realms (of desire, form and beyond form). By what means should they cut off their clinging? By means (of the doctrine that) nothing whatsoever can be found, and (that) if nothing can be found there will be no clinging. What is meant by 'nothing can be found? It means (that) apart from dual views (There is nothing else that can be had). What are dual views? They are inner and outer views beyond which there is nothing. Vimalakirti added: Manjusri, this is how a sick Bodhisattva should control his mind. Top wipe out suffering from old age, illness and death is the Bodhisattva's bodhi (enlightened practice). If he fails to do so his practice lacks wisdom and is unprofitable. For instance, a Bodhisattva is (called) courageous if he overcomes hatred; if in addition he wipes out (the concept of) old age, illness and death he is a true Bodhisattva. A sick Bodhisattva should again reflect: Since my illness is neither real nor existing, the illnesses of all living beings are also unreal and non-existent. But while so thinking if he develops a great compassion derived from his love for living beings and from his attachment to this false view, he should (immediately) keep from these feelings. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva should wipe out all external causes of troubles (klesa) while developing great compassion. For (this) love and (these) wrong views result from hate of birth and death. If he can keep from this love and these wrong views he will be free from hatred, and wherever he may be reborn he will not be hindered by love and wrong views. His next life will be free from obstructions and he will be able to expound the Dharma to all living beings and free them from bondage. As the Buddha has said, there is no such thing as untying others when one is still held in bondage for it

is possible to untie others only after one is free from bonds. Vimalakirti concluded: Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should thus control his mind while dwelling in neither the (state of) controlled mind nor its opposite, that of uncontrolled mind. For if he dwells in (the state of) uncontrolled mind, this is stupidity and if he dwells in (that of) controlled mind, this is the sravaka stage. Hence a Bodhisattva should not dwell in either and so keep from both; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. When staying in the realm of birth and death he keeps from its impurity, and when dwelling in nirvana he keeps from (its condition of) extinction of reincarnation and escape from suffering; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. That which is neither worldly nor saintly is Bodhisattva development (into Buddhahood). That which is neither impure nor pure is Bodhisattva practice. Although he is beyond the demonic state he appears (in the world) to overcome demons; this is Bodhisattva conduct. In his quest of all knowledge (sarvajna) he does not seek it at an inappropriate moment; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into the uncreated he does not achieve Buddhahood; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into nidana (or the twelve links in the chain of existence) he enters all states of perverse views (to save living beings); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he helps all living beings he does not give rise to clinging; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps from the phenomenal he does not lean on the voidness of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he passes through the three worlds (of desire, form and beyond form) he does not injure the Dharmata; this is the Bodhisattva conduct. Although he realizes the voidness (of thing) he sows the seeds of all merits; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he dwells in formlessness he continues delivering living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he refrains from (creative) activities he appears in his physical body; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps (all thoughts) from rising he performs all good deeds; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the six perfections (paramitas) he knows all the mental states of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he possesses the six supernatural powers he refrains from putting an end to all worldly streams; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four infinite states of mind, he does not wish to be reborn in the Brahma heavens, this

Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices meditation, serenity (dhyana), liberation and samadhi, he does not avail himself of these to be reborn in dhyana heavens; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practice the four states of mindfulness he does not keep for ever from the karma of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four right efforts he persists in physical and mental zeal and devotion; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four Hinayana steps to supernatural powers he will continue doing so until he achieves all Mahayana supernatural powers; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five spiritual faculties of the sravaka stage he discerns the sharp and dull potentialities of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five powers of the sravaka stage he strives to achieve the ten powers of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the seven Hinayana degrees of enlightenment he discerns the Buddha's all-wisdom (sarvajna); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the eightfold noble truth (of Hinayana) he delights in treading the Buddha's boundless path; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices samathavipasyana which contributes to the realization of bodhi (enlightenment) he keeps from slipping into nirvana; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the doctrine of not creating and not annihilating things (dharma) he still embellishes his body with the excellent physical marks of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he appears as a sravaka or a pratyeka-buddha, he does not stray from the Buddha Dharma; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has realized ultimate purity he appears in bodily form to do his work of salvation; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he sees into all Buddha lands which are permanently still like space, he causes them to appear in their purity and cleanness; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has reached the Buddha stage which enables him to turn the wheel of the Law (to preach the Dharma) and to enter the state of nirvana, he does not forsake the Bodhisattva path; this is Bodhisattva conduct." While Vimalakirti was expounding the Dharma, all the eight thousand sons of devas who had come with Manjusri, developed the profound mind set on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi).



## ***Chapter Twenty-Eight***

### ***Body In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. Human Beings In Buddhist Point of View:***

According to Buddhism, the state of human-beings, our earth, place where those who keep the basic five precepts are reborn. In terms of matter, the Buddhist view of the origin of the universe is energy. In terms of the sentient beings, the force that produces them is that of the actions they have accumulated, which cause them to be reborn in that way. If a human being keeps the five basic precepts, he or she will continue to be reborn in the human path. People are neither completely good nor completely bad, but human beings are harmonious by nature and can get along with other people. If they were completely good, they would ascend to the heavens. If they were completely bad, they would become either animals, or hungry ghosts, or even fall into the hells. Human beings have both merits and offenses. Either their merit exceeds their offenses, or their offenses exceed their merit. When a person's merit is greater than his offenses, he will be born in a rich and respectable family; but with little merit and many offenses he will be born into a poor and miserable family. Generally speaking, Buddhism believes that birth as a human being is one of the most ideal forms of existence because it is conducive to cultivation. So compared to human beings, gods would in fact be considered inferior, even though gods may have some abilities that human beings do not have, such as some supernatural powers. In fact, the realm of gods is still a part of this world where human beings also live, but that form of existence is less effective for cultivation of the Buddha-dharma. Human beings are living beings in this realm have sharp or developed minds, capable of weighty moral and immoral action than any other living beings. The human realm is a mixture of both pain and pleasure, suffering and happiness. Bodhisattvas always choose this realm as their last existence because it offers opportunity for attaining Buddhahood. The human realm is one of the six destinies (gati) within cyclic existence (samsara) into which beings may be born. The sentient thinking being in the desire realm, whose past deeds affect his present condition. Man

occupies a very important place in the Buddhist cosmos because he has the power of decision. Human life is a mixture of the happy with a good dash of the bitter. The sentient thinking being in the desire realm, whose past deeds affect his present condition. Man occupies a very important place in the Buddhist cosmos because he has the power of decision. Human life is a mixture of the happy with a good dash of the bitter. According to the Buddha, a man can decide to devote himself to selfish, unskilful ends, a mere existence, or to give purpose to his life by the practice of skilful deeds which will make others and himself happy. Still, in many cases, man can make the vital decision to shape his life in this way or that; a man can think about the Way, and it was to man that the Buddha gave most of his important teachings, for men could understand, practice and realize the Way. It is man who can experience, if he wishes, Enlightenment and become as the Buddha and the Arahants, this is the greatest blessing, for not only the secure tranquillity of one person's salvation is gained but out of compassion the Way is shown in many others. The opportunity to be reborn as a human being is so rare; thus the Buddha taught: "Supposing a man threw into the ocean a piece of wood with a hole in it and it was then blown about by the various winds and currents over the waters. In the ocean lived a one-eyed turtle which had to surface once in a hundred years to breathe. Even in one Great Aeon it would be most unlikely in surfacing, to put its head into the hole in that piece of wood. Such is the rarity of gaining birth among human beings if once one has sunk into the three woeful levels or three lower realms." According to the Tibetan Mahayan Buddhism, there are four states of a human being's life: the birth state is said to be momentary, just at the point of conception; the next moment is the beginning of the prior time state, ranging from when the coarse body starts to form until death; then during the death state, even though it is taking place within the old body, the relationship of support and supporter of consciousness abiding in the body has been severed; At the point of death, the relationship of consciousness supported by a physical base takes place only on the subtlest level. At this point, individual consciousness is conjoined with the subtlest inner energy or "air". For one who is going to pass through the intermediate states, as soon as the death state stops, the intermediate state begins. In the intermediate states, although one

does not have a gross physical body, one does have a form achieved through the inetraction of inner air and consciousness. It is grosser than the most subtle body, but more subtle than the usual physical one we see. It will have the shape of the being which one will be reborn.

According to Buddhism, man is only a temporary combination formed by the five skandhas, the six elements (earth, water, fire, air, space and mind), and the twelve nidanas, being the product of previous cause, and without a real self or permanent soul. Spiritual elements of a human being are very complicated, they comprise of the eight consciousnesses, among them the Alayavijnana and Manas play crucial roles. Karma is one of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. Everything that we encounter in this life, good or bad, sweet or bitter, is a result of what we did in the past or from what we have done recently in this life. Good karma produces happiness; bad karma produces pain and suffering. So, what is karma? Karma is a Sanskrit word, literally means a deed or an action and a reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect. Moral or any good or bad action (however, the word 'karma' is usually used in the sense of evil bent or mind resulting from past wrongful actions) taken while living which causes corresponding future retribution, either good or evil transmigration (action and reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect). Our present life is formed and created through our actions and thoughts in our previous lives. Our present life and circumstances are the product of our past thoughts and actions, and in the same way our deeds in this life will fashion our future mode of existence. A karma can be created by body, speech, or mind. There are good karma, evil karma, and indifferent karma. All kinds of karma are accumulated by the Alayavijnana and Manas. Karma can be cultivated through religious practice (good), and uncultivated. For sentient being has lived through innumerable reincarnations, each has boundless karma. Whatever kind of karma is, a result would be followed accordingly, sooner or later. No one can escape the result of his own karma. Living beings in this realm have sharp or developed minds, capable of weighty moral and immoral action than any other living beings. The human realm is a mixture of both pain and pleasure, suffering and happiness. Bodhisattvas always choose this realm as their last existence because it offers opportunity for attaining Buddhahood. The human realm is one of the six destinies

(gati) within cyclic existence (samsara) into which beings may be born. The sentient thinking being in the desire realm, whose past deeds affect his present condition. Man occupies a very important place in the Buddhist cosmos because he has the power of decision. Human life is a mixture of the happy with a good dash of the bitter. Today there is ceaseless work going on in all directions to improve the world. Scientists are pursuing their methods and experiments with undiminished vigor and determination. Modern discoveries and methods of communication and contact have produced startling results. All these improvements, though they have their advantages and rewards, are entirely material and external. Within this conflux of mind and body of man, however, there are unexplored marvels to occupy men of science for many years. Really, the world, which the scientists are trying to improve, is, according to the ideas of Buddhism, subject to so much change at all points on its circumference and radii, that it is not capable of being made sorrowfree. Our life is so dark with aging, so smothered with death, so bound with change, and these qualities are so inherent in it, even as greenness is to grass, and bitterness to quinine, that not all the magic and power of science can ever transform it. The immortal splendor of an eternal sunlight awaits only those who can use the light of understanding and the culture of conduct to illuminate and guard their path through life's tunnel of darkness and dismay. The people of the world today mark the changing nature of life. Although they see it, they do not keep it in mind and act with dispassionate discernment. Though change again and again speaks to them and makes them unhappy, they pursue their mad career of whirling round the wheel of existence and are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony.

According to Buddhist tenets, the life cycle of a sentient being begins when the consciousness enters the womb, and traditionally this has been considered the moment of conception, another life cycle begins. The Eastern ancient said: "Man is the most sacred and superior being," however, to Buddhism, any living being's life is precious and of the same value. That is to say no being's life is more precious than the other's. According to the Upasaka Sutra, Buddhism agrees that in all living beings, man is endowed with all necessary faculties, intelligence. Buddhism also agrees that conditions of human beings are

not too miserable as those beings in the hell or the hungry ghosts. To Buddhism, human life is difficult to obtain. If we are born as human beings with many qualities, difficult to attain. We should try to make our lives meaningful ones. Besides, human beings have intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the true meaning of life and to practice the path to enlightenment. Devout Buddhists should always remember that what rebirth we will take depends on our present actions and habits. Thus, our purpose in this very life is to attain liberation or enlightenment, either becoming liberated from cyclic existence (Arhats), or becoming fully enlightened Buddhas. Most of all, we should be able to take advantage of our precious human lives to live to the fullest, moment by moment. To achieve this, we must be mindful of each moment, not being in the here-and-now when we act. According to Buddhist point of view, we have precious human lives, endowed with many qualities to attain. Because of this, we can make our lives highly meaningful. We often take our lives for granted and dwell on the things that aren't going the way we would like them to. Thinking this way is unrealistic and makes us depressed. However, if we think about the qualities we do have and everything that is going well, we'll have a different and more joyful perspective on life. One of our greatest endowments is our human intelligence. This precious quality enables us to investigate the meaning of life and to practice to advance on the path to enlightenment. If all of our senses, eyes, ears, mental... are intact, we are able to hear the Dharma, read books on it, and think about its meaning. We're so lucky to be born in an historical era when the Buddha has appeared and taught the Dharma. These teachings have been transmitted in a pure form from teacher to student in lineages stemming back to the Buddha. We have the opportunity to have qualified spiritual masters who can teach us, and there are communities of ordained people and Dharma friends who share our interest and encourage us on the path. Those of us who are fortunate to live in countries that cherish religious freedom aren't restricted from learning and practicing the path. In addition, most of us don't live in desperate poverty and thus have enough food, clothing and shelter to engage in spiritual practice without worrying about basic material needs. Our minds aren't heavily obscured with wrong views and we are interested in self-development. We have the potential to do great things with our

present opportunity. But to appreciate this, we must develop a long-term vision for our cultivation because our present lives are only a short one. Devout Buddhists should always remember that our mindstreams don't cease when our physical bodies die. Our minds are formless entities, but when they leave our present bodies at the time of death, they will be reborn in other bodies. What rebirth we'll take depends on our present actions. Therefore, one purpose of our lives can be to prepare for death and future lives. In that way, we can die peacefully, knowing our minds will be propelled towards good rebirths. The other way that we can utilize our lives is to attain liberation or enlightenment. We can become arhats, beings liberated from cyclic existence, or we can go on to become fully enlightened Buddhas, able to benefit others most effectively. Attaining liberation, our minds will be completely cleansed of all disturbing attitudes. Thus we'll never become angry, jealous or proud again. We no longer feel guilty, anxious or depressed, and all our bad habits will be gone. In addition, if we aspire to attain enlightenment for the benefit of everyone, we'll have spontaneous affection for all beings, and will know the most appropriate ways to help them. Also another way to take advantage of our precious human lives is to live life to the fullest, moment by moment. There are several ways to do this. One is to be mindful of each moment, being in the here-and-now as we act. When we eat, we can concentrate on eating, noting the taste and texture of the food. When we walk, we concentrate on the movements involved in walking, without letting our minds wander to any other thoughts. When we go upstairs, we can think, "may I lead all beings to fortunate rebirths, liberation or enlightenment." While washing dishes or clothes, we think, "I may help all beings cleanse their minds of disturbing attitudes and obscurations." When we hand something to another person, we think, "May I be able to satisfy the needs of all beings." We can creatively transform each action by generating the wish to bring happiness to others. Although seeing it, sentient beings seldom keep it in mind and act with dispassionate discernment. Though change again and again speaks to them and makes them unhappy, they pursue their mad career of whirling round the wheel of existence and are twisted and torn between the spokes of agony.

## ***II. An Overview of the Body of Four Elements & Five Aggregates:***

***An Overview of the Four Elements:*** Four great elements of which all things are made (produce and maintain life). These four elements are interrelated and inseparable. However, one element may preponderate over another. They constantly change, not remaining the same even for two consecutive moments. According to Buddhism, matter endures only for 17 thought-moments, while scientists tell us that matter endures only for 10/27<sup>th</sup> of a second. No matter what we say, a human body is temporary; it is created artificially through the accumulation of the four elements. Once death arrives, the body deteriorates to return to the soil, water-based substances will gradually dry up and return to the great water, the element of fire is lost and the body becomes cold, and the great wind no longer works within the body. At that time, the spirit must follow the karma each person has created while living to change lives and be reincarnated into the six realms, altering image, exchange body, etc in the cycle of births and deaths. According to the Sastra on the Prajna Sutra, there are four hundred and four ailments caused by the four elements in the body: One hundred one fevers caused by the Earth element. One hundred one fevers caused by the Fire element. One hundred one chills caused by the water element. One hundred one chills caused by the Wind element. These four elements are also regarded as the fundamental evil passions originating from the view that there is really an eternal substance known as ego-soul: the belief in the existence of an ego-substance, ignorance about the ego, conceit about the ego, and self-love. The verse uttered by Chao Fa-Shih when facing death under the Yao-Ch'in Emperor, fourth century A.D.:

No master have the four elements,  
Unreal are the five skandhas,  
When my head meets the white blade,  
I will be but slicing the spring wind.

***An Overview of the Five Aggregates:*** Skandha is a Sanskrit term which means the five aggregates or five aggregates of conditioned phenomena (constituents), or the five causally conditioned elements of existence forming a being or entity. According to Buddhist philosophy, each individual existence is composed of the five elements and

because they are constantly chancing, so those who attempt to cling to the “self” are subject to suffering. Though these factors are often referred to as the “aggregates of attachment” because they are impermanent and changing, ordinary people always develop desires for them. When Avalokitesvara (Kuan-yin or Kannon, the Bodhisattva who embodies Compassion) says (in the Heart Sutra) that the five skandhas are equally empty, to help him be precise we must ask, 'Mr. Avalokitesvara, empty of what?' The five skandhas, which may be translated into English as five heaps, or five aggregates, are the five elements that comprise a human being... In fact, these are really five rivers flowing together in us: the river of form, which means our body, the river of feeling, the river of perceptions, the river of mental formations, and the river of consciousness. They are always flowing in us... Avalokitesvara looked deeply into the five skandhas..., and he discovered that none of them can be by itself alone... Form is empty of a separate self, but it is full of everything in the cosmos. The same is true with feelings, perceptions, mental formation, and consciousness."

“Skandha” in Sanskrit means “group, aggregate, or heap.” In Buddhism, Skandha means the trunk of a tree, or a body. Skandha also means the five aggregates or five aggregates of conditioned phenomena (constituents), or the five causally conditioned elements of existence forming a being or entity. According to Buddhist philosophy, each individual existence is composed of the five elements and because they are constantly chancing, so those who attempt to cling to the “self” are subject to suffering. Though these factors are often referred to as the “aggregates of attachment” because they are impermanent and changing, ordinary people always develop desires for them. According to The Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra, the five aggregates are composed of form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. Generally speaking, the five aggregates mean men and the world of phenomena. Things that cover or conceal, implying that physical and mental forms obstruct realization of the truth. An accumulation or heap, implying the five physical and mental constituents, which combine to form the intelligence or nature, and rupa. The skandhas refer only to the phenomenal, not to the non-phenomenal. In order to overcome all sufferings and troubles, Buddhists should engage in the practice of profound Prajnaparamita



and perceive that the five aggregates are empty of self-existence. The Buddha reminded Sariputra: “O Sariputra, Form is not different from Emptiness, and Emptiness is not different from Form. Form is Emptiness and Emptiness is Form. The same can be said of feelings, perceptions, actions and consciousnesses.” We, ordinary people, do not see the five aggregates as phenomena but as an entity because of our deluded minds, and our innate desire to treat these as a self in order to pander to our self-importance. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five aggregates (Five Skandhas). The aggregates which make up a human being. The five skandhas are the roots of all ignorance. They keep sentient beings from realizing their always-existing Buddha-Nature. The five aggregates are considered as maras or demons fighting against the Buddha-nature of men. In accordance with the Dharma, life is comprised of five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, mental formation, consciousness). Matter plus the four mental factors classified below as feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness combined together form life. The real nature of these five aggregates is explained in the Teaching of the Buddha as follows: “Matter is equated to a heap of foam, feeling is like a bubble, perception is described as a mirage, mental formations are like a banana tree and consciousness is just an illusion.

### ***III. Human Beings' Physical Existence In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

#### ***An Overview of Physical Existence In Buddhist Teachings:***

According to Buddhism, the first goal of cultivation in Buddhism is to realize the true nature of the body and to be non-attached to it. Most people identify themselves with their bodies. However, after a period of time of meditation practices, we will no longer care to think of yourself as a body, we will no longer identify with the body. At that time, we will begin to see the body as it is. It is only a series of physical and mental process, not a unity; and we no longer mistake the superficial for the real. Mindfulness of your body in daily life activities, such as mindfulness of your body while walking, standing, lying, sitting, looking at someone, looking around the environments, bending, stretching, dressing, washing, eating, drinking, chewing, talking, etc.

The purpose of mindfulness is to pay attention to your behavior, but not to run after any events. Zen practitioners should always remember that this body is an impure mass of ulcers, this body is the storm center of sufferings and afflictions. Our own bodies being impure and disgust, the bodies of others are likewise, only the Buddha-body is forever pure.

***This Body Is Not Real But Only An Illusion:*** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Expedient Method (Upaya) of Teaching, using upaya he appeared ill and because of his indisposition kings, ministers, elders, upasakas, Brahmins, etc., as well as princes and other officials reaching many thousands came to enquire after his health. So Vimalakirti appeared in his sick body to receive and expound the Dharma to them, saying: “Virtuous ones, the human body is impermanent; it is neither strong nor durable; it will decay and is, therefore, unreliable. It causes anxieties and sufferings, being subject to all kinds of ailments. Virtuous ones, all wise men do not rely on this body which is like a mass of foam, which is intangible. It is like a bubble and does not last for a long time. It is like a flame and is the product of the thirst of love. It is like a banana tree, the centre of which is hollow. It is like an illusion being produced by inverted thoughts. It is like a dream being formed by false views. It is like a shadow and is caused by karma. This body is like an echo for it results from causes and conditions. It is like a floating cloud, which disperses any moment. It is like lightning for it does not stay for the time of a thought. It is without owner for it is like the earth. It is egoless for it is like fire (that kills itself). It is transient like the wind. It is not human for it is like water. It is unreal and depends on the four elements for its existence. It is empty, being neither ego nor its object. It is without knowledge like grass, trees and potsherds. It is not the prime mover, but is moved by the wind (of passions). It is impure and full of filth. It is false, and though washed, bathed, clothed and fed, it will decay and die in the end. It is a calamity being subject to all kinds of illnesses and sufferings. It is like a dry well, for it is pursued by death. It is unsettled and will pass away. It is like a poisonous snake, a deadly enemy, a temporary assemblage (without underlying reality), being made of the five aggregates, the twelve entrances (the six organs and their objects) and the eighteen realms of sense (the six organs, their objects and their

perceptions). Virtuous ones, the (human) body being so repulsive, you should seek the Buddha body. Why? Because the Buddha body is called Dharmakaya, the product of boundless merits and wisdom; the outcome of discipline, meditation, wisdom, liberation and perfect knowledge of liberation; the result of kindness, compassion, joy and indifference (to emotions); the consequence of (the six perfections or paramitas) charity, discipline, patience, zeal, meditation and wisdom and the sequel of expedient teaching (upaya); the six supernatural powers; the three insights; the thirty-seven stages contributory to enlightenment; serenity and insight; the ten transcendental powers (dasabala); the four kinds of fearlessness; the eighteen unsurpassed characteristics of the Buddha; the wiping out of all evils and the performance of all good deeds; truthfulness, and freedom from looseness and unrestraint. So countless kinds of purity and cleanness produce the body of the Tathagata.

***No Matter What the Real Kind of This Body Is, Practitioners Should Never Feel Relinquished of It, But Considering It As An Expedient Method For Cultivation:*** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Manjusri Bodhisattva obeyed the Buddha's command to call on Upasaka Vimalakirti to enquire after his health, there was a conversation about the "body" as follows: "Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: 'What should a Bodhisattva say when comforting another Bodhisattva who falls ill?' Vimalakirti replied: 'He should speak of the impermanence of the body but never of the abhorrence and relinquishment of the body. He should speak of the suffering body but never of the joy in nirvana. He should speak of egolessness in the body while teaching and guiding all living beings (in spite of the fact that they are fundamentally non-existent in the absolute state). He should speak of the voidness of the body but should never cling to the ultimate nirvana. He should speak of repentance of past sins but should avoid slipping into the past. Because of his own illness he should take pity on all those who are sick. Knowing that he has suffered during countless past aeons he should think of the welfare of all living beings. He should think of his past practice of good virtues to uphold (his determination for) right livelihood. Instead of worrying about troubles (klesa) he should give rise to zeal and devotion (in his practice of the Dharma). He should act like a king physician to cure others' illnesses. Thus a

Bodhisattva should comfort another sick Bodhisattva to make him happy.' Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should look into all things in this way. He should further meditate on his body which is impermanent, is subject to suffering and is non-existent and egoless; this is called wisdom. Although his body is sick he remains in (the realm of) birth and death for the benefit of all (living beings) without complaint; this is called expedient method (upaya). Manjusri! He should further meditate on the body which is inseparable from illness and on illness which is inherent in the body because sickness and the body are neither new nor old; this is called wisdom. The body, though ill, is not to be annihilated; this is the expedient method (for remaining in the world to work for salvation)."

#### ***IV. Manusyakaya & Buddhakaya In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

##### ***Overview and Meanings of Kaya In Buddhist Point of View:***

According to the concept of "Kaya" in the Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy with the question of "What is man?" originated in the earliest period of time of Veda Philosophy. After the Vedic period of time, responses to philosophical questions gradually became clearer and more reasonable, and questions such as "Kaya of human beings", or "Purusa-Kaya" were more and more emphasized. And the answer for such philosophical question as "Who am I?" kept changing with time. The answer to this question changed from a physical or organic man to a physiological man, then to a psychological man, then to a metaphysical man, then lastly to a psiritual or religious ethical man. First, they believed that men as well as other beings were being formed from the Sun or the solar substance. Then, later people believed that a man was composed of food digested by the father, or composed of the five elements of earth, water, fire, wind and air. In other words, a man is composed of food of five elements, produced from the essence of food digested by the father communicated to the mother and established in the womb. Then there appeared the concept of a man born of the parents, raised to a body that is composed of food or elements nourished by food, reduced at death back to elements, or returned to the physical world. Then another concept of man appeared, a psychological man, a conscious individual who can perceive throught

the senses, who can imagine, think, feel, will; and who can perceive differences in things. Then, there appeared another concept of man, a metaphysical man, a man who is endowed with nothing but inherent conscious sentient principle or soul. Then, there appeared even another concept of man, a spiritual man, a man with a blessed soul that is united with divine. Thus, lastly, the Vedas construed man a spark of the divine, potential God.

According to Buddhism, man is “Pancakkhandha”. The physical body is produced from the essence of food which is a combination of multiple conditions in the world, digested by the father communicated to the mother and established in the womb. Such a person is conditioned by this physical and mental world. he relates closely to others, to society, and to nature, but can never exist by himself. The five aggregates of man are the operation of the twelve elements. Among which, aggregate of form is understood as a person’s physical body, aggregate of feeling includes feelings of suffering, of happiness, and of indifference. It is known as feelings arising from eye contact, ear contact, nose contact, tongue contact, body contact and mind contact. Aggregate of perception includes perception of body, of sound, of odor, of taste, of touch, and of mental objects or phenomena. Aggregate of activities is all mental, oral, and bodily activities. It is also understood as vocational acts occasioned by body, by sound, by odor, by taste, by touching or by ideas. Aggregate of consciousness includes eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind consciousnesses. In the Turning the Dharma-Cakra Sutra, the Buddha taught very clearly about the Pancakkhandha as follows: “Bhiksus, the form, feeling, perception, activities, and consciousness are impermanent, suffering, and void of the self. Let us examine the body and mind to see whether in either of them we can locate the self, we will find in neither of of them. Then, the so-called “Self” is just a term for a collection of physical and mental factors. Let us first look at the aggregate matter of form. The aggregate of form corresponds to what we would call material or physical factors. It includes not only our own bodies, but also the material objects that surround us, i.e., houses, soil, forests, and oceans, and so on. However, physical elements by themselves are not enough to produce experience. The simple contact between the eyes and visible objects, or between the ear and sound cannot result in

experience without consciousness. Only the co-presence of consciousness together with the sense of organ and the object of the sense organ produces experience. In other words, it is when the eyes, the visible object and consciousness come together that the experience of a visible object is produced. Consciousness is therefore an extremely important element in the production of experience. Consciousness or the sixth sense, or the mind. This sense organ together with the other five sense organs of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body to produce experience. The physical and mental factors of experience worked together to produce personal experience, and the nature of the five aggregates are in constant change. Therefore, according to the Buddha's teachings, the truth of a man is selfless. The body and mind that man misunderstands of his 'self' is not his self, it is not his , and he is not it." Devout Buddhists should grasp this idea firmly to establish an appropriate method of cultivation not only for the body, but also for the speech and mind.

Material components which man is made are the Four tanmatra. Four great elements of which all things are made (produce and maintain life). These four elements are interrelated and inseparable. However, one element may preponderate over another. They constantly change, not remaining the same even for two consecutive moments. According to Buddhism, matter endures only for 17 thought-moments, while scientists tell us that matter endures only for 10/27<sup>th</sup> of a second. No matter what we say, a human body is temporary; it is created artificially through the accumulation of the four elements. Once death arrives, the body deteriorates to return to the soil, water-based substances will gradually dry up and return to the great water, the element of fire is lost and the body becomes cold, and the great wind no longer works within the body. At that time, the spirit must follow the karma each person has created while living to change lives and be reincarnated into the six realms, altering image, exchange body, etc in the cycle of births and deaths. Solid matter or Earth. Prithin means the element of extension, the substratum of matter. Without it objects have no form, nor can they occupy space. The qualities of hardness and softness are two conditions of this element. After death, these parts will decay and deteriorate to become soil. For this reason, they belong to the Great Soil. Water, fluidity, or liquid. Unlike the

earth element it is intangible. It is the element which enables the scattered atoms of matter to cohere together. After death, these water-based substances will dry up. In other words, they have returned to water. Fire or heat. Fire element includes both heat and cold, and fire element possesses the power of maturing bodies, they are vitalizing energy. Preservation and decay are due to this element. After death, the element of fire is lost and the body gradually becomes cold. Air, wind, motion, or energy of motion. Air element is the element of motion in the body. After death, breathing ceases, body functions become catatonic or completely rigid because the great wind no longer works within the body.

***Buddhakaya In Buddhist Point of View:*** A lot of people think of the Buddha's body as his physical body. Truly, the Buddha's body means Enlightenment. It is formless and without substance. It always has been and always will be. It is not a physical body that must be nourished by ordinary food. It is an eternal body whose substance is Wisdom. Therefore, Buddha will never disappear as long as Enlightenment exists. Enlightenment appears as the light of Wisdom that awakens people into a newness of life and causes them to be born into the world of Buddhas. According to Mahayana doctrine, Buddhas have three bodies: 1) Dharmakaya, or body of the great order, or true body of the Buddha. This is the true nature of the Buddha, which is identical with transcendental reality, the essence of the universe. The dharmakaya is the unity of the Buddha with every thing existing. It represents the law or dharma, the teaching expounded by the Buddha (Sakyamuni); 2) Sambhogakaya, or body of delight, the body of buddhas who in a "buddha-paradise" enjoy the truth that they embody. This is also the result of previous good actions; and 3) Nirmanakaya, or body of transformation, or emanation body, the earthly body in which Buddhas appear to men in order to fulfill the buddhas' resolve to guide all beings to advance to Buddhahood (liberation). The nirmanakaya is embodied in the earthly Buddhas and Bodhisattvas projected into the world through the meditation of the sambhogakaya as a result of their compassion. The three bodies are not one and yet not different. It is because the levels of understanding of human beings are different. Some see the dharma body, still others see the reward body, and still others see the response body. For example, some look at a pearl as a

substance which is round and perfect, others see the pure light emitting by the pearl, still others see the pearl reflected within itself. Apart from the substance of the pearl and the light, there is no pure light emitting, nor reflection inside the pearl. Thus the three are one. These are Buddha's three-fold body. A Buddha has three bodies or planes of reality. According to the Yogacara philosophy, the Triple Body is Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Nirmanakaya. Dharmakaya or Dharma body (Law body) is likened to the field of a specific career; the Sambhogakaya or bliss-body is a person's training by which that person acquires the knowledge of that specific career; and the Nirmanakaya or the body of transformation is likened the application of this knowledge in daily life to earn a living.

*According to the Lankavatara Sutra, there are four kinds of Buddhakaya: Nirmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Buddha-wisdom or Great wisdom (Tathata-jnanabuddha), and Dharmakaya. According to the sastra on the Consciousness, there are four kinds of Buddhakaya: Nirmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya. According to the T'ien-T'ai Sect, there are four kinds of Buddhakaya: Nirmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Sambhogakaya, and Dharmakaya. This sect believes that the reward body, the sambhoga-kaya of a Buddha. The incarnation body of the Buddha, or retribution body in which he enjoys the reward of his labours. Our physical body is called the retribution body because we are on this earth, the Saha World or World of Endurance, as a result of good and evil karma. T'ien-T'ai believes that the transformation body of the Buddha is the manifested body, or any incarnation of Buddha. The transformation body of the Buddha is corresponding to the Buddha-incarnation of the Bhutatathata. Also according to the T'ien-T'ai Sect, there are five kinds of Buddha-kaya: The first Buddha-body is the spiritual body of wisdom. This is the spiritual body of bhutatathata-wisdom (Sambhogakaya). The second Buddha-body is the Sambhogakaya. The spiritual body of all virtuous achievement. The third Buddha-body is the Nirmakaya. The body of incarnation in the world, or the spiritual body of incarnation in the world. The fourth Buddha-body is the Nirmakaya, or the body of unlimited power of transformation. The fifth Buddha-body is the Dharmakaya. The body of unlimited space. According to the Flower Adornment Sutra, there are five kinds of Buddha-kaya: The first*



Buddha-body is the body or person of Buddha born from the dharma-nature. *The second* Buddha-body is the dharmakaya evolved by Buddha-virtue, or achievement. *The third* Buddha-body is the dharmakaya with unlimited powers of transformation. *The fourth* Buddha-body is the real dharmakaya. *The fifth* Buddha-body is the universal dharmakaya, the dharmakaya as being like space which enfolds all things, omniscient and pure.

According to The Surangama Sutra, book Six, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva vowed in front of the Buddha about his *Thirty-two Response Bodies* as follows: “World Honored One, because I served and made offerings to the Thus Come One, Kuan Yin, I received from that Thus Come One a transmission of the vajra samadhi of all being like an illusion as one becomes permeated with hearing and cultivates hearing. Because I gained a power of compassion identical with that of all Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, I became accomplished in thirty-two response-bodies and entered all lands.” The wonderful purity of thirty-two response-bodies, by which one enters into all lands and accomplishes self-mastery by means of samadhi of becoming permeated with hearing and cultivating hearing and by means of the miraculous strength of effortlessness. According to the Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra, the Sixth Patriarch taught: “Good Knowing Advisor! What is the perfect, full Reward-body of the Buddha? Just as one lamp can disperse the darkness of a thousand years, one thought of wisdom can destroy ten thousand years of delusion. Do not think of the past; it is gone and can never be recovered. Instead think always of the future and in every thought, perfect and clear, see your own original nature. Although good and evil differ, the original nature is non-dual. That non-dual nature is the real nature. Undefined by either good or evil, it is the perfect, full Reward-body of the Buddha. One evil thought arising from the self-nature destroys ten thousand aeons’ worth of good karma. One good thought arising from the self-nature ends evils as numerous as the sand-grains in the Ganges River. To reach the unsurpassed Bodhi directly, see it for yourself in every thought and do not lose the original thought. That is the Reward-body of the Buddha.”

In Hinayana the Buddha-nature in its absolute side is described as not discussed, being synonymous with the five divisions of the commandments, meditation, wisdom, release, and doctrine. The

Madhyamika School of Nagarjuna defines the absolute or ultimate reality as the formless which contains all forms, the essence of being, the noumenon of the other two manifestations of the Triratna. The Dharmalaksana School defines the nature of the dharmakaya as: the nature or essence of the whole Triratna and the particular form of the Dharma in that trinity. The One-Vehicle Schools represented by the Hua-Yen and T'ien-T'ai sects, consider the nature of the dharmakaya to be the Bhutatathata, noumenon and wisdom being one and undivided. The Shingon sect takes the six elements as the nature of dharmakaya. First, takes the six elements (earth, water, fire, air, space) as noumenon or fundamental Dharmakaya. Second, takes mind (intelligence or knowledge) as the wisdom dharmakaya. The nature of the Dharmakaya is the absolute, the true nature of all things which is immutable, immovable and beyond all concepts and distinctions. Dharmata (pháp tánh) or Dharma-nature, or the nature underlying all things has numerous alternative forms.

According to the Mahayana traditions, there are *Seven Surpassing Qualities of a Buddha*: *First*, the Buddha's body with thirty-two signs and eighty-four marks. *Second*, the Buddha's dharma or universal law, the way of universal mercy. *Third*, the Buddha's wisdom. *Fourth*, the Buddha's perfection with perfect insight or doctrine. *Fifth*, the Buddha's supernatural powers. *Sixth*, the Buddha's ability to overcome hindrance and attain Deliverance. *Seventh*, the Buddha's abiding place (Nirvana). Besides, there are many other surpassing qualities of a Buddha. *Buddha Are Inconceivably Pure*: According to the doctrine of the Mahasanghika in the Samayabhedoparacanacakra, the Buddhakaya is inconceivably pure. *First*, the Tathagata, the Buddha, or the Blessed One transcends all worlds. *Second*, the Tathagata has no worldly substances. *Third*, all the words of the Tathagata preach the Dharma. *Fourth*, the Tathagata explains explicitly all things. *Fifth*, the Tathagata teaches all things as they are. *Sixth*, the Tathagata has physical form. *Seventh*, the Buddha's authority is unlimited. *Eighth*, the life of the Buddha-body is limitless. *Ninth*, the Tathagata is never tired of saving beings. *Tenth*, the Buddha does not sleep. *Eleventh*, the Tathagata is above the need to ponder questions. *Twelfth*, the Tathagata, being always in meditation, utters no word, nevertheless, he preaches the truth for all beings by means of words and explanations.

*Thirteenth*, the Tathagata understands all matters instantaneously. *Fourteenth*, the Tathagata gains complete understanding with his wisdom equal within a single thought-moment. *Fifteenth*, the Tathagata, unceasingly produce wisdom regarding destruction of defilements, and wisdom concerning non-origination until reaching Nirvana.

***Manusyakaya & Buddhakaya In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti***

**Sutra:** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Expedient Method (Upaya) of Teaching, lay man Vimalakirti used expedient means of appearing illness in his body to expound about sentient beings' bodies and the Buddha's body to save them. Because of his indisposition, kings, ministers, elders, upasakas, Brahmins, et., as well as princes and other officials numbering many thousands came to enquire after his health. So Vimalakirti appeared in his sick body to receive and expound the Dharma to them, saying: "Virtuous ones, the human body is impermanent; it is neither strong nor durable; it will decay and is, therefore, unreliable. It causes anxieties and sufferings, being subject to all kinds of ailments. Virtuous ones, all wise men do not rely on this body which is like a mass of foam, which is intangible. It is like a bubble and does not last for a long time. It is like a flame and is the product of the thirst of love. It is like a banana tree, the centre of which is hollow. It is like an illusion being produced by inverted thoughts. It is like a dream being formed by false views. It is like a shadow and is caused by karma. This body is like an echo for it results from causes and conditions. It is like a floating cloud which disperses any moment. It is like lightning for it does not stay for the time of a thought. It is ownerless for it is like the earth. It is egoless for it is like fire (that kills itself). It is transient like the wind. It is not human for it is like water. It is unreal and depends on the four elements for its existence. It is empty, being neither ego nor its object. It is without knowledge like grass, trees and potsherds. It is not the prime mover, but is moved by the wind (of passions). It is impure and full of filth. It is false, and though washed, bathed, clothed and fed, it will decay and die in the end. It is a calamity being subject to all kinds of illnesses and sufferings. It is like a dry well for it is pursued by death. It is unsettled and will pass away. It is like a poisonous snake, a deadly enemy, a temporary assemblage (without underlying reality), being made of the

five aggregates, the twelve entrances (the six organs and their objects) and the eighteen realms of sense (the six organs, their objects and their perceptions). “Virtuous ones, the (human) body being so repulsive, you should seek the Buddha body. Why? Because the Buddha body is called Dharmakaya, the product of boundless merits and wisdom; the outcome of discipline, meditation, wisdom, liberation and perfect knowledge of liberation; the result of kindness, compassion, joy and indifference (to emotions); the consequence of (the six perfections or paramitas) charity, discipline, patience, zeal, meditation and wisdom, and the sequel of expedient teaching (upaya); the six supernatural powers; the three insights; the thirty-seven stages contributory to enlightenment; serenity and insight; the ten transcendental powers (dasabala); the four kinds of fearlessness; the eighteen unsurpassed characteristics of the Buddha; the wiping out of all evils and the performance of all good deeds; truthfulness, and freedom from looseness and unrestraint. So countless kinds of purity and cleanness produce the body of the Tathagata. Virtuous ones, if you want to realize the Buddha body in order to get rid of all the illnesses of a living being, you should set your minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi).” Thus the elder Vimalakirti expounded the Dharma to all those who came to enquire after his health, urging countless visitors to seek supreme enlightenment.

Also according to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Manjusri Bodhisattva obeyed the Buddha’s command to call on Upasaka Vimalakirti to enquire after his health, there was a conversation about the “body” as follows: “Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: ‘What should a Bodhisattva say when comforting another Bodhisattva who falls ill?’ Vimalakirti replied: ‘He should speak of the impermanence of the body but never of the abhorrence and relinquishment of the body. He should speak of the suffering body but never of the joy in nirvana. He should speak of egolessness in the body while teaching and guiding all living beings (in spite of the fact that they are fundamentally non-existent in the absolute state). He should speak of the voidness of the body but should never cling to the ultimate nirvana. He should speak of repentance of past sins but should avoid slipping into the past. Because of his own illness he should take pity on all those who are sick. Knowing that he

has suffered during countless past aeons he should think of the welfare of all living beings. He should think of his past practice of good virtues to uphold (his determination for) right livelihood. Instead of worrying about troubles (klesa) he should give rise to zeal and devotion (in his practice of the Dharma). He should act like a king physician to cure others' illnesses. Thus a Bodhisattva should comfort another sick Bodhisattva to make him happy.' Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should look into all things in this way. He should further meditate on his body which is impermanent, is subject to suffering and is non-existent and egoless; this is called wisdom. Although his body is sick he remains in (the realm of) birth and death for the benefit of all (living beings) without complaint; this is called expedient method (upaya). Manjusri! He should further meditate on the body which is inseparable from illness and on illness which is inherent in the body because sickness and the body are neither new nor old; this is called wisdom. The body, though ill, is not to be annihilated; this is the expedient method (for remaining in the world to work for salvation)." Buddhist practitioners should always remember that of all precious jewels, life is the greatest; if there is life, it is the priceless jewel. Thus, if you are able to maintain your livelihood, someday you will be able to rebuild your life. However, everything in life, if it has form characteristics, then, inevitably, one day it will be destroyed. A human life is the same way, if there is life, there must be death. Even though we say a hundred years, it passes by in a flash, like lightening streaking across the sky, like a flower's blossom, like the image of the moon at the bottom of a lake, like a short breath, what is really eternal? Sincere Buddhists should always remember when a person is born, not a single dime is brought along; therefore, when death arrives, not a word will be taken either. A lifetime of work, putting the body through pain and torture in order to accumulate wealth and possessions, in the end everything is worthless and futile in the midst of birth, old age, sickness, and death. After death, all possessions are given to others in a most senseless and pitiful manner. At such time, there are not even a few good merits for the soul to rely and lean on for the next life. Therefore, such an individual will be condemned into the three evil paths immediately. Ancient sages taught: "A steel tree of a thousand years once again blossom, such a thing is still not bewildering; but once a human body

has been lost, ten thousand reincarnations may not return.” Sincere Buddhists should always remember what the Buddha taught: “It is difficult to be reborn as a human being, it is difficult to encounter (meet or learn) the Buddha-dharma; now we have been reborn as a human being and encountered the Buddha-dharma, if we let the time passes by in vain we waste our scarce lifespan.”

## *Chapter Twenty-Nine*

### *Mind in the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *(A) Minds Are Being Such, So Are Their Sins*

##### *I. A Summary of Mind In Buddhist Teachings:*

To the Buddha, man is a supreme being, thus, he taught: “Be your own torch and your own refuge. Do not seek refuge in any other person.” This was the Buddha’s truthful word. He also taught that all realizations come from effort and intelligence that derive from one’s own experience. Man is the master of his destiny. The human’s mind itself right in this very life can make the person’s life better or worse. Finally, if the person tries his or her best to cultivate, he or she can become a Buddha. According to Buddhism, the mind plays an extremely important role in Buddhist life and cultivation. The mind has brought about the Buddhas, the Heaven, or the Hell. It is the main driving force that makes us happy or sorrowful, cheerful or sad, liberated or doomed. For these above mentioned reasons, we can see the Buddha’s teachings on mind scattered all over Buddhist scriptures, especially in the Heart of the Prajna-Paramita-Sutra, Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Sutra of the Diamond-Cutter of Supreme Wisdom, Lankavatara Sutra, Dharmapada Sutra, Surangama Sutra, Sutra on the Foundations of Mindfulness, and so on.

As matter of fact, all of our desires develop because of the thoughts of our mental factor intention. When we see an attractive object, we develop a wish to obtain that object. In contrary, when we see an unattractive object, we develop a wish not to obtain that object; sometimes we hate the object. Generally speaking, almost all delusions created by mental ignorance or passion of the heart. The discriminating mind or the deluded mind itself lies at the roof of this birth and death, but people think that this mind is their real mind, so the delusion enters into the causes and conditions that produce suffering. In Buddhist point of view, man’s mind influences his body profoundly. If allowed to

function viciously and indulge in unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster, can even cause one's death. But on the contrary, a mind imbued with wholesome thoughts can cure a sick body.

From infinite eons, because we have been drowning deeply in the concept of "Self," ignorance has ruled and governed us. Thus, our body, speech, and mind have created infinite karmas and even great transgressions, such as being ungrateful and disloyal to our fathers, mothers, the Triple Jewels, etc, were not spared. Now that we are awakened, it is necessary to feel ashamed and be remorseful by using the same three karmas of body, speech, and mind to repent sincerely. Zen practitioners should always remember that in the endless cycle of Birth and Death, all sentient beings are at one time or another related to one another. However, because of delusion and attachment to self, we have, for countless eons, harmed other sentient beings and created an immense amount of evil karma. The Buddhas and the sages appear in this world out of compassion, to teach and liberate sentient beings, of whom we are a part. Even so, we engender a mind of ingratitude and destructiveness toward the Triple Jewel (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha).

## ***II. The Nature of Sin Is Neither Within nor Without, Nor in Between; Minds Are Being Such, So Are Their Sins:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Three, Chapter on Disciples, the Buddha said to Upali: "You call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf." Upali said: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health. For once, two bhiksus broke the prohibitions, and being shameful of their sins, they dared not call on the Buddha. They came to ask me: 'Upali, we have broken the commandments and are ashamed of our sins, so we dare not ask the Buddha about this and come to you. Please teach us the rules of repentance so as to wipe out our sins.' I then taught them the rules of repentance. At that time, Vimalakirti came and said: 'Hey, Upali, do not aggravate their sins which you should wipe out at once without further disturbing their minds. Why? Because the nature of sin is neither within nor without, nor in between. As the Buddha has said, living beings are impure because their mind are impure; if their minds are pure, they are all pure. And, mind also is neither within nor without nor in between. Their minds being such, so, are their sins. Likewise



all things do not go beyond (their) suchness. Upali, when your mind is liberated, is there any remaining impurity?' I replied: 'There will be no more.' He said: 'Likewise, the minds of all living beings are free from impurities. Upali, false thoughts are impure and the absence of false thoughts is purity. Inverted (ideas) are impure and the absence of inverted (ideas) is purity. Clinging to ego is impure and non-clinging to ego is purity. Upali, all phenomena rise and fall without staying (for an instant) like an illusion and lightning. All phenomena do not wait for one another and do not stay for the time of a thought. They all derive from false views and are like a dream and a flame, the moon in water, and an image in a mirror for they are born from wrong thinking. He who understands this is called a keeper of the rules of discipline and he who knows it is called a skillful interpreter (of the precepts).' At that time, the two bhiksus declared: 'What a supreme wisdom which is beyond the reach of Upali who cannot expound the highest principle of discipline and morality?' I said: 'Since I left the Buddha I have not met a sravaka or a Bodhisattva who can surpass his rhetoric, for his great wisdom and perfect enlightenment have reached such a high degree.' Thereupon, the two bhiksus got rid of their doubts and repentance, set their mind on the quest of supreme enlightenment and took the vow to make all living beings acquire the same power of speech. Hence, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti and inquire after his health."

***(B) Pure Mind, the Buddha Land is Pure  
In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

***I. The Triple World Is But One Mind, Outside the Mind, There Is No Other Thing:***

According to Buddhism, the triple world is just Mind (Tribhavasva-cittamatram (skt). In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha taught: "The Bodhisattva-mahasattvas sees that the triple world is no more than the creation of the citta, manas, and mano-vijnana, that it is brought forth

by falsely discriminating one's own mind, that there are no signs of an external world where the principle of multiplicity rules, and finally that the triple world is just one's own mind." As a matter of fact, once deviant mind arises, demons immediately appear with numberless upside-downs; while correct mind arises, Buddhas appear with the Buddhas' pure land. According to the Platform Sutra, Chapter Ten, the Sixth Patriarch said, "All of you please, listen carefully. If those of future generations recognize living beings, they will have perceived the Buddha-nature. If they do not recognize living beings, they may seek the Buddha throughout many aeons but he will be difficult to meet. I will now teach you how to recognize the living beings within your mind and how to see the Buddha-nature there. If you wish to see the Buddha, simply recognize living beings for it is living beings who are confused about the Buddha and not the Buddha who is confused about living beings. When enlightened to the self-nature, the living being is a Buddha. If confused about the self-nature, the Buddha is a living being. When the self-nature is impartial, the living being is the Buddha. When the self-nature is biased, the Buddha is a living being. If your thoughts are devious and malicious, the Buddha dwells within the living being but by means of one impartial thought, the living being becomes a Buddha. Our minds have their own Buddha and that Buddha is the true Buddha. If the mind does not have its own Buddha, where can the true Buddha be sought? Your own minds are the Buddha; have no further doubts. Nothing can be established outside the mind, for the original mind produces the ten thousand dharmas. Therefore, the Sutras say, 'The mind produced, all dharmas are produced; the mind extinguished, all dharmas are extinguished. Now, to say goodbye, I will leave you a verse called the 'Self-Nature's True Buddha Verse.' People of the future who understand its meaning will see their original mind and realize the Buddha Way. The verse runs:

"The true-suchness self-nature is the true Buddha.

Deviant views, the three poisons are the demon king.

At times of deviant confusion, the demon king is in the house;

But when you have proper views, the Buddha is in the hall.

Deviant views, the three poisons produced within the nature,

Are just the demon king come to dwell in the house.

Proper views casting out three poisons of the mind.

Transform the demon into Buddha True, not False.  
 Dharma-body, Reward-body, and Transformation-body:  
 Fundamentally the three bodies are one body.  
 Seeing that for yourself within your own nature  
 Is the Bodhi-cause for realizing Buddhahood.  
 The pure nature is originally produced from the Transformation-body.  
 The pure nature is ever-present within the Transformation-body.  
 One's nature leads the transformation-body down the right road.  
 And in the future the full perfection is truly without end.  
 The root cause of purity is the lust nature, for once rid of lust,  
 the substance of the nature is pure.  
 Each of you, within your natures; abandon the five desires.  
 In an instant, see your nature, it is true.  
 If in this life you encounter the door of Sudden Teaching  
 You will be suddenly enlightened to your  
 Self-nature and see the Honored of the world.  
 If you wish to cultivate and aspire to Buddhahood,  
 You won't know where the truth is to be sought  
 Unless you can see the truth within your own mind,  
 This truth which is the cause of realizing Buddhahood.  
 Not to see your self-nature but to seek the Buddha outside:  
 If you think that way, you are deluded indeed.  
 I now leave behind the Dharma-door of the Sudden Teaching  
 To liberate worldly people who must cultivate themselves.  
 I announce to you and to future students of the Way:  
 If you do not hold these views you will only waste your time."

Thinking very carefully the Sixth Patriarch's teachings, Buddhist practitioners will always see that when deviant mind arises, demons appear; when correct mind arises, Buddhas appear. These teachings will forever be the Truth for all Buddhist practitioners!

Unlike the material body, immaterial mind is invisible. We are aware of our thoughts and feelings and so forth by direct sensation, and we infer their existence in others by analogy. The mind is the root of all dharmas. In Contemplation of the Mind Sutra, the Buddha taught: "All my tenets are based on the mind that is the source of all dharmas." The mind has brought about the Buddhas, the Heaven, or the Hell. It is the main driving force that makes us happy or sorrowful, cheerful or

sad, liberated or doomed. The mind is so closely linked with the body that mental states affect the body's health and well-being. Some doctors even confirm that there is no such thing as a purely physical disease. Unless these bad mental states are caused by previous evil acts, and they are unalterable, it is possible so to change them as to cause mental health and physical well-being to follow thereafter. Man's mind influences his body profoundly. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster, can even kill a being; but it can also cure a sick body. When mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and understanding, the effect it can produce is immense. A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts really does lead to a healthy and relaxed life. According to Zen Master Taisen Deshimaru in 'Questions to a Zen Master: "It is only your mind that suffers. If you are anxious you suffer, but if you disconnect the roots of your anxiety your suffering disappears... The ego suffers for itself; without it there would be no more suffering." According to the Buddha, in addition to the physical sufferings, there are mental sufferings such as the suffering of separation from what is dear to us, the suffering of contact with what we despise, and the suffering of not getting what we desire, etc. As a matter of fact, Outside the mind, there is no other thing. Mind, Buddha, and all the living, these three are not different (the Mind, the Buddha and sentient beings are not three different things). Zen practitioners should always remember that nothing exists outside the mind (consciousness), since all phenomena are projections of consciousness.

## ***II. Pure Mind, the Buddha Land Is Pure In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, the Buddha told Ratna-rasi, because of his straightforward mind, a Bodhisattva can act straightforwardly; because of his straightforward deeds, he realizes the profound mind; because of his profound mind his thoughts are kept under control; because of his controlled thoughts, his acts accord with the Dharma (he has heard); because of his deeds in accord with the Dharma, he can dedicate his merits to the benefit of others; because of this dedication, he can make use of expedient methods (upaya); because of his expedient methods, he can bring living beings to

perfection; because he can bring them to perfection, his Buddha land is pure; because of his pure Buddha land, his preaching of the Dharma is pure; because of his pure preaching, his wisdom is pure; because of his pure wisdom, his mind is pure, and because of his pure mind, all his merits are pure. Therefore, Ratna-rasi, if a Bodhisattva wants to win the pure land, he should purify his mind and because of his pure mind, the Buddha land is pure.” At that time, Sariputra thought: “If the Buddha land is pure, because of the Bodhisattva’s pure mind, is it because the mind of the World Honoured One was not pure when He was still in the Bodhisattva stage, that this Buddha land (i.e. this world) is so unclean (as we see it now)?” The Buddha knew of his thought and said to Sariputra: “Are the sun and the moon not clean when a blind man does not see their cleanliness?” Sariputra said: “World Honoured One, this is the fault of the blind man and not that of the sun and the moon.” The Buddha said: “Sariputra, because of their (spiritual) blindness, living beings do not see the imposing majesty of the Tathagata’s pure land; this is not the fault of the Tathagata. Sariputra, this land of mine is pure but you do not see its purity.” Thereupon, Brahma with a tuft of hair on his head (resembling a conch) said to Sariputra: “Don’t think this Buddha land is impure. Why? Because I see that the land of Sakyamuni Buddha is pure and clean, like a heavenly palace.” Sariputra said: “I see that this world is full of hills, mountains, pits, thorns, stones and earth, which are all unclean.” Brahma said: “Because your mind is up and down and disagrees with the Buddha-wisdom, you see that this land is unclean. Sariputra, because a Bodhisattva is impartial towards all living beings and his profound mind is pure and clean in accord with the Buddha Dharma, he can see that this Buddha land is (also) pure and clean.” At that time, the Buddha pressed the toes of His (right) foot on the ground and the world was suddenly adorned with hundreds and thousands of rare and precious gems of the great chiliocosm, like the precious Majestic Buddha’s pure land adorned with countless precious merits, which the assembly praised as never seen before; in addition each person present found himself seated on a precious lotus throne. The Buddha said to Sariputra: “Look at the majestic purity of this Buddha land of mine.” Sariputra said: “World Honoured One, I have never seen and heard of this Buddha land in its majestic purity.” The Buddha said: “This

Buddha land of mine is always pure, but appears filthy so that I can lead people of inferior spirituality to their salvation. This is like the food of devas which takes various colours according to the merits of each individual eater. So, Sariputra, the man whose mind is pure sees this world in its majestic purity.”

## *Chapter Thirty*

### *Equanimity In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. An Overview of Equanimity In Buddhist Teachings:*

Equanimity or non-attachment ability means complete abandonment, detachment, or indifferent to all disturbances of the sub-conscious or ecstatic mind. The Sanskrit word ‘Upeksa’ means equanimity, calmness, unbiased, unprejudice, and so on. In Zen, a mind of complete abandonment is a mind that remains unbiased and calm when confronting difficulties and challenges. A mind of equanimity is a state of balancing of energy, and it can be achieved in daily cultivation. According to The Abhidharma, “equanimity” means neutrality. It is mental equipoise and not hedonic indifference. Equanimity is the result of a calm concentrative mind. According to the Buddha, the best way to bring about equanimity is wise attention and continuous mindfulness. Once a mind of equanimity is developed, one moment of equanimity causes a succeeding moment of equanimity to arise, and so on. In our nowadays violent society, amidst the welter of experience, gain and loss, good repute and ill-repute, praise and blame, happiness and suffering, a man with the mind of equanimity will never waver. Zen practitioners have the mind of equanimity which understands that there is no one to own anything. In Dharmapada, sentence 83, the Buddha taught: “Truly the good give up longing for everything. The good sages not with thoughts of craving. Touched by happiness or by pain, the wise show neither elation nor depression.” A man who has reached perfect neutrality through the cultivation of equanimity, always avoids the following four wrong paths: the path of greed, hate, cowardice, and delusion. A man who has reached perfect neutrality through cultivation of equanimity, always has his serene neutrality which enables him to see all beings impartially.

Equanimity is defined as the mind in equilibrium, i.e. above the distinction of things or persons, of self or others; indifferent, having abandoned the world and all things, and having no affections or desires. Once we have fully developed Upeksa, we will feel true compassion

for all beings, and we will have the ability to eliminate any partiality from our daily attitudes toward other people. Indifference, the state of mental equilibrium in which the mind has no bent or attachment, and neither meditates nor acts, a state of indifference. Equanimity, one of the most important Buddhist virtues. Upeksa refers to a state that is neither joy nor suffering but rather independent of both, the mind that is in equilibrium and elevated above all distinctions. Neutral feeling. One of the chief Buddhist virtues, that of renunciation, leading to a state of indifference without pleasure or pain, or independence of both. Upeksa is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught: “If any Buddhist wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, must first be able to let go of all of the five desires of ordinary people.” According to Buddhist tradition, there are seven abandonments or riddences: First, cherishing none and nothing. Second, no relations with others. Third, riddance of love and hate. Fourth, riddance of anxiety about the salvation of others. Fifth, riddance of the clinging of form. Sixth, giving to others. Seventh, benefitting others without hope of return.

## *II. Equanimity in the Vimalakirti Sutra:*

As mentioned above, Upeksa is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught: “If one wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, Buddhists must first be able to let go of all of the five desires of ordinary people.” According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva called on to enquire after Upasaka Vimalakirti’s health, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti about “Upeksa”. Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “What should be relinquish (upeksa) of a Bodhisattva?” **Vimalakirti replied: “In his work of salvation, a Bodhisattva should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return.”** In Buddhism, abandonment is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we can turn away from the five desires. Equanimity is one of the chief Buddhist virtues, that of renunciation, leading to a state of indifference without pleasure or pain, or independence of both. It is defined as the mind in equilibrium, i.e. above the distinction of things or persons, of self or others; indifferent, having abandoned the world and all things, and having no affections or desires. Once we have fully developed Upeksa,



we will feel true compassion for all beings, and we will have the ability to eliminate any partiality from our daily attitudes toward other people. Usually, our view of others dominated by various kinds of discriminating emotions. We always feel closeness and sympathy toward loved ones. In contrast, toward strangers we always feel distant and indifferent, and for those we dislike we feel aversion or contempt. That is to say we always classify friends and enemies clearly. However, we should always remember that our sympathy, closeness and/or hatred have no effect on others, these feelings do not nurture or harm others. It is we who will suffer the ill-consequences of our actions. Upeksha is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught: "If one wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, Buddhists must first be able to let go of all of the five desires of ordinary people." Detachment is the attitude of those who give up, forget, do not attach any importance for what they have done for the benefit of others. In general, we feel proud, self-aggrandized when we do something to help other people. Quarrels, conflicts, or clashes between men or groups of men are due to passions such as greed or anger whose source can be appraised as self-attachment or dharma-attachment. The Buddha taught that if there is someone who misjudges us, we must feel pity for him; we must forgive him in order to have peace in our mind. The Bodhisattvas have totally liberated themselves from both self-attachment and dharma-attachment. When people enjoy material or spiritual pleasures, the Bodhisattvas also rejoice, from their sense of compassion, pity, and inner joy. They always consider human beings as their benefactors who have created the opportunities for them to practice the Four Immeasurable Minds on their way to Enlightenment. In terms of the Immeasurable Detachment, the Bodhisattvas consider all men equal, the clever as the stupid, themselves as others, they do everything as they have done nothing, say everything as they have said nothing, attain all spiritual levels as they have attained nothing. Immeasurable Equanimity, a mind of great detachment, or infinite equanimity. Limitless indifference, such as rising above all emotions, or giving up all things. Here a monk, with a heart filled with equanimity. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of equanimity above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with equanimity, abundant,

magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Equanimity is also considered as a divine abode. It is the state of mind that regards others with impartiality, free from attachment and aversion. An impartial attitude is its chief characteristic, and it is opposed to favouritism and resentment. Practitioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom.

## *Chapter Thirty-One*

### *The State of Suchness In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. An Overview of Dharma In Buddhist Teachings:*

Generally speaking, dharma means things, events, and phenomena. Dharma also means duty, law or doctrine. The Dharma also means the cosmic law which is underlying our world, but according to Buddhism, this is the law of karmically determined rebirth. The Dharma that is the law of beginningless and endless becoming, to which all phenomena are subject according to causes and conditions. When dharma means phenomenon, it indicates all phenomena, things and manifestation of reality. All phenomena are subject to the law of causation, and this fundamental truth comprises the core of the Buddha's teaching. Dharma is a very troublesome word to handle properly and yet at the same time it is one of the most important and essential technical terms in Buddhism. Dharma has many meanings. A term derived from the Sanskrit root "dhr," which means "to hold," or "to bear"; there seems always to be something of the idea of enduring also going along with it. Originally, it means the cosmic law which underlying our world; above all, the law of karmically determined rebirth. The teaching of the Buddha, who recognized and regulated this law. In fact, dharma (universal truth) existed before the birth of the historical Buddha, who is no more than a manifestation of it. Today, "dharma" is most commonly used to refer to Buddhist doctrine and practice. Dharma is also one of the three jewels on which Buddhists rely for the attainment of liberation, the other jewels are the Buddha and the Sangha. Etymologically, it comes from the Sanskrit root "Dhri" means to hold, to bear, or to exist; there seems always to be something of the idea of enduring also going along with it. The most common and most important meaning of "Dharma" in Buddhism is "truth," "law," or "religion." Secondly, it is used in the sense of "existence," "being," "object," or "thing." Thirdly, it is synonymous with "virtue," "righteousness," or "norm," not only in the ethical sense, but in the intellectual one also. Fourthly, it is occasionally used in a most

comprehensive way, including all the senses mentioned above. In this case, we'd better leave the original untranslated rather than to seek for an equivalent in a foreign language.

According to Buddhism, dharma means Buddhist doctrine or teachings. The teaching of the Buddhas which carry or hold the truth. The way of understanding and love taught by the Buddha doctrine. The Buddha taught the Dharma to help us escape the sufferings and afflictions caused by daily life and to prevent us from degrading human dignity, and descending into evil paths such as hells, hungry ghosts, and animals, etc. The Dharma is like a raft that gives us something to hang onto as we eliminate our attachments, which cause us to suffer and be stuck on this shore of birth and death. The Buddha's dharma refers to the methods of inward illumination; it takes us across the sea of our afflictions to the other shore, nirvana. Once we get there, even the Buddha's dharma should be relinquished. The Dharma is not an extraordinary law created by or given by anyone. According to the Buddha, our body itself is Dharma; our mind itself is Dharma; the whole universe is Dharma. By understanding the nature of our physical body, the nature of our mind, and worldly conditions, we realize the Dharma. The Dharma that is the law of beginningless and endless becoming, to which all phenomena are subject according to causes and conditions. The Dharma, which comprises the spoken words and sermons of Sakyamuni Buddha wherein he elucidated the significance of the Unified Three Treasures and the way to its realization. The Dharma, the teaching imparted by the Buddha. All written sermons and discourses of Buddhas (that is, fully enlightened beings) as found in the sutras and other Buddhist texts still extant.

To Buddhist theories, nothing is real and permanent, the five aggregates make up beings, pillars and rafters make a house, etc. All is temporal and merely phenomenal, fallacious, and unreal. Names are only provisional symbol or sign. All dharmas are empirical combinations without permanent reality. All things are false and fictitious and unreal names, i.e. nothing has a name of itself, for all names are mere human appellations. In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha reminded Mahamati: "Mahamati! As they are attached to names, images, and signs, the ignorant allow their minds to wander away." Things which exist only in name, i.e. all things are

combinations of other things and are empirically named. All things or phenomena are combinations of elements without permanent reality, phenomena, empirical combinations without permanent reality. The phenomenal which no more exists than turtle's hair or rabbit's horns.

According to the Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra, the basic characteristic of all dharmas is not arising, not ceasing, not defiled, not immaculate, not increasing, not decreasing. The Buddha says: "He who sees the Dharma sees me." Dharma means the teaching of the Buddha. Dharma also means the doctrine of understanding and loving. Dharma means the doctrines of Buddhism, norms of behavior and ethical rules including pitaka, vinaya and sila. Dharma also means reflection of a thing in the human mind, mental content, object of thought or idea. Dharma means factors of existence which the Hinayana considers as bases of the empirical personality. According to Prof. Junjiro Takakusu in *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, the word "Dharma" has five meanings. First, dharma would mean 'that which is held to,' or 'the ideal' if we limit its meaning to mental affairs only. This ideal will be different in scope as conceived by different individuals. In the case of the Buddha it will be Perfect Enlightenment or Perfect Wisdom (Bodhi). Secondly, the ideal as expressed in words will be his Sermon, Dialogue, Teaching, Doctrine. Thirdly, the ideal as set forth for his pupils is the Rule, Discipline, Precept, Morality. Fourthly, the ideal to be realized will be the Principle, Theory, Truth, Reason, Nature, Law, Condition. Fifthly, the ideal as realized in a general sense will be Reality, Fact, Thing, Element (created and not created), Mind-and-Matter, Idea-and-Phenomenon, reflection of a thing in the human mind, mental content, object of thought or idea, and factors of existence which the Hinayana considers as bases of the empirical personality. According to the *Madhyamakas*, Dharma is a protean word in Buddhism. In the broadest sense it means an impersonal spiritual energy behind and in everything. There are four important senses in which this word has been used in Buddhist philosophy and religion. First, dharma in the sense of one ultimate Reality. It is both transcendent and immanent to the world, and also the governing law within it. Second, dharma in the sense of scripture, doctrine, religion, as the Buddhist Dharma. Third, dharma in the sense of righteousness,

virtue, and piety. Fourth, dharma in the sense of 'elements of existence.' In this sense, it is generally used in plural.

## ***II. A Summary of the Principle of True Reality (Thing As It Is) In Buddhist Teachings:***

According to Buddhism, thusness is the ultimate foundation of Buddhist thought concerning the real state of all that exists. It is natural for people to seek first the innermost essence among the outward appearance of all things or to seek an unchanging fact among many changing things. Failing in this, people try to distinguish the unknowable from the knowable, the real from the apparent, or the thing-in-itself from the thing-for-us. This effort, too, will end in failure, for what they select as the real or the thing-in-itself is utterly beyond human knowledge. Such efforts may be called the search for the world-principle or for the life-principle. The method of search and the resulting theories are various. Some are monistic or pantheistic, while others are dualistic or pluralistic. Against all these views Buddhism stands aloof by itself. Buddhism is atheistic, there is no doubt about it. When questioned about the First Cause or Principle, the Buddha always remained reticent. As to the life-principle, he denied the existence of an ego or soul or any kind of thing which one may call the real self, as we have discussed. To see the true nature or the true state of all things is not to find one in many or one before many, nor is it to distinguish unity from diversity or the static from the dynamic. According to Prof. Junjiro Takakusu in *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, the true reality means the true state without any special condition. It is, in fact, the true reality without a reality, i.e., without any specific character or nature. It is very difficult for the human mind to understand this idea of reality in which there is no substance at all. The idea of an abiding substance with changing qualities is very deeply rooted in our habits of thought. Buddhist schools, no matter what they are, Hinayana or Mahayana, realistic or idealistic, are utterly free from such a habit of thought and all maintain the theory of pure change without substratum. When any Buddhist speaks of the true state of reality he means the state without a specific nature. According to the general views of the Hinayana, the state without any specific condition is Nirvana, because Nirvana is perfect freedom from bondage. The

Realistic School (Sarvastivada), belonging to the Hinayana, goes a step further and assumes that selflessness, impermanence and Nirvana (flamelessness) are the true state of all things. Nihilistic School (Satyasiddhi) holds that all things, matter and mind, are void or unreal and that nothing exists even in Nirvana. The Mahayana teaches, on the other hand, that the truth can be discovered only by negative views of becoming, and, on the other hand, holds that true perfection can be realized negatively in the denial of the illusory and causal nature of existence. The Wreath School of the Mahayana thinks that the ideal world, or the World One-and-True, is without any independent individual. The Lotus School identifies the manifested state as it is and the true entity immanent-in-nature. On the whole, to see only the fact that a flower is falling is, after all, a one-sided view according to the theory of impermanence. We ought to see that immanent in the fact of a flower's falling there lies the fact of a flower's blooming, and also immanent in the blooming of the flower there is the fact of its falling. Thus the opposition of falling (extinction) and blooming (becoming) is synthesized and we form the view of reciprocal identification which is an unbiased view of the mean, or Middle Path. This amounts to saying that we see inaction in action and action in inaction, immotion in motion and motion in inmotion, calm in wave and wave in calm. We thus arrive at the true state of all things, i.e., the Middle Path. And this is what is meant by Thusness or Suchness. When the view is negatively expressed it indicates the true negation or Void, because any special state of thing is denied altogether. Such is considered to be the ultimate idea of Buddhist philosophy. When the ultimate principle is considered from the universal point of view, it is called "the Realm of Principle" (Dharmadhatu), but when it is considered from the personal point of view, it is named "the Matrix of Thus-come or Thus-gone" (Tathagata-garbha). Other ways of expressing this same idea are: the Buddha-nature (Buddhata or Buddha-svabhava), and the Spiritual or Law-body (Dharmakaya). These are all practically synonymous. Without knowing the principle of Thusness or Void in the highest sense of the word, one can in no way understand the Mahayana doctrine. The word 'void' in its highest sense does not mean 'nothingness,' but indicates 'devoid of special conditions,' or 'unconditioned'.

### ***III. The State of Suchness In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to Vimalakirti Sutra, according to the dharma means according to the Law or according to rule. According to Chapter Seven of the Vimalakirti Sutra, a goddess (devakanya) who had watched the gods (devas) listening to the Dharma in Vimalakirti's room appeared in bodily form to shower flowers on the Bodhisattvas and the chief disciples of the Buddha (in their honour). When the flowers fell on the Bodhisattvas, they fell to the ground, but when they fell on the chief disciples, they stuck to their bodies and did not drop in spite of all their efforts to shake them off. At that time, the goddess asked Sariputra why he tried to shake the flowers off. Sariputra replied: "I want to shake off these flowers which are not in the state of suchness." The goddess said: "Do not say these flowers are not in the state of suchness. Why? Because they do not differentiate, and it is you (alone) who give rise to differentiation. If you (still) differentiate after leaving home in your quest of Dharma, this is not the state of suchness, but if you no longer give rise to differentiation, this will be the state of suchness. Look at the Bodhisattvas whose bodies do not retain the flowers this is because they have put an end to differentiation. This is like a man taking fright who invites trouble for himself is like a man taking right and evil (people). So if a disciple fears birth and death, then form, sound, smell, taste and touch can trouble him, but if he is fearless he is immune from all the five sense data. (in your case). It is because the force of habit still remains that these flowers cleave to your body but if you cut it off, they will not stick to it."

#### ***IV. Vimalakirti Taught Dharmas That Agree With the Absolute Dharmas:***

Also according to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Three, the Buddha asked Maudgalaputra: "Go to Vimalakirti and enquire after his health on my behalf." Maudgalyayana said: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to enquire after his health. The reason is that one day when I came to Vaisali to expound the Dharma to lay Buddhists (upasakas) in the street there, Vimalakirti came and said: "Hey Maudgalyayana, when expounding the Dharma to these upasakas, you should not preach like that for what you teach should agree with the absolute Dharma, which is free from the (illusion of) living beings; is free from the self for it is beyond an ego; from life for



it is beyond birth and death and from the concept of a man which lacks continuity (thought seemingly continuous, like a torch whirled around); is always still for it is beyond (stirring) phenomena; is above form for it is causeless; is inexpressible for it is beyond word and speech; is inexplorable for it is beyond intellect; is formless like empty space; is beyond sophistry for it is immaterial; is egoless for it is beyond (the duality of) subject and object; is free from discrimination for it is beyond consciousness; is without compare for it is beyond all relativities; is beyond cause for it is causeless; is identical with Dharmata (or Dharma-nature), the underlying nature (of all things); is in line with the absolute for it is independent; dwells in the region of absolute reality, being above and beyond all dualities; is unmovable for it does not rely on the six objects of sense; neither comes nor goes for it does not stay anywhere; is in line with voidness, formlessness and inactivity; is beyond beauty and ugliness; neither increases nor decreases; is beyond creation and destruction; does not return to anywhere; is above the six sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; is neither up nor down; is eternal and immutable; and is beyond contemplation and practice. “Maudgalyayana, such being the characteristics of the Dharma, how can it be expounded? For expounding, it is beyond speech and indication, and listening to it is above hearing and grasping. This is like a conjurer expounding the Dharma to illusory men, and you should always bear all this in mind, when expounding the Dharma. You should be clear about the sharp or dull roots of your audience and have a good knowledge of this to avoid all sorts of hindrance. Before expounding the Dharma, you should use your great compassion (for all living beings) to extol Mahayana to them and think of repaying your own debt of gratitude to the Buddha by striving to preserve the three treasures (of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) for ever.”



## *Chapter Thirty-Two*

### *Serving the Dharma In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. An Overview of Offerings in Buddhist Point of View:*

Making offerings means to provide whatever nourishes, e.g. food, goods, incense, lamps, scriptures, the doctrine, etc, any offerings for body or mind. Buddhists should always remember that offerings to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas mean to express respect and gratitude to them. It is similar to children paying respect to their parents, as well as students showing gratitude toward their teachers. In many temples, Buddhists offer flowers and incense to the Buddha as an outward form of respect to the Buddha. When we offer flowers, we think that as those flowers fade we also fade and die; therefore, there is nothing in this world for us to cling on. Buddhists offer flowers and incense to the Buddha as an outward form of respect to the Buddha. When we offer flowers, we think that as those flowers fade we also fade and die; therefore, there is nothing in this world for us to cling on. Understand this, we will try our best to practice Buddha-dharma. However, among the various offerings to the Buddhas, the offering of the Dharma is the highest. Offering of the Buddha-truth means teaching the dharma to others to remove their suffering, resolve their spiritual problems and lead them to enlightenment and liberation. Dharma-dana is among the various offerings to the Buddhas, the offering of the Dharma is the highest because it enables the audience to transcend Birth and Death and ultimately attain Buddhahood. Devout Buddhists should always remember that the worthiest offering to the Buddha when you are correct in life, living according to the Dhamma, and living an honest life in the Correct Dharma.

Some who do not understand the significance of offering in Buddhism, hastily conclude that Buddhism is a religion of idol worship. They are totally wrong. While lying on his death-bed between the two Sala trees at Kusinara, the eighty-year-old Buddha seeing the flowers offered to him, addressed the Venerable Ananda thus: “They who, Ananda, are correct in life, living according to the Dhamma -- it is they

who right honor, reverence and venerate the Tathagata with the worthiest homage. Therefore, Ananda, be you correct in life, living according to the Dhamma. Thus, should you train yourselves.” This encouragement of the Buddha on living according to the Dhamma shows clearly that what is of highest importance is training in mental, verbal and bodily conduct, and not the mere offering of flowers to the Enlightened Ones. The emphasis is on living the right life. Now when a Buddhist offers flowers, or lights a lamp before the Buddha image or some sacred object, and the ponders over the supreme qualities of the Buddha, he is not praying to anyone; these are not ritual, rites, or acts of worship. The flowers that soon fade, and the flames that die down speak to him, and tell him of the impermanency of all conditioned things. The image serves him as an object from concentration, for meditation; he gains inspiration and endeavors to emulate the qualities of the Master.

## ***II. Offering of Dharma In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

Serving the dharma by believing it, explaining it, obeying it, keeping it, protecting it, cultivating the spiritual nature and assisting the Buddhism. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, chapter thirteen, the Offering of Dharma, under the influence of the Buddha’s transcendental power a deva in the sky said to the Bodhisattvas: “Virtuous man, the offering of Dharma surpasses all other forms of offering.” Lunar Canopy asked: ‘What is this offering of Dharma?’ The deva replied: ‘Go to the Tathagata Bhaisajya who will explain it fully.’ Thereupon, Lunar Canopy came to the Tathagata Bhaisajya, bowed his head at his feet and stood at his side, asking: ‘World Honoured One, (I have heard that) the offering of Dharma surpasses all other forms of offering; what is the offering of Dharma?’ “The Tathagata replied: ‘Virtuous one, the offering of Dharma is preached by all Buddhas in profound sutras but it is hard for worldly men to believe and accept it as its meaning is subtle and not easily detected, for it is spotless in its purity and cleanness. It is beyond the reach of thinking and discriminating; it contains the treasury of the Bodhi-sattva’s Dharma store and is sealed by the Dharani-symbol; it never backslides for it achieves the six perfections (paramitas), discerns the difference between various meanings, is in line with the bodhi Dharma, is at the

top of all sutras, helps people to enter upon great kindness and great compassion, to keep from demons and perverse views, and to conform with the law of causality and the teaching on the unreality of an ego, a man, a living being and life and on voidness, formlessness, non-creating and non-uprising. It enables living beings to sit in a bodhimandala to turn the wheel of the law. It is praised and honoured by heavenly dragons, gandharvas, etc. It can help living beings to reach the Buddha's Dharma store and gather all knowledge (sarvajna realized by) saints and sages, preach the path followed by all Bodhisattvas, rely on the reality underlying all things, proclaim the (doctrine of) impermanence, suffering, voidness and absence of ego and nirvana. It can save all living beings who have broken the precepts and keep in awe all demons, heretics and greedy people. It is praised by the Buddhas, saints and sages for it wipes out suffering from birth and death, proclaims the joy in nirvana as preached by past, future and present Buddhas in the ten directions. "If a listener after hearing about this sutra, believes, understands, receives, upholds, reads and recites it and uses appropriate methods (upaya) to preach it clearly to others, this upholding of the Dharma is called the offering of Dharma. "Further, the practice of all Dharmas as preached, to keep in line with the doctrine of the twelve links in the chain of existence, to wipe out all heterodox views, to achieve the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpatti-dharma-ksanti) (as beyond creation), to settle once for all the unreality of the ego and the non-existence of living beings, and to forsake all dualities of ego and its objects without deviation from and contradiction to the law of causality and retribution for good and evil; by trusting to the meaning rather than the letter, to wisdom rather than consciousness, to sutras revealing the whole truth rather than those of partial revelation; and to the Dharma instead of the man (i.e. the preacher); to conform with the twelve links in the chain of existence (nidanas) that have neither whence to come nor wither to go, beginning from ignorance (avidya) which is fundamentally non-existent, and conception (samskara) which is also basically unreal, down to birth (jati) which is fundamentally non-existent and old age and death (jaramarana) which are equally unreal. Thus contemplated, the twelve links in the chain of existence are inexhaustible, thereby putting an end

to the (wrong) view of annihilation. This is the unsurpassed offering of Dharma.”

The Buddha then said to Sakra: “Lunar Canopy, after hearing the Dharma from the Buddha Bhaisajya (the Buddha of Medicine), realized (only) the patience of Meekness and took off his precious robe to offer it to that Buddha, saying: “World Honoured One, after your nirvana, I shall make offerings of Dharma to uphold the right doctrine; will your awe-inspiring majestic help me to overcome the demons and to practise the Bodhisattva line of conduct?”” The Buddha Bhaisajya knew of his deep thought and prophesied: “Until the last moment you will guard the Dharma protecting citadel.” Sakra, at that time Lunar Canopy perceived the pure and clean Dharma, and after receiving the Buddha’s prophecy, believed it and left his home to join the order. He practiced the Dharma so diligently that he soon realized the five transcendental powers. In his Bodhisattvas development, he won the endless power of speech through his perfect control (dharani- of all external influences). After the nirvana of the Buddha Bhaisajya, he used this power of speech to turn the wheel of the law, spreading the Dharma widely for ten small aeons. Lunar Canopy was indefatigable (untiring) in his preaching of the Dharma and converted a million lacs of people who stood firm in their quest of supreme enlightenment, fourteen nayutas of people who set their minds on achieving the sravaka and pratyeka-buddha stages, and countless living beings who were reborn in the heavens. Sakra, who was that Royal Precious Canopy? He is now a Buddha called the Tathagata Precious Flame and his one thousand sons are the thousand Buddhas of the (present) Bhadrakalpa (the virtuous aeon) whose first Buddha was Krakucchanda and last Buddha was Rucika. Bhiksu Lunar Canopy was myself. Sakra, you should know that the offering of Dharma is the highest form of offering. Therefore, Sakra, you should make the offering of Dharma as an offering to all Buddhas.”

## ***Chapter Thirty-Three***

### ***The Bestowal of Dharma In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. An Overview of Giving of Dharma in Buddhist Point of View:***

If we feel satisfied only with the giving of wealth and materials, without helping sentient beings cultivate to transform their sufferings and afflictions, according to the Buddha is not enough. The Buddha reminded about the supreme method in helping sentient beings is to help them cultivate wholesome deeds. According to the Maharatnakuta Sutra, Chapter XXIV, the Bodhisattva Wonderful Sound preaches Dharmaparyaya in various shapes to different beings according to their ability and capacity. In Chapter XXV, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva also preaches Dharmaparyaya in various shapes to different beings. According to the Buddha, there are two gifts, the carnal and spiritual. Of these two gifts, the spiritual is prominent. Giving of law means to teach others rightly. A person who has knowledge or wisdom in some field should be able to teach others or guide them even if he has no money or is physically handicapped. Even a person of humble circumstances can perform giving of the Law. To speak of his own experience in order to benefit others can be his giving of the Law. Therefore, according to Buddhism, giving of the law is to teach and transform all living beings by explaining the Buddha-dharma to them. In other words, giving of the law means lecturing or preaching the sutras for sentient beings so that they can cultivate to liberate themselves.

#### ***II. The Bestowal of Dharma In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Four, the Buddha said to a son of an elder called Excellent Virtue: “You call on Vimalakirti to inquire his health on my behalf.” Excellent Virtue said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his

health. The reason is that once I held a ceremonial meeting at my father's house to make offerings to the gods and also to monks, brahmins, poor people, outcastes and beggars. When the meeting ended seven days later, Vimalakirti came and said to me: 'O son of the elder, an offering meeting should not be held in the way you did; it should bestow the Dharma upon others, for what is the use of giving alms away?' I asked: 'Venerable Upasaka, what do you mean by bestowal of Dharma?' He replied: 'The bestowal of Dharma is (beyond the element of time, having) neither start nor finish and each offering should benefit all living beings at the same time. This is a bestowal of Dharma.' I asked: 'What does this mean?' He replied: 'This means that bodhi springs from kindness (maitri) toward living beings; the salvation of living beings springs from compassion (karuna); the upholding of right Dharma from joy (mudita); wisdom from indifference (upeksa); the overcoming of greed from charity-perfection (dana-paramita); ceasing to break the precepts from discipline-perfection (sila-paramita); egolessness from patience-perfection (ksanti-paramita); relinquishment of body and mind from zeal-perfection (viryaparamita); realization of enlightenment from serenity-perfection (dhyana-paramita); realization of all-knowledge (sarvajna) from wisdom-perfection (prajna-paramita); the teaching and converting of living beings spring from the void; non-rejection of worldly activities springs from formlessness; appearance in the world springs from inactivity; sustaining the right Dharma from the power of expedient devices (upaya); the liberation of living beings from the four winning virtues; respect for and service to others from the determination to wipe out arrogance; the relinquishment of body, life and wealth from the three indestructibles; the six thoughts to dwell upon from concentration on the Dharma; the six points of reverent harmony in a monastery form the straightforward mind; right deeds from pure livelihood; joy in the pure mind from nearness to saints and sages; non-rising of hate for bad people from the effective control of mind; retiring from the world from the profound mind; practice in accordance with the preaching from the wide knowledge gained from hearing (about the Dharma); absence of disputation from a leisurely life; the quest of Buddha wisdom from meditation; the freeing of living beings from bondage from actual practice; the earning of all excellent physical



marks to embellish Buddha lands from the karma of mortal excellence; the knowledge of the minds of all living beings and the relevant expounding of Dharma to them, from the karma of good knowledge; the understanding of all things commensurate with neither acceptance nor rejection of them to realize their oneness, from the karma of wisdom; the eradication of all troubles (klesa), hindrances and evils from all excellent karmas; the realization of all wisdom and good virtue from the contributory conditions leading to enlightenment. All this, son of good family, pertains to the bestowal of Dharma. A Bodhisattva holding this meeting that bestows the Dharma, is a great almsgiver (danapati); he is also a field of blessings for all worlds.’ World Honoured One, as Vimalakirti was expounding the Dharma, two hundred Brahmins who listened to it, set their minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment. I myself realized purity and cleanliness of mind, which I had never experienced before. I then bowed my head at his feet and took out my priceless necklace of precious stones, which I offered to him but he refused it. I then said: ‘Venerable Upasaka, please accept my present and do what you like with it.’ He took my necklace and divided it in two, offering half to the poorest beggar in the assembly and the other half to the ‘Invincible Tathagata’, whose radiant land was then visible to all those present, who saw the half-necklace transformed into a precious tower in all its majesty on four pillars which did not shield one another. After this supernatural transformation, Vimalakirti said: ‘He who gives alms to the poorest beggar with an impartial mind performs an act which does not differ from the field of blessings of the Tathagata, for it derives from great compassion with no expectation of reward. This is called the complete bestowal of Dharma.’ After witnessing Vimalakirti’s supernatural power, the poorest beggar who had also listened to his expounding of the Dharma developed a mind set on supreme enlightenment. Hence, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health. Thus, each of the Bodhisattvas present related his encounter with Vimalakirti and declined to call on him to inquire after his health.”



## *Chapter Thirty-Four*

### *Dharma of Joy*

Joy of the Law means the joy of hearing or tasting dharma. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter on Bodhisattvas, a demon pretended to be Indra, offered twelve thousand goddesses (devakanya) to the Bodhisattva Ruler of the World. The demon said to the Ruler of the World Bodhisattva: “Bodhisattva, please take these twelve thousand goddesses who will serve you.” The Ruler of the World Bodhisattva replied: “Sakra, please do not make to a monk this unclean offering which does not suit me.” “Even before the Ruler of the World Bodhisattva had finished speaking, Vimalakirti came and said: “He is not Sakra; he is a demon who comes to disturb you.” He then said to the demon: ‘You can give me these girls and I will keep them.’ The demon was frightened, and being afraid that Vimalakirti might give him trouble, he tried to make himself invisible but failed, and in spite of his use of supernatural powers he could not go away. Suddenly a voice was heard in the air, saying: ‘Demon, give him the girls and then you can go.’ Being scared, he gave the girls.’ At that time, Vimalakirti said to them: “The demon has given you to me. You can now develop a mind set on the quest of supreme enlightenment.” Vimalakirti then expounded the Dharma to them urging them to seek the truth. He declared: “You have now set your minds on the quest for the truth and can experience joy in the Dharma instead of in the five worldly pleasures (arising from the objects of the five senses).” The goddesses asked him: ‘What is this joy in the Dharma?’ He replied: “Joy in having faith in the Buddha, joy in listening to the Dharma, joy in making offerings to the Sangha, and joy in forsaking the five worldly pleasures; joy in finding out that the five aggregates are like deadly enemies, that the four elements (that make the body) are like poisonous snakes, and that the sense organs and their objects are empty like space; joy in following and upholding the truth; joy in being beneficial to living beings; joy in revering and making offerings to your masters; joy in spreading the practice of charity (dana); joy in firmly keeping the rules of discipline (sila); joy in forbearance (ksanti); joy in

unflinching zeal (virya) to sow all excellent roots; joy in unperturbed serenity (dhyana); joy in wiping out all defilement that screens clear wisdom (prajna); joy in expanding the enlightened (bodhi) mind; joy in overcoming all demons; joy in eradicating all troubles (klesa); joy in purifying the Buddha land; joy in winning merits from excellent physical marks; joy in embellishing the bodhimandala (the holy site); joy in fearlessness to hear (and understand ) the profound Dharma; joy in the three perfect doors to nirvana (i.e. voidness, formlessness and inactivity) as contrasted with their incomplete counterparts (which still cling to the notion of objective realization); joy of being with those studying the same Dharma and joy in the freedom from hindrance when amongst those who do not study it; joy to guide and convert evil men and to be with men of good counsel; joy in the state of purity and cleanness; joy in the practice of countless conditions contributory to enlightenment. All this is the Bodhisattva joy in the Dharma.”

At that time, the demon said to the girls: ‘I want you all to return with me to our palace.’ The girls replied: ‘While we are here with the Venerable Upasaka, we delight in the joy of the Dharma; we no longer want the five kinds of worldly pleasures.’ The demon then said to Vimalakirti: ‘Will the Upasaka give away all these girls, as he who gives away everything to others is a Bodhisattva?’ Vimalakirti said: ‘I now give up all of them and you can take them away so that all living beings can fulfill their vows to realize the Dharma.’ The girls then asked Vimalakirti: ‘What should we do while staying at the demon’s palace?’ Vimalakirti replied: ‘Sisters, there is a Dharma called the *Inexhaustible Lamp*, which you should study and practice. For instance, a lamp can (be used to) light up hundreds and thousands of other lamps; darkness will thus be bright and this brightness will be inexhaustible. So, sisters, a Bodhisattva should guide and convert hundreds and thousands of living beings so that they all develop the mind set on supreme enlightenment; thus his deep thought (of enlightening others) is, likewise, inexhaustible. This teaching of the Dharma will then increase in all excellent Dharmas; this is called the *Inexhaustible Lamp*. Although you will be staying at the demon’s palace you should use this *Inexhaustible Lamp* to guide countless sons and daughters of devas to develop their minds set on supreme enlightenment, in order to repay your debt of gratitude to the Buddha, and also for the benefit of

all living beings.' The devas' daughters bowed their heads at Vimalakirti's feet and followed the demon to return to his palace and all of a sudden they vanished." World Honoured One, since Vimalakirti possesses such supernatural power, wisdom and eloquence, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health."



## ***Chapter Thirty-Five***

### ***Vimalakirti's Bitter and Eager Words***

#### ***I. The Jambudvipa In Buddhist Teachings:***

The Samsara, or worldly world is also called the Jambudvipa. It is so named either from the Jambu trees abounding in it, or from an enormous Jambud tree on Mount Meru visible like a standard to the whole continent. Saha means sufferings and afflictions; it also means worries, binding, unable to be free and liberated. The worldly world is full of storm, conflict, hatred and violence. The world in which we live is an impure field, and Sakyamuni is the Buddha who has initiated its purification. People in this world endure many sufferings stemming from three poisons of greed, anger and delusion as well as earthly desires. The Saha World is filled with dirt, rocks, thorns, holes, canyons, hills, cliffs. There are various sufferings regarding thirst, famine, hot, and cold. The people in the Saha World like wicked doctrines and false dharma; and do not have faith in the proper dharma. Their lives are short and many are fraudulent. Kings and mandarins, although already have had lands to govern and rule, are not satisfied; as they become greedy, they bring forces to conquer other countries causing innocent people to die in vain. In addition, there are other infinite calamities such as droughts, floods, loss of harvest, thirst, famine, epidemics, etc. As for this Saha World, the favorable circumstances to cultivate in peace and contentment are few, but the unfavorable conditions of afflictions destroying path that are rather losing Bodhi Mind they developed in the beginning. Moreover, it is very difficult to encounter a highly virtuous and knowledgeable advisor. According to the Buddha, the planet in which we are currently living is called Virtuous Southern Continent. It is situated to the south of Mount Sumeru and is just a tiniest part of the Great World System of the Saha World in which Sakyamuni Buddha is the ruler. Thus, "Saha" also called the place that which bears, the earth, interpreted as bearing, enduring; the place of good and evil; a universe, or great chiliocosm, where all are subject to transmigration and which a Buddha transforms; it is divided into three regions and Mahabrahma Sahampati is its lord.

World of endurance refers to our world which is filled with sufferings and affections, yet gladly enjoyed and endured by its inhabitants. According to Buddhism, Jambudvipa is the human world, the world in which we are living. Jambudvipa is a small part of Saha World, the realm of Sakyamuni Buddha. The southernmost of the four great land masses (catur-dvipa) of traditional Buddhist cosmology. It is said to be named after the Jambu tree that grows there. It measures 2,000 yojanas on three sides, and its fourth side is only three-and-a-half yojanas long. The Southern Continent, one of the four continents that situated south of Mount Meru, comprising the world known to the early Indian. According to Eitel in The Dictionary of Chinese-English Buddhist Terms, Jambudvipa includes the following countries around the Anavatapta Lake and the Himalayas. The North region includes Huns-Mongolians-Turks; the East region includes China-Korea-Japan; the South region includes Northern India (twenty-seven kingdoms), Eastern India (ten kingdoms), Southern India (fifteen kingdoms), Central India (thirty kingdoms, and Western Indian (thirty-four kingdoms).

## ***II. Vimalakirti's Bitter and Eager Words:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Ten, Vimalakirti asked the visiting Bodhisattvas: "How does the Tathagata of the Fragrant land preach the Dharma?" They replied: "The Tathagata of our land does not use word and speech to preach but uses the various fragrance to stimulate the devas in their observance of the commandments. They sit under fragrant trees and perceive how sweet the trees smell thereby realizing the samadhi derived from the store of all merits. When they realize this samadhi, they win all merits." These Bodhisattvas then asked Vimalakirti: "How does the World Honoured One, Sakyamuni Buddha, preach the Dharma?" Vimalakirti replied: "Living beings of the Saha world are pig-headed (stubborn) and difficult to convert; hence the Buddha uses strong language to tame them. He speaks of hells, animals and hungry ghosts in their planes (realms) of suffering; of the places of rebirth for stupid men as retribution for perverse deeds, words and thoughts, i.e. for killing, stealing, carnality, lying, double tongue, coarse language, affected speech, covetousness, anger, perverted views (which are the ten evils); for stinginess, breaking the



precepts, anger, remissness, confused thoughts and stupidity (i.e. the six hindrances to the six paramitas); for accepting, observing and breaking the prohibitions; for things that should and should not be done; for obstructions and non-obstructions; for what is sinful and what is not; for purity and filthiness; for the worldly and holy states; for heterodoxy and orthodoxy; for activity and non-activity; and for samsara and nirvana. Since the minds of those who are difficult to convert are like monkeys, various methods of preaching are devised to check them so that they can be entirely tamed. Like elephants and horses which cannot be tamed without whipping them until they feel pain and become easily managed, the stubborn of this world can be disciplined only with bitter and eager words.” After hearing this, the visiting Bodhisattvas said: “We have never heard of the World Honoured One, Sakyamuni Buddha, who conceals his boundless sovereign power to appear as a beggar to mix with those who are poor in order to win their confidence (for the purpose of liberating them) and of the Bodhisattvas here who are indefatigable and so humble and whose boundless compassion caused their rebirth in this Buddha land.”



## *Chapter Thirty-Six*

### *Neither Exhausting the Mundane State Nor Staying In the Supramundane State*

#### *I. An Overview of Conditioned Dharmas & Unconditioned Dharmas:*

**Conditioned Dharmas:** Conditioned things mean all factors of our normal experience. They share three features: impermanent, suffering, and not-self. In other words, all conditioned things are impermanent, are suffering, and have no self. Simply speaking, impermanence means that everything changes all the time. Herakleitus, a Greek philosopher who lived around 500 B.C. observed: “There is not a moment, not an inkling, not a second when a river does not flow.” In some way or the other, conditioned things are connected with suffering and unpleasant feelings. However, the insight that everything conditioned is totally suffering is regarded as extremely difficult to attain, and is reserved for the supreme saints from Arhats to Bodhisattvas only. Devout Buddhists should understand the subtle meaning of ‘suffering’. ‘Suffering’ here means commotion, turmoil, unrest, or disturbance. Thirdly, all conditioned things have ‘no-self’. All conditioned dharmas (functioning dharmas) are miserable. Active, conditioned, produced or functioning dharmas. All phenomena which are influenced by the production or birth, duration or existence, change, and annihilation. Conditioned dharmas have many characteristics. Anything which serves to divert beings away from inherent Budha-nature. Outflows are so called because they are turning of energy and attention outward rather than inward. Various phenomena in the world, made up of elements with outflows. That is to say these phenomena are worldly and impure, indeed, leaking (hữu lậu), because they are tainted by the three poisons of greed, anger and ignorance. Conditioned merits and virtues lead to rebirth with samsara. Functioning means active or creative. The processes resulting from the laws of karma. Active is the opposite of passive, inert, inactive, non-causative, laissez-faire. According to the Vajra Sutra, any thing with shape or form is considered a “dharma born

of conditions.” All things born of conditions are like dreams, illusory transformations, bubbles of foam, and shadows. Like dewdrops and lightning, they are false and unreal. Devout Buddhists should always view the conditioned world as follows: “It is like a star, a bubble, a dewdrop, a fading lamp, a fantasy, a drifting cloud, a dream, and a flash of lightning.” If we can contemplate everything in this way, we are able to understand the truth, let go of attachments, and put an end to random thoughts.

***Unconditioned Dharmas:*** “Not being produced or non-causative.” Whatever dharmas lack production, cessation, abiding, and change are “unconditioned.” In other words, “unconditioned, unproduced,” refers to everything that is completely beyond conditioned existence, beyond arising, dwelling and passing away. “Unconditioned” is a Taoist term has the literal meaning of “non-doing” or “non-striving” or “not making.” It does not imply inaction or mere idling. We are merely to cease striving for the unreal things which blind us to our true self. “Non-doing” is also a Zen notion of acting spontaneously, without premeditation, considered to be an expression of the mind of an awakened master. Only a person who is unattached to the result of actions is able to act in this way, and it is characterized as perfect freedom of action that responds without hesitation to circumstances. The immaterial character of the transcendent. The eternal body of Buddha not conditioned by any cause and effect. “Non-doing” dharma is anything not subject to cause, condition or dependence. Unconditioned dharmas are dharmas which are out of time, eternal, inactive, unchanging, and supra-mundane. In Buddhism, Nirvana and space are considered to be unconditioned dharmas. In short, unconditioned dharmas are things that are not being produced or non-causative. Whatever dharmas lack production, cessation, abiding, and change are “unconditioned.” In other words, “unconditioned, unproduced,” refers to everything that is completely beyond conditioned existence, beyond arising, dwelling and passing away. In original teaching only Nirvana was regarded as Unconditioned. According to other traditions, Unconditioned dharmas are those which are not produced to causes and conditions.

## ***II. Neither Exhausting the Mundane State Nor Staying In the Supramundane State In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, chapter eleven, the Bodhisattva Conduct, the Buddha said to the Bodhisattvas: “There are the exhaustible and the inexhaustible Dharmas which you should study. What is the exhaustible? It is the active (yu wei or mundane) Dharma. What is the inexhaustible? It is the non-active (wu wei or supramundane) Dharma. As Bodhisattvas, you should not exhaust (or put an end to) the mundane (state); nor should you stay in the supramundane (state). Further, to win merits, a Bodhisattva does not stay in the supramundane, and to realize wisdom he does not exhaust the mundane. Because of his great kindness and compassion, he does not remain in the supramundane, and in order to fulfill all his vows, he does not exhaust the mundane. To gather the Dharma medicines he does not stay in the supramundane, and to administer remedies he does not exhaust the mundane. Since he knows the illnesses of all living beings he does not stay in the supramundane, and since he wants to cure their illnesses, he does not exhaust the mundane. Virtuous Ones, a Bodhisattva practicing this Dharma neither exhausts the mundane nor stays in the supramundane. This is called the exhaustible and inexhaustible Dharma doors to liberation which you should study. “What is meant by not exhausting the mundane (state)? It means not discarding great benevolence; not abandoning great compassion; developing a profound mind set on the quest of all-knowledge (sarvajna) or Buddha knowledge) without relaxing for even an instant; indefatigable teaching and converting living beings; constant practice of the four Bodhisattva winning methods; upholding the right Dharma even at the risk of one’s body and life; unwearied planting of all excellent roots; unceasing application of expedient devices (upaya) and dedication (parinamana); never-ending quest of the Dharma; unsparing preaching of it; diligent worship of all Buddhas; hence fearlessness when entering the stream of birth and death; absence of joy in honour and of sadness in disgrace; refraining from slighting non-practisers of the Dharma; respecting practisers of Dharma as if they were Buddhas; helping those suffering from klesa to develop the right thought; keeping away from (desire and) pleasure with no idea of prizing such a high conduct; no preference for one’s happiness but joy

at that of others; regarding one's experience in the state of samadhi as similar to that in a hell; considering one's stay in samsara (i.e. state of birth and death) as similar to a stroll in a park; giving rise to the thought of being a good teacher of Dharma when meeting those seeking it; giving away all possessions to realize all-knowledge (sarvajna); giving rise to the thought of salvation when seeing those breaking the precepts; thinking of the (six) perfections (paramitas) as dear as one's parents; thinking of the (thirty-seven) conditions contributory to enlightenment as if they were one's helpful relatives; planting all excellent roots without any restrictions; gathering the glorious adornments of all pure lands to set up one's own Buddha land; unrestricted bestowal of Dharma to win all the excellent physical marks (of the Buddha); wiping out all evils to purify one's body, mouth and mind; developing undiminished bravery while transmigrating through samsara in countless aeons; untiring determination to listen to (an account of) the Buddha's countless merits; using the sword of wisdom to destroy the bandit of klesa (temptation) to take living beings out of (the realm of the five) aggregates (skandhas) and (twelve) entrances (ayatana) so as to liberate them for ever; using firm devotion to destroy the army of demons; unceasing search for the thought-free wisdom of reality; content with few desires while not running away from the world in order to continue the Bodhisattva work of salvation; not infringing the rules of respect-inspiring deportment while entering the world (to deliver living beings); use of the transcendental power derived from wisdom to guide and lead all living beings; controlling (dharani) the thinking process in order never to forget the Dharma; being aware of the roots of all living beings in order to cut off their doubts and suspicions (about their underlying nature); use of the power of speech to preach the Dharma without impediment; perfecting the ten good (deeds) to win the blessings of men and devas (in order to be reborn among them to spread the Dharma); practicing the four infinite minds (kindness, pity, joy and indifference) to teach the Brahma heavens; rejoicing at being invited to expound and extol the Dharma in order to win the Buddha's (skillful) method of preaching; realizing excellence of body, mouth and mind to win the Buddha's respect-inspiring deportment; profound practice of good Dharma to make one's deeds unsurpassed; practicing Mahayana to become a Bodhisattva

monk; and developing a never-receding mind in order not to miss all excellent merits. “This is the Bodhisattva not exhausting the mundane state. “What is the Bodhisattva not staying in the supra-mundane state (nirvana)? It means studying and practicing the immaterial but without abiding in voidness; studying and practicing formlessness and inaction but without abiding in them; studying and practicing that which is beyond causes but without discarding the roots of good causation; looking into suffering in the world without hating birth and death (i.e. samsara); looking into the absence of the ego while continuing to teach all living beings indefatigably; looking into nirvana with no intention of dwelling in it permanently; looking into the relinquishment (of nirvana) while one’s body and mind are set on the practice of all good deeds; looking into the (non-existing) destinations of all things while the mind is set on practicing excellent actions (as true destinations); looking into the unborn (i.e. the uncreate) while abiding in (the illusion of) life to shoulder responsibility (to save others); looking into passionlessness without cutting off the passion-stream (in order to stay in the world to liberate others); looking into the state of non-action while carrying out the Dharma to teach and convert living beings; looking into nothingness without forgetting about great compassion; looking into the right position (of nirvana) without following the Hinayana habit (of staying in it); looking into the unreality of all phenomena which are neither firm nor have an independent nature, and are egoless and formless, but since one’s own fundamental vows are not entirely fulfilled, one should not regard merits, serenity and wisdom as unreal and so cease practicing them. “This is the Bodhisattva not staying in the non-active (wu wei) state. Further, to win merits, a Bodhisattva does not stay in the supramundane, and to realize wisdom he does not exhaust the mundane. Because of his great kindness and compassion, he does not remain in the supramundane, and in order to fulfill all his vows, he does not exhaust the mundane. To gather the Dharma medicines he does not stay in the supramundane, and to administer remedies he does not exhaust the mundane. Since he knows the illnesses of all living beings he does not stay in the supramundane, and since he wants to cure their illnesses, he does not exhaust the mundane.” “Virtuous Ones, a Bodhisattva practicing this Dharma neither exhausts the mundane nor stays in the supramundane. This is called the exhaustible

and inexhaustible Dharma doors to liberation which you should study.” After hearing the Buddha expounding the Dharma, the visiting Bodhisattvas were filled with joy and rained (heavenly) flowers of various colours and fragrances in the great chiliocosm as offerings to the Buddha and His sermon. After this, they bowed their heads at the Buddha’s feet and praised His teaching which they had not heard before, saying: “How wonderful is Sakyamuni Buddha’s skillful use of expedient methods (upaya).” After saying this, they disappeared to return to their own land.



## *Chapter Thirty-Seven*

### *All Things Are Illusions In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. A Summary of Dharma-Laksana In Buddhist Teachings:*

According to Buddhism, Dharma-laksana means “Characteristics of Dharma,” Dharma here denoting things substantial and mental, or matter and mind, for the chief object of this school is to investigate the nature and qualities of all existences. The first founder of the school was Asanga, an elder brother of Vasubandhu, who was the author of the text “Yogacara-bhumi.” In India the school was formerly called Yogacara, which means the practice of self-concentration. Vasubandhu, when he was converted to Mahayana by his brother and succeeded in the systematizing the philosophical views of the Yogacara School, designated the tenet of the school as Mere Ideation (Vijnaptimatra), attributing the existence of all the outer world to inner ideation. In short, holding that nothing but ideation exists. As to ontology this school stands between the realistic and nihilistic schools, given above. It adheres neither to the doctrine that all things exist, because it takes the view that nothing outside the mind (mental activity) exists, nor to the doctrine that nothing exists, because it asserts that ideations do exist. It firmly adheres to the doctrine of the mean, neither going to the extreme of the theory of existence nor to that of non-existence. This school can, therefore, be called the “ideal-realism” or “Ideation Theory.” The academic name of this school is “Mere Ideation,” or Vijnaptimatra (Ideation Only), a study of Nature and Characteristics of dharmas or elements.

The Dharmalaksana, though idealistic, takes the model of the analytical method used in the Realistic and Nihilistic Schools, and classifies the world of becoming into five categories which are subdivided into one hundred dharmas (see Bách Pháp Pháp Tướng Tông). A special of this school is that the mind is divided into eight consciousnesses, each being a separate reality. No other school of Buddhism has such a doctrine. In addition to the first five mental faculties (eye, ear, tongue, skin-sense or consciousnesses) there are the

sixth, the sense-center, a general perceiving organ or conscious mind; the seventh, the thought-center or the self-conscious mind, and the eighth, the store-center or store-consciousness. The last two are called Manas (thought) and Alaya (store-consciousness). Among these eight consciousnesses the former five constitute the sense-consciousness (Vijnana). The sixth, the sense-center, forms conceptions out of the perceptions obtained from the outside. The seventh is thought (Manas): The seventh, the thought-center, thinks, wills and reasons on a self-centered basis. The eighth is mind (citta): The eighth, the store-center, store seeds, i.e., keeps efficiency or energy for all manifestations. The sixth, the seventh and the eighth always act on one another, for The sixth is the general center of perception and cognition inwardly which acts outwardly on the basis of the thought-center which in turn acts on the basis of the all-storing center. The Manas is responsible for self-consciousness, self-interest, or selfish motives. The subjective function of the eighth is seen and regarded by the seventh as self (atman) thought in reality there is no such thing as self. This false idea pollutes all thoughts and gives rise to an idea of individual or personal ego or soul.

## ***II. A Summary of the Sutra On the Anattalakkhana Sutta of All Things:***

After finishing the preaching of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (Sutra on Egolessness), the Buddha continued to preach the Anattalakkhana Sutta to the five brothers of Kaundinya. When Sakyamuni Buddha put forth the notion of “no-self,” he upsets many concepts about life in the universe. He blasted our most firm and widespread conviction, that of a permanent self. Those who understand “not self” know that its function is to overthrow “self,” not to replace it with a new concept of reality. The notion of “not self” is a method, not a goal. If it becomes a concept, it must be destroyed along with all other concepts. The doctrine of no-self has two main characteristics: selflessness of things (dharma-nairatmya) and selflessness of person (pudgalanairatmya). Sometimes, the teaching of “not-self” causes confusion and misunderstanding. Any time we speak, we do say “I am speaking” or “I am talking”, etc. How can we deny the reality of that “I”? Sincere Buddhists should always remember that the Buddha never

asked us to reject the use of the name or term “I”. The Buddha himself still use a word “Tatathata” to refer to himself, no matter what is the meaning of the word, it is still a word or a name. When the Buddha taught about “not-self”, he stressed on the rejection of the idea that this name or term “I” stands for a substantial, permanent and changeless reality. The Buddha said that the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, volition and consciousness) were not the self and that the self was not to be found in them. The Buddha’s rejection of the self is a rejection of the belief in a real, independent, permanent entity that is represented by the name or term “I”, for such a permanent entity would have to be independent, permanent, immutable and impervious to change, but such a permanent entity and/or such a self is nowhere to be found.

A Sanskrit term for “No-self.” One of the “three characteristics” (tri-laksana) that the Buddha said apply to all conditioned (samskrita) phenomena, the others being impermanence and unsatisfactoriness or suffering. The doctrine holds that, contrary to the assertions of the brahmanical orthodoxy of the Buddha’s time, there is no permanent, partless, substantial “self” or soul. The brahmanical tradition taught that the essence of every individual is an eternal, unchanging essence (called the atman). The Buddha declared that such a essence is merely a conceptual construct and that every individual is in fact composed of a constantly changing collection of “aggregates” (skandha). No-self also means non-existence of a permanent self. The body consists of the five elements and there is no self. Elements exist only by means of union of conditions. There is no eternal and unchangeable substance in them.

The doctrine of “Egolessness” is one of the central teachings of Buddhism; it says that no self exists in the sense of a permanent, eternal, integral and independent substance within an individual existent. The anatta or anatma doctrine taught by the Buddha, to which most Buddhists, including Zen practitioners, subscribe, is briefly the “not self” idea of man’s true nature. This is not to be confused with the “not self” expression used in Hindu philosophies. It means that the true nature of man is not conceivable by the human mind. How can one speak of “Anatta” if there is no “Atta”? We must understand what the Buddha meant by “Anatta”. He never meant anything in contra-

distinction to “Atta”. He did not place two terms in juxtaposition and say: “This is my ‘Anatta’ in opposition to ‘Atta’.” The term “Anatta”, since the prefix “an” indicates non-existence, and not opposition. So “Anatta” literally means no atta, that is the mere denial of an “atta”, the non-existence of “atta”. The believers in an “atta” tried to keep their “atta”. The Buddha simply denied it, by adding the prefix “an”. As this concept of an Atta, Self, or Soul, was deep rooted in many whom the Buddha met, He had to discourse at length on this pivotal question of Self to learned men, dialecticians and hair-splitting disputants.

The doctrine of no-self has two main characteristics: selflessness of things (dharma-nairatmya) and selflessness of person (pudgalanairatmya). First, selflessness of person (Pudgalanairatmya). Man as without ego or permanent soul, or no permanent human ego or soul. Second, selflessness of things (Dharmanairatmya). This means no permanent individuality in or independence of things. Things are without independent individuality, i.e. the tenet that things have no independent reality, no reality in themselves. The idea that there is no self-substance or “Atman” constituting the individuality of each object is insisted on by the followers of Mahayana Buddhism to be their exclusive property, not shared by the Hinayana. This idea is naturally true as the idea of “no self-substance” or Dharmanairatmya is closely connected with that of “Sunyata” and the latter is one of the most distinguishing marks of the Mahayana., it was natural for its scholars to give the former a prominent position in their philosophy. In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha taught: “When a Bodhisattva-mahasattva recognizes that all dharmas are free from Citta, Manas, Manovijnana, the Five Dharmas, and the Threefold Svabhava, he is said to understand well the real significance of Dharmanairatmya.”

According to the Buddha, Impersonal Tone or No Mark of the Self is one of the eight chief characteristics of ‘satori.’ In Zen. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Zen experience is that it has no personal note in it as is observable in Christian mystic experiences. There is no reference whatever in Buddhist satori to such personal feelings. We may say that all the terms are interpretations based on a definite system of thought and really have nothing to do with the experience itself. In anywhere satori has remained thoroughly impersonal, or rather highly intellectual. Not only satori itself is such a prosaic and

non-glorious event, but the occasion that inspires it also seems to be unromantic and altogether lacking in super-sensuality. Satori is experienced in connection with any ordinary occurrence in one's daily life. It does not appear to be an extraordinary phenomenon as is recorded in Christian books of mysticism. Sometimes takes hold of you, or slaps you, or brings you a cup of tea, or makes some most commonplace remark, or recites some passage from a sutra or from a book of poetry, and when your mind is ripe for its outburst, you come at once to satori. There is no voice of the Holy Ghost, no plenitude of Divine Grace, no glorification of any sort. Here is nothing painted in high colors, all is grey and extremely unobtrusive and unattractive. In practices of meditation, first of all, you cannot have the mark of self. If you have the mark of self, all kinds of obstacles will arise, and you will obtain no wisdom at all. Once there is a mark of self, selfish thoughts arise, followed by thoughts of seeking and greed. if you do not obtain what you seek and crave, contentious thoughts arise, and you will struggle with others to see who is stronger. The practice meditation means to diligently wipe the mirror of the mind or to clean it. Only when we are free of all random thoughts are we "diligently wiping it clean at all times." We want to wipe it clean so it will not get dusty. This is the Dharma-door of "Sweeping away all dharmas, and separating from all marks."

In short, based on the Buddha's preaching, phenomena are unreal, i.e. turtle-hair or rabbit's horn; the unreality of phenomena, one of the three kinds of unreality. From the attachment to an ego leads to wrong discrimination of judgment, and proceeds from rightly comprehending the nature of objects, internal as well as external, and also relationship existing between objects as independent individuals or as belonging to a genus. The first reason, as given by the Buddha is that all things are selfless or egoless, which means that no things, men, animals and inanimate objects, both living and not living, have what we may call their original self or real being. Let us consider man. A man does not have a core or a soul which he can consider to be his true self. A man exists, but he cannot grasp his real being, he cannot discover his own core, because the existence of a man is nothing but an "existence depending on a series of causations." Everything that exists is there because of causations; it will disappear when the effects of the

causation cease. As long as a man is an existent depending on a series of causations, it is unreasonable for him to try to hold on to himself and to regard all things around him from the self-centered point of view. All men ought to deny their own selves and endeavor to help each other and to look for co-existence, because no man can ever be truly independent. If all things owe their existence to a series of causations, their existence is a conditional one; there is no one thing in the universe that is permanent or independent. Therefore, the Buddha's theory that selflessness is the nature of all things inevitably leads to the next theory that all things are impermanent (anitya).

### ***III. All Things Are Illusions In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Twelve, Sariputra asked Vimalakirti: "Where did you die to be reborn here?" Vimalakirti asked back: "Is the (sravaka) Dharma which you have realized subject to death and rebirth?" Sariputra replied: "It is beyond death and birth." Vimalakirti asked: "If there is neither birth nor death, why did you ask me: 'Where did you die to be reborn here?' What do you think of illusory men and women created by an illusionist; are they subject to death and birth?" Sariputra replied: "They are not subject to death and birth. Have you not heard the Buddha say that all things are illusions?" Vimalakirti said: "Yes, if all things are illusions, why did you ask me where I died to be reborn here? Sariputra, death is unreal and deceptive, and means decay and destruction (to the worldly man), while life which is also unreal and deceptive means continuance to him. As to the Bodhisattva, although he disappears (in one place) he does not put an end to his good (deeds), and although he reappears (in another) he prevents evils from arising." At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra: "There is a (Buddha) land called the realm of Profound Joy whose Buddha is Aksobhya Buddha where Vimalakirti disappeared to come here." Sariputra said: "It is a rare thing, World Honoured One, that this man could leave a pure land to come to this world full of hatred and harmfulness!" Vimalakirti asked Sariputra: Sariputra, what do you think of sunlight; when it appears does it unite with darkness?" Sariputra replied: "Where there is sunlight, there is no darkness." Vimalakirti asked: "Why does the sun shine on Jambudvīpa (this

earth)?" Sariputra replied: "It shines to destroy darkness." Vimalakirti said: "Likewise, a Bodhisattva, although born in an unclean Buddha land, does not join and unite with the darkness of ignorance but (teaches and) converts living beings to destroy the obscurity of klesa." As the assembly admired and wished to see the Immutable Tathagata, the Bodhisattvas and sravakas of the pure land of Profound Joy. The Buddha who read their thoughts said to Vimalakirti: "Virtuous man, please show the Immutable Tathagata and the Bodhisattvas and sravakas of the land of Profound Joy to this assembly who want to see them." Vimalakirti thought that he should, while remaining seated, take with his hand the world of Profound Joy with its iron enclosing mountains, hills, rivers, streams, ravines, springs, seas, Sumerus, sun, moon, stars, planets, palaces of heavenly dragons, ghosts, spirits and devas, Bodhisattvas, sravakas, towns, hamlets, men and women of all ages, the Immutable Tathagata, his bo-tree (bodhi-tree) and beautiful lotus blossoms, which were used to perform the Buddha work of salvation in the ten directions, as well as the tree flights of gemmed steps linking Jambudvipa (our earth) with Trayastrimsas by which the devas descended to earth to pay reverence to the Immutable Tathagata and to listen to his Dharma, and by which men ascended to Trayastrimsas to see the devas. All this was the product of countless merits of the realm of Profound Joy, from the Akanistha heaven above to the seas below and was lifted by Vimalakirti with his right hand with the same ease with which a potter raises his wheel, taking everything to earth to show it to the assembly as if showing his own head-dress. Vimalakirti then entered the state of samadhi and used his supramundane power to take with his right hand the world of Profound Joy which he placed on earth. The Bodhisattvas, sravakas and some devas who had realized supramundane said to their Buddha: "World Honoured One, who is taking us away? Will you please protect us?" The Immutable Buddha said: "This is not done by me but by Vimalakirti who is using his supramundane power." But those who had not won supramundane powers neither knew nor felt that they had changed place. The world of Profound Joy neither expanded nor shrank after landing on the earth which was neither compressed nor straitened, remaining unchanged as before. At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha said to the assembly: "Look at the Immutable Tathagata of the land of

Profound Joy which is majestic, where the Bodhisattvas live purely and the (Buddha's) disciples are spotless." The assembly replied: "Yes, we have seen." The Buddha said: "If a Bodhisattva wishes to live in such a pure and clean Buddha land, he should practise the path trodden by the Immutable Tathagata." When the pure land of Profound Joy appeared fourteen nayutas of people in this saha world developed the mind set on supreme enlightenment, and vowed to be reborn in the realm of Profound Joy. Sakyamuni Buddha then prophesied their coming rebirth there. After the (visiting Bodhisattvas had done their) work of salvation for the benefit of living beings in this world, the pure land of Profound Joy returned to its original place. And this was seen by the whole assembly. The Buddha then said to Sariputra: "Have you seen the world of Profound Joy and its Immutable Tathagata?" Sariputra replied: "Yes, World Honoured One, I have. May all living beings win a pure land similar to that of the Immutable Buddha and achieve supramundane powers like those of Vimalakirti! World Honoured One, we shall soon realize a great benefit resulting from our meeting and paying obeisance to this man now. And living beings, hearing this sutra now or after the Buddha's nirvana, will also realize a great benefit; how much more so, if after hearing it, they believe, understand, receive and uphold it or read, recite, explain and preach it, and practice its Dharma accordingly? He who receives this sutra with both hands, will in reality secure the treasure of the Dharma-gem; if, in addition, he reads, recites and understands its meaning and practices it accordingly, he will be blessed and protected by all Buddhas. Those making offerings to this man (Vimalakirti), will through him automatically make offerings to all Buddhas. He who copies this sutra to put it into practice, will be visited by the Tathagata who will come to his house. He who rejoices at hearing this sutra, is destined to win all knowledge (sarvajna). And he who can believe and understand this sutra, or even (any of) its four-line gathas and teaches it to others, will receive the (Buddha's) prophecy of his future realization of supreme enlightenment."



## ***Chapter Thirty-Eight***

### ***The Lamp of Buddha's Dharma Is An Inexhaustible Lamp In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. Buddha's Dharma Is the Lamp or the Torch That Helps Light the Path for Practitioners in Buddhist Cultivation:***

In Buddhism, Buddha's dharma is the lamp that helps practitioners dispel the darkness of ignorance. Buddha's dharma is the torch that helps light the correct path for practitioners in cultivation. The birth of the Buddha's teachings is the pinnacle of the Buddha's achievement. The Buddha's enlightenment was in some respects the pinnacle of his achievement, but it was his subsequent teaching of Dharma (Truth) that laid the foundation for his enduring legacy. The community of monks and nuns that he established ensured the transmission of this doctrine to future generations, and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. the reign of the emperor Asoka played an instrumental role in the dissemination of Buddhism in India. After he had attained enlightenment, the Buddha remained for seven weeks at the site of the Bodhi Tree and enjoyed great bliss. During this period he realized that what he had come to understand was a profound and difficult truth, which other people relished worldly attachment, would find hard to grasp. According to the Buddha, the Buddha-dharma is simply worldly dharma in which we turn ourselves around. It is the dharma that most ordinary people are unwilling to use. Worldly people are sinking and floating in the worldly dharma; they are always busy running here and there, constantly hurried and agitated. The source of all these activities is invariably selfishness, motivated by a concern to protect their own lives and properties. Buddha-dharma, on the other hand, is unselfish and public-spirited, and springs from a wish to benefit others. Sincere cultivators always think of others' welfare. Sincere cultivators always forget their own "Ego". They always give up their own interests in service to others, and never bring uncomfortable circumstances and afflictions to others. However, most people fail to clearly understand the basic ideas that the Buddha once preached. As a result as we can see now, within Buddhist circles

we find struggle and contention, troubles and hassles, quarrels and strife. These problems seem to be no different from that of ordinary people, if we do not want to say worst than what we can find in worldly life. The Buddha predicted all these problems, thus He concluded that it would be pointless to try to teach others about his enlightenment, but the great god Brahma Sahampati intervened and implored the Buddha to share his discoveries with humankind.

The great god Brahma Sahampati intervened and implored the Buddha to share his discoveries with humankind. Impelled by his great compassion, the Buddha decided to survey the world. He saw that beings are of different kinds: like lotuses in a pond, some are immersed underwater, other grow and rest on the surface, and other again come right out of the water and stand clear, He understood that just as some people have good qualities and others bad, some would be easy to teach and others would be difficult. Because of this diversity and out of his great compassion for all beings, the Buddha changed his mind and resolved to teach. The Buddha's first sermon was addressed to the five ascetics who had been his companions before the enlightenment. At the deer park at Sarnath, near present day Varanasi, he explained to them the content of his enlightenment in the form of the Four Noble Truths. These ascetics were so struck by the depth of his insight and the novelty of his message that one of them instantly became an arhat, a "worthy one" who attains nirvana through a Buddha's teaching. The other four followed suit in the days to come. This momentous first sermon, which has become one of the better-known articulations of the Buddha's teaching and of Buddhism in general, is called the "Setting in Motion of the Wheel of Dharma." It is still celebrated in most Theravada countries in the festival called "Asalha Puja," which takes place on the full moon day of the month of July.

For the next forty-five years, until his ultimate extinction, the Buddha taught Dharma. The number of his followers increased steadily and the community of monks, the Sangha, began to form. The Buddha himself continued wandering and begging for his food. He taught indiscriminately, talking to kings and paupers alike, and ceased traveling only in the three months of the rainy season. The Buddha did not appoint a successor. When his disciples asked who would lead them after his death, he retorted that they must turn to themselves and be

guided by the Dharma as he had taught it to them. It would be the duty of the Sangha to maintain the Dharma when he was gone. At his death approached, the Buddha asked the assembled monks if they had any questions. The gathering remained silent. The Buddha's last words to the monks were: "All things composed are perishable. Now strive diligently." Then, lying on his right side between two "sal" trees, he began meditating into the many stages of his complete and final extinction (parinirvana), after which he would never again be reborn.

## ***II. In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra, the Lamp of Buddha's Dharma Is An Inexhaustible Lamp:***

The one lamp that is yet limitless in the lighting of other lamps. The influence of one disciple may be limitless and inexhaustible. Limitless mirrored reflections. An altar light always burning. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Four, when the goddesses asked Vimalakirti: 'What should we do while staying at the demon's palace?' Vimalakirti replied: 'Sisters, there is a Dharma called the Inexhaustible Lamp, which you should study and practice. For instance, a lamp can (be used to) light up hundreds and thousands of other lamps; darkness will thus be bright and this brightness will be inexhaustible. So, sisters, a Bodhisattva should guide and convert hundreds and thousands of living beings so that they all develop the mind set on supreme enlightenment; thus his deep thought (of enlightening others) is, likewise, inexhaustible. This teaching of the Dharma will then increase in all excellent Dharmas; this is called the Inexhaustible Lamp. Although you will be staying at the demon's palace you should use this Inexhaustible Lamp to guide countless sons and daughters of devas to develop their minds set on supreme enlightenment, in order to repay your debt of gratitude to the Buddha, and also for the benefit of all living beings.' The devas' daughters bowed their heads at Vimalakirti's feet and followed the demon to return to his palace and all of a sudden they vanished."



## *Chapter Thirty-Nine*

### *Treasures of the Dharma and Acted Like Skillful Seafaring Pilots In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. A Summary of the Treasure of the Dharma:*

Dharma is a very troublesome word to handle properly and yet at the same time it is one of the most important and essential technical terms in Buddhism. First, etymologically, it comes from the Sanskrit root “Dhri” means to hold, to bear, or to exist; there seems always to be something of the idea of enduring also going along with it. The most common and most important meaning of “Dharma” in Buddhism is “truth,” “law,” or “religion.” Secondly, it is used in the sense of “existence,” “being,” “object,” or “thing.” Thirdly, it is synonymous with “virtue,” “righteousness,” or “norm,” not only in the ethical sense, but in the intellectual one also. Fourthly, it is occasionally used in a most comprehensive way, including all the senses mentioned above. In this case, we’d better leave the original untranslated rather than to seek for an equivalent in a foreign language. Besides, Dharma also means the cosmic law which is underlying our world. According to Buddhism, this is the law of karmically determined rebirth. Dharmas are all phenomena, things and manifestation of reality. All phenomena are subject to the law of causation, and this fundamental truth comprises the core of the Buddha’s teaching. In Buddhism, Dharma means the teaching of the Buddha (Understanding and Loving). The way of understanding and love taught by the Buddha. The Buddha says: “He who sees the Dharma sees me.” All things are divided into two classes: physical and mental; that which has substance and resistance is physical, that which is devoid of these is mental (the root of all phenomena is mind). The doctrines of Buddhism, norms of behavior and ethical rules including pitaka, vinaya and sila.

According to Prof. Junjiro Takakusu in *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, the word “Dharma” has five meanings. First, the Dharma would mean ‘that which is held to,’ or ‘the ideal’ if we limit its meaning to mental affairs only. This ideal will be different in scope as conceived by different individuals. In the case of the Buddha it will be

Perfect Enlightenment or Perfect Wisdom (Bodhi). Secondly, the ideal as expressed in words will be his Sermon, Dialogue, Teaching, or Doctrine. Thirdly, the ideal as set forth for his pupils is the Rule, Discipline, Precept, or Morality. Fourthly, the ideal to be realized will be the Principle, Theory, Truth, Reason, Nature, Law, or Condition. Fifthly, the ideal as realized in a general sense will be Reality, Fact, Thing, Element (created and not created), Mind-and-Matter, or Idea-and-Phenomenon. According to the Madhyamakas, Dharma is a protean word in Buddhism. In the broadest sense it means an impersonal spiritual energy behind and in everything. There are four important senses in which this word has been used in Buddhist philosophy and religion. First, Dharma in the sense of one ultimate Reality. It is both transcendent and immanent to the world, and also the governing law within it. Secondly, Dharma in the sense of scripture, doctrine, religion, as the Buddhist Dharma. Thirdly, Dharma in the sense of righteousness, virtue, and piety. Fourthly, Dharma in the sense of 'elements of existence.' In this sense, it is generally used in plural. According to the meaning of Dharma in Sanskrit, Dharma is a very troublesome word to handle properly and yet at the same time it is one of the most important and essential technical terms in Buddhism. Dharma has many meanings. A term derived from the Sanskrit root "dhr," which means "to hold," or "to bear"; there seems always to be something of the idea of enduring also going along with it. Originally, it means the cosmic law which underlying our world; above all, the law of karmically determined rebirth. The teaching of the Buddha, who recognized and regulated this law. In fact, dharma (universal truth) existed before the birth of the historical Buddha, who is no more than a manifestation of it. Today, "dharma" is most commonly used to refer to Buddhist doctrine and practice. Dharma is also one of the three jewels on which Buddhists rely for the attainment of liberation, the other jewels are the Buddha and the Samgha.

Besides, the term "Dharma" also means the teaching of the Buddhas which carry or hold the truth. The way of understanding and love taught by the Buddha doctrine. The Buddha taught the Dharma to help us escape the sufferings and afflictions caused by daily life and to prevent us from degrading human dignity, and descending into evil paths such as hells, hungry ghosts, and animals, etc. The Dharma is like

a raft that gives us something to hang onto as we eliminate our attachments, which cause us to suffer and be stuck on this shore of birth and death. The Buddha's dharma refers to the methods of inward illumination; it takes us across the sea of our afflictions to the other shore, nirvana. Once we get there, even the Buddha's dharma should be relinquished. The Dharma is not an extraordinary law created by or given by anyone. According to the Buddha, our body itself is Dharma; our mind itself is Dharma; the whole universe is Dharma. By understanding the nature of our physical body, the nature of our mind, and worldly conditions, we realize the Dharma. The Dharma that is the law of beginningless and endless becoming, to which all phenomena are subject according to causes and conditions. The Dharma, which comprises the spoken words and sermons of Sakyamuni Buddha wherein he elucidated the significance of the Unified Three Treasures and the way to its realization. The Dharma, the teaching imparted by the Buddha. All written sermons and discourses of Buddhas (that is, fully enlightened beings) as found in the sutras and other Buddhist texts still extant. According to the Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra, the basic characteristic of all dharmas is not arising, not ceasing, not defiled, not immaculate, not increasing, not decreasing. The Buddha says: "He who sees the Dharma sees me."

## ***II. Treasures of the Dharma and Acted Like Skillful Seafaring Pilots In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, Bodhisattvas always amass all treasures of the Dharma and acted like (skillful) seafaring pilots. They were well versed in the profound meanings of all Dharmas. They knew very well the mental states of all living beings and their comings and goings (within the realms of existence). They had reached the state near the unsurpassed sovereign wisdom of all Buddhas, having acquired the ten fearless powers (dasabala) giving complete knowledge and the eighteen different characteristics (of a Buddha as compared with Bodhisattvas (avenikadharma). Although they were free from (rebirth in ) evil existences, they appeared in five mortal realms as royal physicians to cure all ailments, prescribing the right medicine in each individual case, thereby, winning countless merits to embellish countless Buddha lands. Each living being derived

great benefit from seeing and hearing them, for their deeds were not in vain. Thus, they had achieved all excellent merits.



## *Chapter Forty*

### *Individual Supernatural Characteristics In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. A Summary of Tathagatas' Teachings:*

To someone it can be only life of the Buddha; the example that the Buddha and his immediate disciples set, that glorious feat of a man, who stood before men as a man and declared a path of deliverance. To others, Buddhism would mean the massive doctrine as recorded in the Buddhist Tripitaka (literature), and it is described a very lofty, abstruse, complex and learned philosophy of life. The name Buddhism comes from the word “Bodhi” which means “waking up,” and thus Buddhism is the philosophy of Awakening. Therefore, the real definition of Buddhism is Noble Truth. The Buddha did not teach from theories. He always taught from a practical standpoint based on His understanding, His enlightenment, and His realization of the Truth. This philosophy has its origins in the experience of the man named Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, who was himself awakened at the age of 36. Buddhism is now older than 2,500 years old and has more than 800 million followers world wide (including Chinese followers in Mainland China). People in the West had heard of the Buddha and his teaching as early as the thirteenth century when Marco Polo (1254-1324), the Italian traveler who explored Asia, wrote accounts on Buddhism in his book, “Travels of Marco Polo”. From the eighteenth century onwards, Buddhist text were brought to Europe and translated into English, French and German. Until a hundred years ago, Buddhism was mainly an Asian philosophy but increasingly it is gaining adherents in Europe and America. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Alan Bennett, an Englishman, went to Burma to become a Buddhist monk. He was renamed Ananda Metteya. He returned to Britain in 1908. He was the first British person to become a Buddhist monk. He taught Dharma in Britain. Since then, Buddhist monks and nuns from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Japan, China and other Buddhist countries in Asia have come to the West, particularly over the last seventy years. Many of these teachers have kept to their original customs while others have adapted to some

extent to meet the demands of living in a western society. In recent years, there has been a marked growth of interest in Buddhism in Europe. The membership of existing societies has increased and many new Buddhist centers have been established. Their members include large numbers of professionals and scholars. Today, Britain alone has over 140 Buddhist centers found in most major cities.

To the Tathagatas, man is a supreme being, thus, the Buddha taught: “Be your own torch and your own refuge. Do not seek refuge in any other person.” This was the Buddha’s truthful word. He also said: “All realizations come from effort and intelligence that derive from one’s own experience. Man is the master of his destiny, since he can make his life better or worse. If he tries his best to cultivate, he can become a Buddha.” Buddhism is the only way that leads people from the evil to the virtuous, from deluded to fully enlightened sagehood. Buddhism is a philosophy, a way of life or a religion. The religion of the awakened one. One of the three great world religions. It was founded by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni over 25 centuries ago. Sakyamuni expounded the four noble truths as the core of his teaching, which he had recognized in the moment of his enlightenment. He had shown people how to live wisely and happily and his teachings soon spread from India throughout Asia, and beyond. In short, the core of the Buddha’s Teachings can be expressed in many different ways. If we want to say that the Buddha’s teachings can help people to cultivate to attain liberation, it’s alright; but if we want to say these teachings can help bring people a happy life, it’s alright too. The core of these teachings comprise of: Not to do any evil, to cultivate good, and to purify one’s mind. These are the Teachings of the Buddhas.

## ***II. Tathagatas' Supernatural Powers In Buddhist Teachings:***

***Ten Divine Powers of a Tathagata:*** According to the Lotus Sutra, Chapter 21, there are ten divine powers of a Tathagata. *First, divine power of putting forth His broad and far-stretched tongue:* In all his preachings, the Buddha put forth “his broad and far-stretched tongue till it reached upward to the Brahma world.” This expression may strike us today as strange, but it comes from an old Indian custom. In ancient India, to put one’s tongue out was an action showing the truth of what one said. Through his first divine power, the Buddha revealed that all

teachings that he had preached were true and would be so eternally. To use a common expression, he showed that he was never two-tongued in what he preached. *Second, divine power of shinning beautiful light from his whole body:* Sakyamuni Buddha revealed his divine power by radiating a beautiful light from his whole body, shinning everywhere throughout all directions of the universe. This mysterious phenomenon signifies that the truth is the light that dispels the darkness of illusion, darkness does not exist as a real entity. Darkness is only a nonlighted state and will disappear when light shines. The same thing can be said of illusion. Only the truth has real existence; illusion is unreal. Illusion is born from the state in which our minds do not yet realize the truth. Illusion will disappear from our minds when we realize the truth. Truth attracts Truth. They blend together and become one. The moment Sakyamuni Buddha radiated the sacred light from his body, the other Buddhas also in like manner radiated infinite light, which melted into one great light that shone everywhere throughout the universe. This means “Truth” will be spread everywhere, or all people from the Saha world will eventually become Buddhas. *Third, divine power of preaching of the truth:* The Buddha drew back his tongue, coughed simultaneously, and snapped his fingers in unison. The phrase “cough simultaneously” means that all the teachings are united into one, and the voices raised in a cough signify the preaching of the teaching. *Fourth, divine power of spreading the Law and performing the Bodhivattva practice:* When the Buddha made the next move: “snapped their fingers in unison,” with a special meaning: “Confirmation.” This action also came from an Indian custom. The Buddhas’ snapping their fingers in unison represent their assurance, “I give my words,” or “I promise to do it.” The description of all the Buddhas snapping their finger unison therefore signifies their solemn promise to spread the Law, in other words, their vow to perform the Bodhivattva practice. *Fifth, devine power of earth shaking:* When the Buddhas appear to preach, all their lands being shaken in six ways. Earthquakes in six directions, according to the Maha-Prajna Sutra. The six different kinds of shaking of the chiliocosm, or universe, when the Buddha entered into the samadhi of joyful wandering: when the East rose and the West sank; when the West rose and the east sank; when the South rose and the North sank; when the North rose and the South

sank; when the surroundings (borders) rose the centre (middle) sank; when the Centre (middle) rose and the surroundings (borders) sank. *Sixth, divine power of causing sentient beings happily obtaining that which they had never experienced before:* When the Buddha preaches his teachings, all living beings, gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahogaras, human and non-human beings, and other creatures, by the reason of the divine power of the Buddha, all saw this saha world the infinite, the boundless, hundred thousand myriad kotis of Buddhas, seated on the lion throne, under all the Jewel trees, and saw Sakyamuni together with the Tathagata Abundant Treasures, seated on lion thrones in the midst of the stupa, and also saw the infinite, the boundless, hundred thousand myriad kotis of Bodhisattva-mahasattvas, and the four groups of reverently surround Sakyamuni Buddha. After beholding this they were all greatly delighted, obtaining that which they had never experienced before. *Seventh, Divine power of leading all sentient beings to be able to attain Nirvana in the future:* When the Buddhas appear to preach the Lotus Sutra, all creatures, both human and non-human beings, were enabled to see the great assembly of Sakyamuni Buddha, together with the Tathagata Abundant Treasures and many other Buddhas. This state is called “All creatures universally see the great assembly of the Buddha surrounded by many other Buddhas.” And through this the Buddha wanted to send to all of us a message: “All creatures can equally realize the Buddha’s teachings.” However, their capacity to understand the teachings of Buddhism is different. Some can grasp them easily, while others find it very difficult to do so. That’s why tactful means to enlighten people are to be used in various ways according to their differing capacities. This is the present state of human beings, but in an eternal future, all of them will be able to attain enlightenment. *Eighth, Divien power of preaching the sutras to save beings in the Saha World:* When the Buddhas appear, all the gods in the sky sang with exalted voices: “Beyond these infinite, boundless, hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of asamkhyeya worlds, there is a realm named Saha. In its midst is a Buddha, whose name is Sakyamuni. Now, for the sake of all Bodhisattva-mahasattvas, he preaches the sutras to save beings.” *Ninth, Divien power of making sentient beings to practice daily in accord with the Buddha’s mind:* When the Buddhas appear, another

mysterious phenomenon happens: “All gods from afar strewed the Saha world with various flowers, incense, garlands, canopies, as well as personal ornaments, gems, and wonderful things. This phenomenon means that, in the future, the practice of all people will make equal offerings to the Buddha. The greatest offering to the Buddha is to make all one’s daily practice in accord with the Buddha’s mind. *Tenth, Divine power of making all worlds in the universe to be united without barrier as one Buddha-land:* When the Buddhas appear, all the worlds in the universe will be united without barrier as one Buddha-land. The Saha world is said to be the realm of illusion, while the Pure Land is said to be a beautiful land with no suffering and hell to be a world of suffering. But if all living beings live perfectly for the sake of the truth by means of the Buddha’s teachings, this universe will be united into one Buddha-land with no distinction between the world of heaven, the Saha world, and the world of hell. Because the truth is one, all things will tend toward the truth sometime in the future and will contribute to creating a world of perfect harmony.

***Tathagatas’ Ten Kinds of Supernatural Unimpeded Function Relating to Miraculous Abilities:*** Ten kinds of unimpeded function relating to miraculous abilities according to the Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38. First, place untold worlds in one atom. Second, manifest all Buddha-lands, equal to the cosmos, in a single atom. Third, place the water of all oceans in one pore and travel throughout the universe, without the sentient beings therein being disturbed. Fourth, contain untold worlds within their own bodies and manifest all spiritual powers. Fifth, tie up innumerable mountain chains with a single hair and carry them through all worlds, without frightening sentient beings. Sixth, make untold ages one age and make one age untold ages, showing therein the differences of formation and disintegration, without scaring sentient beings. Seventh, in all worlds they show various changes and devastations by floods, conflagrations, and gales, without troubling sentient beings. Eighth, when such disasters arise they can safeguard the necessities of life of all sentient beings in all worlds, not letting them be damaged or lost. Ninth, can hold inconceivably many worlds in one hand and toss them beyond untold worlds, without exciting fear in the sentient beings. Tenth, explain how

all lands are the same as space, causing sentient beings all to gain understanding.

***Ten Kinds of Supernatural Power of Perfect Comprehension of a Tathagata:*** According to the Lotus Sutra, there are ten kinds of perfect comprehension of a Buddha, or ten fields of knowledge that belong only to the Buddha. First, the power to know right and wrong states. Second, the power to know the consequences of karma. Third, the power to know all meditations and contemplations. Fourth, the power to know the various higher and lower capacities of living beings. Fifth, the power to know what living beings understand. Sixth, the power to know the basic nature and actions of living beings. Seventh, the power to know the causes and effects of living beings in all worlds. Eighth, the power to know the results of karma in past lives. Ninth, the power to know by supernatural insight. Tenth, the power of being free from all error, or infallibility in knowledge.

### ***III. Individual Supernatural Characteristics In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, Chapter on the Buddhaland, all those present in the assembly, who witnessed the Buddha's supernatural powers, praised the rare occurrence which they had never seen before, brought their palms together and gazed at Him without pausing for an instant. Thereupon, Ratna-rasi chanted the following gatha of praise:

“I salute Him whose eyes are broad like the green Lotus.  
Whose mind is unchanging and serene.  
Who has accumulated countless pure deeds,  
That lead all beings to the extinction of mortality.

I have seen the great saint use His transcendental powers  
To create in the ten directions countless lands  
In which Buddhas still proclaim the Dharma;  
All this has the assembly seen and heard.

The power of your Dharma surpasses all beings  
And bestows on them the wealth of the Law.  
With great skill your discernment

All while unmoved in Reality.

You are from all phenomena released;  
Hence, to the King of Dharma,  
I bow down.  
You preached neither *is* nor *is not*  
For all things by causes are created.  
There is neither self nor doing nor thing done,  
But good or evil karma is infallible.

Under the Bodhi tree You conquered Mara.  
Obtained Ambrosia, realized Nirvana and won Bodhi.  
From mind, thought and feeling are You free,  
Thereby, overcoming heresies,  
Turning thrice in the chiliocosm the wheel of the Law  
That is pure and clean at heart.

To this gods and men who were saved attested,  
Thus, the Three Treasures appeared in the saha world  
To save living beings with this profound Dharma which,  
When applied, fails never to Nirvana lead.  
You are the king physician who destroys old age,  
illness and death.  
So your unfathomable Dharma of boundless merits, I salute.

While like Mount Sumeru you are unmoved  
by both praise and censure.  
Your compassion is extended to both good and evil men,  
Like space thy mind remains impartial.  
Does not anyone revere this human Buddha  
after hearing about Him?

I have offered Him a small canopy,  
Which encloses the great chiliocosm  
With palaces of gods, dragons and spirits,  
Gandharas, yaksas and others such as well.

As all kings in this world.  
 With mercy He used His 'ten powers' to make this change.  
 The witnesses praise the Buddha.  
 I bow to the most Honoured One in the three realms.  
 The whole assembly (now) take refuge  
 in the King of The Law.  
 Those gazing at Him are filled with joy,  
 Each seeing the Bhagavat before him;  
 'Tis one of His eighteen characteristics.

When he proclaims the Dharma with unchanging voice,  
 All beings understand according to their natures  
 Aaying the Bhagavat speaks their own languages;  
 This one of His eighteen characteristics.

When He expounds the Dharma in one voice,  
 They understand according to their versions  
 Deriving great benefit from what they have gathered;  
 This is one more of His eighteen characteristics.

When He expounds the Dharma in one voice,  
 Some are filled with fear, others are joyful,  
 Some hate it while others are from doubts relieved;  
 'This is one of His eighteen characteristics.

I bow to the Possessor of 'ten powers',  
 I bow to Him who has achieved fearlessness  
 Acquiring all eighteen characteristics;  
 I bow to Him who guides others like a pilot.

I bow to Him who has untied all bonds;  
 I bow to Him who has reached the other shore;  
 I bow to Him who can all worlds deliver;  
 I bow to Him who from birth and death is free.

Who knows how living beings come and go



And penetrates all things to win His freedom,  
 Who is skillful in nirvanic deeds,  
 Cannot be soiled like the lotus.

Who plumbs the depths of everything without hindrance.  
 I bow to Him, who like space, relies on nothing.

Therefore, according to the spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra, *avenika-buddhadharma* means the characteristics, achievements, and doctrine of Buddha which distinguish him from all others. All Buddhas as all kings in this world, with mercy they use their 'ten powers' to make this change. They proclaim the Dharma with unchanging voice, all beings understand according to their natures saying the Buddhas speak their own languages. They expound the Dharma in one voice, sentient beings understand according to their versions deriving great benefit from what they have gathered. They expound the Dharma in one voice, some beings are filled with fear, others are joyful, some hate it while others are from doubts relieved. They are the Possessors of 'ten powers', who have achieved fearlessness acquiring all eighteen characteristics; and who guide others like a pilot. They have untied all bonds; who have reached the other shore; who can all worlds deliver; and who from birth and death are free. They know how living beings come and go and penetrates all things to win their freedom, who are skillful in nirvanic deeds, cannot be soiled like the lotus. They plumb the depths of everything without hindrance, who are like space and rely on nothing.



## *Chapter Forty-One*

### *Bodhi Can Be Won By Neither Body Nor Mind For Bodhi Is the State of Calmness and Extinction of Passion*

#### *I. A Summary of Bodhicitta & Bodhi Resolve In Buddhist Teachings:*

*A Summary of Bodhicitta:* In Buddhism, Bodhicitta, or the ‘Thought of Enlightenment’ is an important concept in both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Though not directly mentioned, the idea is explicit in the Theravada Buddhism. It was in Mahayana, however, that the Bodhicitta concept developed along both ethical and metaphysical lines and this development is found in Vajrayana too, wherein it also came to be regarded as a state of ‘great bliss’. In Mahayana it developed along with pantheistic lines, for it was held that Bodhicitta is latent in all beings and that it is merely a manifestation of the Dharmakaya, or Bhutatathata in the human heart. Though the term Bodhicitta does not occur in Pali, this concept is found in Pali canonical literature where, for example, we are told how Gautama after renouncing household life resolved to strive to put an end to all the sufferings. It is this comprehension that came to be known as the Enlightenment, and Gautama came to be known as the Enlightened One, the Buddha. Bodhi Mind, or the altruistic mind of enlightenment is a mind which wishes to achieve attainment of enlightenment for self, spontaneously achieve enlightenment for all other sentient beings. The spirit of Enlightenment, the aspiration to achieve it, the Mind set on Enlightenment. Bodhicitta is defined as the altruistic intention to become fully enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings. The attainment of enlightenment is necessary for not only in order to be capable of benefitting others, but also for the perfection of our own nature. Bodhi mind is the gateway to Enlightenment and attainment of Buddha. An intrinsic wisdom or the inherently enlightened heart-mind, or the aspiration toward perfect enlightenment. The Buddha taught: “All sentient beings are perfectly equal in that they all possess the

Buddha nature. This means that we all have the Bodhi seed or the seed of kindness of a Buddha, and the compassion of a Buddha towards all living beings, and therefore the potential for enlightenment and for perfection lies in each one of us. “Bodhicitta” is a Sanskrit term means “Mind of Awakening.” In Mahayan Buddhism, this refers to Bodhisattva’s aspiration to attain Buddhahood in order to benefit other sentient beings (the aspiration of a bodhisattva for supreme enlightenment for the welfare of all). Therefore, the mind for or of Bodhi (the Mind of Enlightenment, the awakened or enlightened mind) is the mind that perceives the real behind the seeming, believes in moral consequences, and that all have the Buddha-nature, and aims at Buddhahood. The spirit of enlightenment, the aspiration to achieve it, the mind set on Enlightenment. It involves two parallel aspects. First, the determination to achieve Buddhahood (above is to seek Bodhi). Second, the aspiration to rescue all sentient beings (below is to save or transform all beings). Mind of enlightenment, mind of love, mind of deepest request to realize oneself and work for the well-being of all. The mind of enlightenment or the aspiration of a Bodhisattva for supreme enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. It is often divided into two aspects: 1) the intention to become awakened; and 2) acting on the intention by pursuing the path to awakening (Bodhi). According to Zen Master Suzuki in the Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism, Bodhicitta is the most important characteristic of Bodhisattva, thus on the basis of Nagarjuna’s Discourse on the Transcendentality of the Bodhicitta, he gives a detailed description of Bodhicitta. First, the Bodhicitta is free from all determinations, the five skandhas, the twelve ayatanas, and the eighteen dhatus. It is not particular, but universal. Second, love is the essence of the Bodhicitta, therefore, all Bodhisattvas find their reason of being in this. Third, the Bodhicitta abides in the heart of sameness (samata) creates individual means of salvation (upaya). Fourth, evidently Maitreya exhausted his power of speech in order to extol the importance of the Bodhicitta in the career of a Bodhisattva, for without this being dully impressed on the mind of the young Buddhist pilgrim Sudhana, he could not have been led into the interior of the Tower of Vairocana. The Tower harbors all the secrets that belong to the spiritual life of the highest Buddhist. If the novice were not quite fully prepared for the initiation,

the secrets would have no signification whatever. They may even be grossly misunderstood, and the result will be calamitous indeed. For this reason, Maitreya left not a stone unturned to show Sudhana what the Bodhicitta really meant. There are two kinds of Bodhi-mind. The first kind of Bodhi-mind is the mind that vows to take the four universal vows of a Buddha or a Bodhisattva to be one's own original vows to save all sentient beings. The second kind of Bodhi-mind is the mind that has a perfect understanding of the ultimate reality; therefore, start out a vow "Above to seek bodhi, below to save beings." This is also the supreme bodhi-mind. There are three kinds of Bodhi-mind. According to Most Venerable Thích Thiên Tâm in *The Pure Land Buddhism in Theory and Practice*, exchanging the virtues of Buddha Recitation for the petty merits and blessings of this world is certainly not consonant with the intentions of the Buddhas. Therefore, practitioners should recite the name of Amitabha Buddha for the purpose of escaping the cycle of Birth and Death. However, if we were to practice Buddha Recitation for the sake of our own salvation alone, we would only fulfill a small part of the Buddhas' intentions. What, then, is the ultimate intention of the Buddhas? The ultimate intention of the Buddhas is for all sentient beings to escape the cycle of Birth and Death and to become enlightened, as they are. Thus, those who recite Amitabha Buddha's name should develop the Bodhi-Mind or the Aspiration for Supreme Enlightenment. The word "Bodhi" means "enlightened." There are three main stages of Enlightenment. First, the enlightenment of sravakas or Hearers. Second, the enlightenment of Pratyeka-buddhas or the Self-Awakened. Third, the enlightenment of Buddhas. What Pure Land practitioners who develop the Bodhi Mind are seeking is precisely the Enlightenment of the Buddhas. This stage of Buddhahood is the highest, transcending those of the Sravakas and Pratyeka Buddhas, and is therefore called Supreme Enlightenment or Supreme Bodhi. This Supreme Bodhi Mind contains two principal seeds, compassion and wisdom, from which emanates the great undertaking of rescuing oneself and all other sentient beings. There are also three other kinds of Bodhi-mind. The first kind of Bodhi-mind is the mind to act out one's vows to save all living beings. To start out for bodhi-mind to act out one's vows to save all living beings (all beings possess Tathagata-garbha nature and can become a Buddha; therefore,

vow to save them all). The second kind of Bodhi-mind is the Bodhi-mind which is beyond description, and which surpasses mere earthly ideas. The third kind of Bodhi-mind is the Samadhi-bodhi mind. A state of enlightenment in which the mind is free from distraction, free from unclean hindrances, absorbed in intense, purposeless concentration, thereby entering a state of inner serenity. Bodhi is the highest state of Samadhi in which the mind is awakened and illuminated. The term “Bodhi” is derived from the Sanskrit root “Budh,” meaning “knowledge,” “Understanding,” or “Perfect wisdom.” A term that is often translated as “enlightenment” by Western translators, but which literally means “Awakening.” Like the term BUDDHA, it is derived from the Sanskrit root buddh, “to wake up,” and in Buddhism it indicates that a person has “awakened” from the sleep of ignorance in which most beings spend their lives. According to Buddhist legend, the Buddha attained bodhi in the town of BODHGAYA while sitting in meditation under the Bodhi Tree or Bodhi-Vrksa. According to the Avatamsaka Sutra, Bodhi (enlightenment) belongs to living beings. Without living beings, no Bodhisattva could achieve Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment. The word ‘Bodhi’ also means ‘Perfect Wisdom’ or ‘Transcendental Wisdom,’ or ‘Supreme Enlightenment.’ Bodhi is the state of truth or the spiritual condition of a Buddha or Bodhisattva. The cause of Bodhi is Prajna (wisdom) and Karuna (compassion). According to the Hinayana, bodhi is equated with the perfection of insight into and realization of the four noble truths, which means the cessation of suffering. According to the Mahayana, bodhi is mainly understood as enlightened wisdom. According to the Avatamsaka Sutra, the Buddha taught: “Good Buddhists! In Bodhisattvas arise the Bodhi-mind, the mind of great compassion, for the salvation of all beings; the mind of great kindness, for the unity with all beings; the mind of happiness, to stop the mass misery of all beings; the altruistic mind, to repulse all that is not good; the mind of mercy, to protect from all fears; the unobstructed mind, to get rid of all obstacles; the broad mind, to pervade all universes; the infinite mind, to pervade all spaces; the undefiled mind, to manifest the vision of all Buddhas; the purified mind, to penetrate all knowledge of past, present and future; the mind of knowledge, to remove all obstructive knowledge and enter the ocean of all-knowing knowledge. Just as someone in water is in no

danger from fire, the Bodhisattva who is soaked in the virtue of the aspiration for enlightenment or Bodhi mind, is in no danger from the fire of knowledge of individual liberation. Just as a diamond, even if cracked, relieves poverty, in the same way the diamond of the Bodhi mind, even if split, relieves the poverty of the mundane whirl. Just as a person who takes the elixir of life lives for a long time and does not grow weak, the Bodhisattva who uses the elixir of the Bodhi mind goes around the mundane whirl for countless eons without becoming exhausted and without being stained by the ills of the mundane whirl. The Avatamsaka Sutra also says: “To neglect the Bodhi Mind when practicing good deeds is the action of demons.” This teaching is very true indeed. For example, if someone begins walking without knowing the destination or goal of his journey, isn’t his trip bound to be circuitous, tiring and useless? It is the same for the cultivator. If he expends a great deal of effort but forgets the goal of attaining Buddhahood to benefit himself and others, all his efforts will merely bring merits in the human and celestial realms. In the end he will still be deluded and revolved in the cycle of Birth and Death, undergoing immense suffering. If this is not the action of demons, what, then, is it? For this reason, developing the Supreme Bodhi Mind to benefit oneself and others should be recognized as a crucial step. A Bodhisattva’s Bodhi mind vows not only to destroy the lust of himself, but also to destroy the lust for all other sentient beings. A Bodhisattva who makes the Bodhi mind always vows to be the rain of food and drink to clear away the pain of thirst and hunger during the aeon of famine (to change himself into food and drink to clear away human beings’ famine). That person always vows to be a good doctor, good medicine, or a good nurse for all sick people until everyone in the world is healed. That person always vows to become an inexhaustible treasure for those who are poor and destitute. For the benefiting of all sentient beings, the person with Bodhi mind is willing to give up his virtue, materials, enjoyments, and even his body without any sense of fatigue, regret, or withdrawal. That person always believes that Nirvana is nothing else but a total giving up of everything (giving up does not mean throwing away or discarding, but it means to give out for the benefit of all sentient beings). In daily life, that person always stays calm even though he may get killed, abused or beaten by others. That

person always vows to be a protector for those who need protection, a guide for all travellers on the way, a bridge or a boat for those who wish to cross a river, a lamp for those who need light in a dark night. The Mahavairocana Sutra says: “The Bodhi Mind is the cause - Great Compassion is the root - Skillful means are the ultimate.” For example, if a person is to travel far, he should first determine the goal of the trip, then understand its purpose, and lastly, choose such expedient means of locomotion as automobiles, ships, or planes to set out on his journey. It is the same for the cultivator. He should first take Supreme Enlightenment as his ultimate goal, and the compassionate mind which benefits himself and others as the purpose of his cultivation, and then, depending on his references and capacities, choose a method, Zen, Pure Land or Esoterism, as an expedient for practice. Expedients, or skillful means, refer, in a broader sense, to flexible wisdom adapted to circumstances, the application of all actions and practices, whether favorable or unfavorable, to the practice of the Bodhisattva Way. For this reason, the Bodhi Mind is the goal that the cultivator should clearly understand before he sets out to practice.

***Bodhi Resolve:*** To vow to devote the mind to bodhi, or to awake the thought of enlightenment, or to bring forth the Bodhi resolve means to generate a true intention in our mind to become enlightened. This is the starting point of the Path to enlightenment. This intention is a seed that can grow into a Buddha. Develop Bodhicitta means develop a supreme motivation to cultivation to achieve full enlightenment or Buddhahood in order to be of the most benefit to others. Only owing to the Bodhicitta we are able to dedicate ourselves to working for the happiness of all beings. The dedicated attitude of Bodhicitta is the powerful energy capable of transforming our mind fully and completely. Ten reasons to cause sentient beings to develop Bodhi Mind. According to Great Master Sua-Sen, the eleventh Patriarch of the Thirteen Patriarchs of Pureland Buddhism, there are ten reasons that cause sentient beings to develop Bodhi Mind. Buddhas from their initial aspiration to their attainment of Buddhahood, never lose the determination for perfect enlightenment. Great Enlightened Beings take the determination for enlightenment as a reliance, as they never forget it. This is one of the ten kinds of reliance of Great Enlightening Beings. According to The Flower Adornment Sutra, chapter 38



(Detachment from the World), the Great Enlightening Being Universally Good told Universal Wisdom that Offsprings of Buddha, Great Enlightening Beings have ten kinds of reliance which help them be able to obtain abodes of the unexcelled great knowledge of Buddhas. Sincere and devoted Buddhists should make up their minds to cultivate themselves and to vow “above to seek Bodhi, below to save sentient beings.” There are ten qualities that should be cultivated by an aspirant to awaken the Bodhicitta: gather friends, worship the Buddha, acquire roots of merit, search the good laws, remain ever compassionate, bear all suffering that befall him, remain kind, compassionate and honest, remain even-minded, rejoice in Mahayana with faith, search the Buddha-wisdom. According to the Bodhicittotapadasutra-Sastra, there are four qualities that should be cultivated by an aspirant to awaken the Bodhicitta: reflecting on the Buddha, reflecting on the impurity of the body, being compassionate towards beings, searching after the highest fruit. According to the Sutra In Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 36, the Buddha said: “It is difficult for one to leave the evil paths and become a human being. It is difficult to become a male human being. It is difficult to have the six organs complete and perfect. It is difficult for one to be born in the central country. It is difficult to be born at the time of a Buddha. It is still difficult to encounter the Way. It is difficult to bring forth faith. It is difficult to resolve one’s mind on Bodhi. It is difficult to be without cultivation and without attainment.” The Buddha and Bodhisattvas broadly explained the virtue of Bodhi Mind in The Avatamsaka Sutra: “The principal door to the Way is development of the Bodhi Mind. The principal criterion of practice is the making of vows.” If we do not develop the broad and lofty Bodhi Mind and do not make firm and strong vows, we will remain as we are now, in the wasteland of Birth and Death for countless eons to come. Even if we were to cultivate during that period, we would find it difficult to persevere and would only waste our efforts. Therefore, we should realize that in following Buddhism, we should definitely develop the Bodhi Mind without delay. According to Most Venerable Thích Thiền Tâm in the Pure Land Buddhism in Theory and Practice, it is not enough simply to say “ I have developed the Bodhis Mind,” or to recite the above verses every day. To really develop the Bodhi Mind, the practitioner should, in his

cultivation, meditate on and act in accordance with the essence of the vows. There are cultivators, clergy and lay people alike, who, each day, after reciting the sutras and the Buddha's name, kneel down to read the transference verses: "I wish to rid myself of the three obstructions and sever afflictions..." However, their actual behavior is different, today they are greedy, tomorrow they become angry and bear grudges, the day after tomorrow it is delusion and laziness, the day after that it is belittling, criticizing and slandering others. The next day they are involved in arguments and disputes, leading to sadness and resentment on both sides. Under these circumstances, how can they rid themselves of the three obstructions and sever afflictions? In general, most of us merely engage in external forms of cultivation, while paying lip service to "opening the mind." Thus, the fires of greed, anger and delusion continue to flare up, preventing us from tasting the pure and cool flavor of emancipation as taught by the Buddhas. Therefore, we have to pose the question, "How can we awaken the Bodhi Mind?" Sincere and devoted Buddhists should make up their minds to cultivate themselves and to vow "above to seek Bodhi, below to save sentient beings." A Bodhisattva's Bodhi mind vows not only to destroy the lust of himself, but also to destroy the lust for all other sentient beings. A Bodhisattva who makes the Bodhi mind always vows to be the rain of food and drink to clear away the pain of thirst and hunger during the aeon of famine (to change himself into food and drink to clear away human beings' famine). That person always vows to be a good doctor, good medicine, or a good nurse for all sick people until everyone in the world is healed. That person always vows to become an inexhaustible treasure for those who are poor and destitute. For the benefiting of all sentient beings, the person with Bodhi mind is willing to give up his virtue, materials, enjoyments, and even his body without any sense of fatigue, regret, or withdrawal. That person always believes that Nirvana is nothing else but a total giving up of everything (giving up does not mean throwing away or discarding, but it means to give out for the benefit of all sentient beings). In daily life, that person always stays calm even though he may get killed, abused or beaten by others. That person always vows to be a protector for those who need protection, a guide for all travellers on the way, a bridge or a boat for those who wish to cross a river, a lamp for those who need light in a dark night.

## ***II. Bodhi Can Be Won By Neither Body Nor Mind, for Bodhi Is the State of Calmness and Extinction of Passion:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter 4, Chapter on Bodhisattvas, the Buddha then said to Maitreya Bodhisattva: “You go to Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Maitreya replied: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health. The reason is that once when I was expounding to the deva-king and his retinue in the Tusita heaven the never-receding stage (of Bodhisattva development into Buddhahood) Vimalakirti came and said to me: ‘Maitreya, when the World Honoured One predicted your future attainment of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-sayak-sambodhi) in one lifetime, tell me in which life, whether in the past, future or present, did or will you receive His prophecy? If it was in your past life, that has gone; if it will be in your future life, that has not yet come; and if it is in your present life, that does not stay. As the Buddha once said: ‘O bhiksus, you are born, are aging and are dying simultaneously at this very moment’; if you received His prophecy in a lifeless (state), the latter is prediction (of your future Buddhahood) nor realization of supreme enlightenment. How then did you receive the prediction of your attainment of Buddhahood in one lifetime? Or did you receive it in the absolute state (thatness or tathata) of either birth or death? If you receive it in the absolute state of birth, this absolute state is uncreated. If you receive it in the absolute state of death, this absolute state does not die. For (the underlying nature of) all living beings and of all things is absolute; all saints and sages are in this absolute state, and so, also are you, Maitreya. So, if you, Maitreya, received the Buddhahood, all living beings (who are absolute by nature) should also receive it. Why? Because that which is absolute is non-dual and is beyond differentiation. If you, Maitreya, realize supreme enlightenment, so should all living beings. Why? Because they are the manifestation of bodhi (enlightenment). If you, Maitreya, win nirvana, they should also realize it. Why? Because all Buddhas know that every living being is basically in the condition of extinction of existence and suffering which is nirvana, in which there can be no further extinction of existence. Therefore, Maitreya, do not mislead the devas because there is neither development of supreme bodhi-mind nor its backsliding. Maitreya, you

should instead urge them to keep from discriminating views about bodhi (enlightenment). Why? Because bodhi can be won by neither body nor mind. For bodhi is the state of calmness and extinction of passion (i.e. nirvana) because it wipes out all forms. Bodhi is unseeing, for it keeps from all causes. Bodhi is non-discrimination, for it stops memorizing and thinking. Bodhi cuts off ideation, for it is free from all views. Bodhi forsakes inversion, for it prevents perverse thoughts. Bodhi puts an end to desire, for it keeps from longing. Bodhi is unresponsive, for it wipes out all clinging. Bodhi complies (with self-nature), for it is in line with the state of suchness. Bodhi dwells (in this suchness), for it abides in (changeless) Dharma-nature (or Dharmata, the underlying nature of all things.) Bodhi reaches this suchness, for it attains the region of reality. Bodhi is non-dual, for it keeps from (both) intellect and its objects. Bodhi is impartial, for it is equal to boundless space. Bodhi is the non-active (we wei) state, for it is above the conditions of birth, existence and death. Bodhi is true knowledge, for it discerns the mental activities of all living beings. Bodhi does not unite, for it is free from all confrontation. Bodhi disentangles, for it breaks contact with habitual troubles (klesa). Bodhi is that of which the position cannot be determined, for it is beyond form and shape, and is that which cannot be called by name for all names (have no independent nature and so) are void. Bodhi is like the mindlessness of an illusory man, for it neither accepts nor rejects anything. Bodhi is beyond disturbance, for it is always serene by itself. Bodhi is real stillness, because of its pure and clean nature. Bodhi is non-acceptance, for it keeps from causal attachments. Bodhi is non-differentiating, because of its impartiality towards all. Bodhi is without compare, for it is indescribable. Bodhi is profound and subtle, for although unknowing, it knows all.' World Honoured One, when Vimalakirti so expounded the Dharma, two hundred sons of devas realized the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti). This is why I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health."

## *Chapter Forty-Two*

### *Eight Perfections In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. A Summary of Accomplishments In Buddhist Teachings:*

In Buddhism, an accomplished one is the one who accomplishes or brings to perfection his or her cultivation, a practitioner who has attained spiritual realization and supernatural powers. To transform all beings by developing their Buddha-nature and causing them to obtain enlightenment. Modern man seems to seek happiness and accomplishments outside instead of seeking it within. However, happiness does not depend on the external world. Science and technology seem to promise that they can turn this world into a paradise. Therefore, there is ceaseless work going on in all directions to improve the world. Scientists are pursuing their methods and experiments with undiminished vigour and determination. Man's quest to unravel the hidden secrets of nature continued unabated. Modern discoveries and methods of communication have produced startling results. All these improvements, thought they have their advantages and rewards, are entirely material and external. In spite of all this, man cannot yet control his own mind, he is not better for all his scientific progress. Within this conflux of mind and body of man, however, there are unexplored marvels to keep men of science occupied for many years. According to the Sekha Sutta in the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, in the chapter on the Buddha's teachings of accomplishments of a noble disciple, the Buddha confirmed that in order to possess of virtue, a noble disciple should do the followings: First, to guard the doors of his sense-faculties. Second, to be moderate in eating. Third, to be devoted to wakefulness. Fourth, possess seven good qualities. Fifth, pleasant abiding in the four jhanas. Sixth, to dwell restrained with the restraint of the Patimokkha. Seventh, to be perfect in conduct and resort. Eighth, to see fear in the slightest faults. Ninth, to train by undertaking the training precepts. Also according to the Sekha Sutta in the Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, the Buddha mentioned about seven good qualities: First, here a noble disciple has

faith and he places his faith in the Tathagata's enlightenment thus: "The Blessed One is accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of words, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened blessed." Second, he has shame; he is ashamed of misconduct in body, speech, and mind, ashamed of engaging in evil unwholesome deeds. Third, he has fear of wrong doing; he is afraid of misconduct in body, speech, and mind, afraid of engaging in evil unwholesome deeds. Fourth, he has learned much, remembers what he learned, and consolidates what he has learned. Such teachings as are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing, and affirm a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure—such teachings as these he has learned much of, remembered, recited verbally, investigated with the mind and penetrated well by view. Fifth, he is energetic in abandoning unwholesome states and in undertaking wholesome states; he is steadfast, firm in striving, not remiss in developing wholesome states. Sixth, he has mindfulness; he possesses the highest mindfulness and skill; he recalls and recollects what was done long ago and spoken long ago. Seventh, he is wise; he possesses wisdom regarding rise and disappearance that is noble and penetrative and leads to the complete destruction of suffering.

## ***II. Eight Perfections In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti, Chapter Tenth, there are eight perfections: *First*, benevolence towards all living beings with no expectation of reward. *Second*, endurance of sufferings for all living beings dedicating all merits to them. *Third*, impartiality towards them with all humility free from pride and arrogance. *Fourth*, reverence to all Bodhisattvas with the same devotion as to all Buddhas (i.e. without discrimination between Bodhisattvas and Buddhas. *Fifth*, absence of doubt and suspicion when hearing (the expounding of) sutras which he has not heard before. *Sixth*, abstention from opposition to the Sravaka Dharma. *Seventh*, abstention from discrimination in regard to donations and offerings received with no thought of self-profit in order to subdue his mind. *Eighth*, self-examination without contending with others.

Thus, he should achieve singleness of mind bent on achieving all merits; these are the eight Dharmas.





## *Chapter Forty-Three*

### *To Cultivate Right Mindfulness In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. A Summary of Right Mindfulness in Buddhist Cultivation:*

Right remembrance, the seventh of the eightfold noble path, means remembering correctly and thinking correctly. The looking or contemplating on the body and the spirit in such a way as to remain ardent, self-possessed and mindful. Right remembrance means looking on the body and spirit in such a way as to remain ardent, self-possessed and mindful, having overcome both hankering and dejection. According to the eightfold noble path, right mindfulness means the one-pointedness of the mind. Right mindfulness means to give heed to good deed for our own benefit and that of others. Right mindfulness means to be always aware and attentive. We should always be aware of what we think, say and do. We must concentrate on everything we do before we can do it well. For instance, if we concentrate in class, we would not miss anything the teacher says. Right mindfulness also means remembrance including old mistakes to repent of and deep gratitude towards parents, country, humankind, and Buddhist Triple Gems. Right mindfulness also means the reflection on the present and future events or situations. We must meditate upon human sufferings that are caused by ignorance and decide to work for alleviating them, irrespective of possible difficulties and boredom. Correct (Right or Perfect) Remembrance or Mindfulness or correct memory which retains the true and excludes the false. Dwell in contemplation of corporeality. Be mindful and putting away worldly greed and grief. Correct mindfulness also means ongoing mindfulness of body, feelings, thinking, and objects of thought. “Correct mindfulness” involves cultivating a state of mental clarity and alertness in which one is aware of one’s mental processes and attitudes and, more importantly, in which one is in control of them. Through continuous self-examination and mental alertness, one can develop the mindfulness that enables one to master one’s emotions, thoughts and feelings and focus them in the direction of awakening (bodhi). In short, right remembrance means remembering

correctly, thinking correctly, and controlling the mind so that it does not cause sufferings and afflictions for people and for self; on the contrary, it would bring us and other people peace, mindfulness and happiness.

According to Theravada Buddhism, mindfulness is considered as the strongest strand for it plays an important role in the acquisition of both calm and insight. Mindfulness is a certain function of the mind, and therefore, a mental factor. Without this all important factor of mindfulness one cannot cognize sense-objects, one cannot be fully aware of one's behavior. It is called right mindfulness because it avoids misdirected attention, and prevents the mind from paying attention to things unwholesome, and guides its possessor on the right path to purity and freedom. Right mindfulness sharpens the power of observation, and assists right thinking and right understanding. Orderly thinking and reflection is conditioned by man's right mindfulness. In the Satipatthana and Anapanasati sutras, the Buddha states clearly how a meditator becomes aware of his thoughts, mindfully watching and observing each and every one of them, be they good or evil, salutary or otherwise. The sutras warn us against negligence and day-dreaming and urges us to be mentally alert and watchful. As a matter of fact, the earnest student will note that the very reading of the discourse, at times, makes him watchful, earnest and serious-minded. It goes without saying that right mindfulness is a quality that no sensible man would treat with contempt. Thus, it is truly essential to cultivate mindfulness in this confused age when so many people suffer from mental imbalance. Right mindfulness is an instrumental not only in bringing concentration calm, but in promoting right understanding and right living. It is an essential factor in all our actions both worldly and spiritual.

In Buddhist cultivation, right remembrance, the seventh of the eightfold noble path, means remembering correctly and thinking correctly. The looking or contemplating on the body and the spirit in such a way as to remain ardent, self-possessed and mindful. Right remembrance means looking on the body and spirit in such a way as to remain ardent, self-possessed and mindful, having overcome both hankering and dejection. Right mindfulness means to give heed to good deed for our own benefit and that of others. According to the eightfold noble path, right mindfulness means the one-pointedness of the mind,

and Zen will help practitioner to have Right Remembrance. Through Zen we always have Right mindfulness. In fact, in our daily life activities, we should always be aware and attentive. We should always be aware of what we think, say and do. We must concentrate on everything we do before we can do it well. For instance, if we concentrate in class, we would not miss anything the teacher says. Right mindfulness also means remembrance including old mistakes to repent of and deep gratitude towards parents, country, humankind, and Buddhist Triple Gems. Right mindfulness also means the reflection on the present and future events or situations. We must meditate upon human sufferings that are caused by ignorance and decide to work for alleviating them, irrespective of possible difficulties and boredom. Correct Memory which retains the true and excludes the false. Dwell in contemplation of corporeality. Be mindful and putting away worldly greed and grief. Correct mindfulness also means ongoing mindfulness of body, feelings, thinking, and objects of thought.

Right Mindfulness is one of the three trainings in meditation (two others are Right Effort and Right Concentration). Mindfulness is awareness or attention, and as such it means avoiding a distracted or clouded state of mind. In the practice of the Dharma, right mindfulness plays as a kind of rein upon our minds for our minds are never concentrated or still. The Buddha taught: "The practice of mindfulness means mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of feelings, mindfulness of consciousness, and mindfulness of objects of the mind." In short, right mindfulness means to watch our body and mind and to know what we are doing at all times. Right Mindfulness is an important mental factor that enables us to remember and keep our attention on what is beneficial. Right Mindfulness plays an important role in meditation, i.e., Right mindfulness can help us clear the flurry of thoughts from our minds, and eventually, we'll be able to concentrate single-pointedly on our breath. Right mindfulness is the application or arousing of attention: First, activities of the body. Be attentive to the activities of the body with the practice of concentration on breathing. Second, feelings or sensations. Be aware of all forms of feelings and sensations, pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral, by contemplating their appearance and disappearance within oneself. Third, the activities of the mind (Cittanupassana (p)). Be aware whether one's mind is lustful, hatred,

deluded, distracted or concentrated. Fourth, mental objects (Dhammanapassana (p). Contemplate the impermanence of all things from arise, stay, change and decay to eliminate attachment.

## ***II. To Practice Right Mindfulness In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Seven, Manjusri asked: “On what should he rely in his fear of birth and death?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should rely on the power of the Tathagata’s moral merits.” Manjusri asked: “What should he do to win support from the power of the Tathagata’s moral merits?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should liberate all living beings in order to win support from the power of the Tathagata’s moral merit.” Manjusri asked: “What should he wipe out in order to liberate living beings?” Vimalakirti replied: “When liberating living beings, a Bodhisattva should first wipe out their klesa (troubles and causes of troubles)?” Manjusri asked: “What should he do to wipe out klesa?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should uphold right mindfulness.” Manjusri asked: “What should he do to uphold right mindfulness?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should advocate the unborn and the undying.” Manjusri asked: “What is the unborn and what is the undying?” Vimalakirti replied: “The unborn is evil that does not arise and the undying is good that does not end.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of good and evil?” Vimalakirti replied: “The body is the root of good and evil.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of the body?” Vimalakirti replied: “Craving is the root of the body.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of craving?” Vimalakirti replied: “Baseless discrimination is the root of craving.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of baseless discrimination?” Vimalakirti replied: “Inverted thinking is the root of discrimination.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of inverted thinking?” Vimalakirti replied: “Non-abiding is the root of inverted thinking.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of non-abiding?” Vimalakirti replied: “Non-abiding is rootless. Manjusri, from this non-abiding root all things arise.”

## *Chapter Forty-Four*

### *Fifteen Modes of Contemplation On Non-Active State In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. An Overview of Unconditioned Dharmas In Buddhist Teachings:*

The unconditioned dharma is a Taoist term has the literal meaning of “non-doing” or “non-striving” or “not making.” It does not imply inaction or mere idling. We are merely to cease striving for the unreal things which blind us to our true self. However, this is a Zen notion of acting spontaneously, without premeditation, considered to be an expression of the mind of an awakened master. Only a person who is unattached to the result of actions is able to act in this way, and it is characterized as perfect freedom of action that responds without hesitation to circumstances. The Dharmaguptakas consider “Unconditioned dharmas” as “suchness” and “continuity in things,” by which they understand that which in their nature does not change and in virtue of which, for example, good deeds do not produce evil fruits. The immaterial character of the transcendent. The eternal body of Buddha not conditioned by any cause and effect. Anything not subject to cause, condition or dependence. Dharmas which are out of time, eternal, inactive, unchanging, and supra-mundane. The unconditioned dharma, the ultimate inertia from which all forms come, the noumenal source of all phenomenal. Nirvana and space are considered to be unconditioned dharmas. In short, unconditioned dharmas are things that are not being produced or non-causative. Whatever dharmas lack production, cessation, abiding, and change are “unconditioned.” In other words, “unconditioned, unproduced,” refers to everything that is completely beyond conditioned existence, beyond arising, dwelling and passing away. In original teaching only Nirvana was regarded as Unconditioned. According to other traditions, Unconditioned dharmas are those which are not produced to causes and conditions.

In Sarvastivada school, there are three types of unconditioned dharmas: 1) space (akasa); 2) analytical cessations (pratisamkhyas);

nirodha); and 3) non-analytical cessations (apratismkhyanirodha). The Theravada tradition, however, only recognizes one unconditioned dharma, Nirvana, which is a non-analytical cessation. Nobody has ever tried to establish the existence of the unconditioned by argumentation. It is represented as an indisputable fact to which the cultivator's eyes are open as soon as he has reached a state of deep mindfulness that allows him to be even-minded towards everything conditioned. Then his thought no longer turns to anything that might be considered a conditioned phenomenon, does not settle down in it, does not cling, cleave or clutch to it; but his thought turns away, retracts and recoils from it, like water from a lotus leaf. Any object which is either a sign or an occurrence seems to be nothing but an impediment to the cultivation.

According to the Mahayana Buddhist Schools, there are six unconditioned dharmas or six inactive or metaphysical concepts. The unconditioned dharma, the ultimate inertia from which all forms come, the noumenal source of all phenomenal. Those dharmas which do not arise or cease, and are not transcendent, such as Nirvana, the Dharma body, etc. Unconditioned merits and virtues are the causes of liberation from birth and death. First, Unconditioned Empty Space (Akasha). Second, Unconditioned Extinction (Pratismkhyanirodha) which is attained through selection. Extinction obtained by knowledge. Third, Unconditioned Extinction (Apratismkhyanirodha) which is Unselected. Extinction not by knowledge but by nature. Fourth, Unconditioned Unmoving Extinction (Aninnya). Extinction by a motionless state of heavenly meditation. Fifth, Unconditioned Extinction of Feeling (Samjnavedayitanirodha). Extinction by the stoppage of idea and sensation by an arhat. Sixth, Unconditioned True Suchness (Tathata).

## ***II. Fifteen Modes of Contemplation On Non-Active State In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Honorable lay man Vimalakirti explained about fifteen modes of contemplation on "staying in the supramundane state" or "non-active state" of a Bodhisattva. *First*, studying and practicing the immaterial or emptiness without abiding in voidness. *Second*, studying and practicing formlessness (nonappearance) and inaction (non pursuit) without abiding in them.

*Third*, contemplating the reality of noncreation but does not take noncreation as an object of attainment. *Fourth*, looking into the impermanence without discarding the performance of good deeds (a Bodhisattva meditates on the truth of Impermanence but does not abandon his work to serve and save sentient beings). *Fifth*, looking into suffering in the world without hating birth and death, i.e. samsara (a Bodhisattva contemplates on suffering but does not reject the world of births and deaths). *Sixth*, looking into the absence of the ego while continuing to teach all living beings indefatigably. *Seventh*, looking into nirvana with no intention of dwelling in it permanently (a Bodhisattva contemplates on extinction but does not embrace extinction). *Eighth*, looking into the relinquishment (of nirvana) while one's body and mind are set on the practice of all good deeds (a Bodhisattva meditates on detachment but goes on realizing good things in the world). *Ninth*, looking into the non-existing destinations of all things while the mind is set on practicing excellent actions as true destinations (a Bodhisattva meditates on the homeless nature of all dharmas but continues to orient himself toward the good). *Tenth*, looking into the unborn, i.e. the uncreate while abiding in the illusion of life to shoulder responsibility to save others (a Bodhisattva contemplates on the reality of neither-creation-nor-destruction but still undertakes the responsibility in the world of creations and destructions). *Eleventh*, looking into passionlessness without cutting off the passion-stream in order to stay in the world to liberate others. *Twelfth*, looking into the state of non-action while carrying out the Dharma to teach and convert living beings (a Bodhisattva contemplates on nonaction but continues always his acts of service and education). *Thirteenth*, looking into nothingness (emptiness) without forgetting (abandoning) about great compassion. *Fourteenth*, looking into the right position (of nirvana) without following the Hinayana habit of staying in it (a Bodhisattva meditates on the position of the True Dharma but does not follow a rigid path). *Fifteenth*, looking into the unreality of all phenomena which are neither firm nor have an independent nature, impermanence, and are egoless and formless (markless), but since his own fundamental vows are not entirely fulfilled, he should not regard merits, serenity and wisdom as unreal and so cease practicing them.





## ***Chapter Forty-Five***

### ***Relationships Between Bodhisattvas & Sentient Beings in the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. An Overview of Bodhisattvas and Living Beings:***

“Enlightened Being” (Bodhisattva) is a Chinese Buddhist term that means an enlightened being (bodhi-being), or a Buddha-to-be, or a being who desires to attain enlightenment, or a being who seeks enlightenment, including Buddhas, Pratyeka-buddhas, or any disciples of the Buddhas. An enlightened being who does not enter Nirvana but chosen to remain in the world to save other sentient beings. Any person who is seeking Buddhahood, or a saint who stands right on the edge of nirvana, but remains in this world to help others achieve enlightenment. One who vows to live his or her life for the benefit of all sentient beings, vowing to save all sentient beings from affliction and aspiring to attainment of the Buddha-hood. One whose being or essence is bodhi whose wisdom is resulting from direct perception of Truth with the compassion awakened thereby. Enlightened being who is on the path to awakening, who vows to forego complete enlightenment until he or she helps other beings attain enlightenment. A Bodhisattva is one who adheres to or bent on the ideal of enlightenment, or knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (Bodhi), especially one who is aspirant for full enlightenment (samma sambodhi). A Bodhisattva fully cultivates ten perfections (thập thiện: Parami) which are essential qualities of extremely high standard initiated by compassion, understanding and free from craving, pride and false views. There are five Bodhisattvas who have cultivated over countless lifetimes and expand in his life for the benefit of others. Therefore, a Bodhisattva is one who is enlightened, literally he is an Enlightenment-being, a Buddha-to-be, or one who wishes to become a Buddha. It would be a mistake to assume that the conception of a Bodhisattva was a creation of the Mahayana. For all Buddhists each Buddha had been, for a long period before his enlightenment, a Bodhisattva. But why does a Bodhisattva have such a vow? Why does he want to undertake such infinite labor? For the good of others,

because they want to become capable of pulling others out of this great flood of sufferings and afflictions. But what personal benefit does he find in the benefit of others? To a Bodhisattva, the benefit of others is his own benefit, because he desires it that way. Who could believe that? It is true that people devoid of pity and who think only of themselves, find it hard to believe in the altruism of the Bodhisattva. But compassionate people do so easily.

The term "Living Beings" refer to all creatures that possess life-force. Each individual living being comes into being as the result of a variety of different causes and conditions. The smallest living beings as ants, mosquitoes, or even the most tiniest parasites are living beings. Every being is a combination of five elements: rupa, vedana, sanna, sankhara, and vinnana. Hence, one being is not essentially different from another, an ordinary man is not different from a perfect saint. But is the nature and proportion of each of the five constituents existing in an individual be taken into account, then one being is different from another, an ordinary man is different from a perfect saint. The combination of elements is the outcome of Karma and is happening every moment, implying that the disintegration of elements always precedes it. The elements in a combined state pass as an individual, and from time immemorial he works under misconception of a self and of things relating to a self. His vision being distorted or obscured by ignorance of the truth he can not perceive the momentary combination and disintegration of elements. On the other hand, he is subject to an inclination for them. A perfect man with his vision cleared by the Buddhist practices and culture realizes the real state of empirical things that an individual consists of the five elements and does not possess a permanent and unchanging entity called soul. In the "Song of Meditation," Hakuin Zenji says, "All sentient beings are intrinsically Buddhas." We are all right to begin with. So when called, just answer. If you cannot answer, that, too, is okay. Regardless of whether you answer or not, you are this fundamentally, originally enlightened ground. We practice on this ground of original enlightenment because that is our life. We do not need to look for anything else because everything is already right here. This life itself, your life itself, is the valley that has no echo. When you look for something else, you are putting another head on top of your own. How do we appreciate the life

that we have? Unfortunately, we often experience this life as if it were a roller coaster, spinning around in the six realms. Sometimes you feel marvelous. The next day, you hit bottom. You go from heaven to hell and all kinds of spheres in between from day to day, maybe even in one day. What are you doing with this life? You wonder, "Am I really the same as the Buddhas?" Many of you respond, "Hardly." So what will you do? This is a very common dilemma. That is why if we just rely on one perspective, such as "We are all okay, be just as you are." we fall into a trap. It sounds good, but unfortunately, not all of us can live like that. Something is not quite right. We, Buddhist practitioners, must examine who we are and truly see what this life is, what is the very nature of existence. This is a very natural inquiry.

The two words of "Cause and Effect", not only living beings who cannot escape them (cause and effect); even the Buddhas (before becoming enlightened) and Bodhisattvas cannot avoid them either. However, because Bodhisattvas have far-ranging vision, they avoid creating bad causes and only receive joyful rewards. Living beings, on the other hand, are very short-sighted. Seeing only what is in front of them, they often plant evil causes, and so they must often suffer the bitter retribution. Because the Bodhisattvas are afraid of bad consequences in the future, not only they avoid planting evil-causes or evil karma in the present, but they also diligently cultivate to gradually diminish their karmic obstructions; at the same time to accumulate their virtues and merits, and ultimately to attain Buddhahood. However, sentient beings complete constantly to gather evil-causes; therefore, they must suffer evil effect. When ending the effect of their actions, they are not remorseful or willing to repent. Not only do they blame Heaven and other people, but they continue to create more evil karma in opposition and retaliation. Therefore, enemies and vengeance will continue to exist forever in this vicious cycle.

## ***II. Bodhisattvas Contemplate On Living Beings in the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Seven, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "How should a Bodhisattva look at living beings?" Vimalakirti replied: "A Bodhisattva should look at living beings like an illusionist does at the illusory men (he has created); and like a wise

man looking at the moon's reflection in water; at his own face in a mirror; at the flame of a burning fire; at the echo of a calling voice; at flying clouds in the sky; at foam in a liquid; at bubbles on water; at the (empty) core of a banana tree; at a flash of lightning; at the (non-existent) fifth element (beside the four that make the human body); at the sixth aggregate (beside the five that make a sentient being); at the seventh sense datum (beside the six objects of sense); at the thirteenth entrance (ayatana-beside the twelve involving the six organs and six sense data); at the nineteenth realm of sense (beside the eighteen dhatus or fields of sense); at form in the formless world; at the (non-existent) sprout of a charred grain of rice; at a body seen by a srotapanna (who has wiped out the illusory body to enter the holy stream); at the entry of an anagamin (or a non-returning sravaka) into the womb of a woman (for rebirth); at an arhat still preserving the three poisons (of desire, anger and stupidity which he has eliminated forever); at a Bodhisattva realizing the patient endurance of the uncreate who is still greedy, resentful and breaking the prohibitions; at a Buddha still suffering from klesa (troubles); at a blind man seeing things; at an adept who still breathes air in and out while in the state of nirvanic imperturbability; at the tracks of birds flying in the air; at the progeny of a barren woman; at the suffering of an illusory man; at a sleeping man seeing he is awake in a dream; at a devout man realizing nirvana who takes a bodily form for (another) reincarnation; and at a smokeless fire. This is how a Bodhisattva should look at living beings." At that time, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "When a Bodhisattva so meditates how should he practise kindness (maitri)?" Vimalakirti replied: "When a Bodhisattva has made this meditation, he should think that he ought to teach living beings to meditate in the same manner; this is true kindness; he should practise causeless (nirvanic) kindness which prevents creativeness; he should practice unheated kindness which puts an end to klesa (troubles and causes of troubles); he should practice impartial kindness which covers all the three periods of time (which means that it is eternal involving past, future and present); he should practice passionless kindness which wipes out disputes; he should practice non-dual kindness which is beyond sense organs within and sense data without; he should practice indestructible kindness which eradicates all corruption; he should practice stable kindness which is a

characteristic of the undying self-mind; he should practice pure and clean kindness which is spotless like Dharmata; he should practice boundless kindness which is all-pervasive like space; he should practice the kindness of the arhat stage which destroys all bondage; he should practice the Bodhisattva kindness which gives comfort to living beings; he should practice the Tathagata kindness which leads to the state of thatness; he should practice the Buddha kindness which enlightens all living beings; he should practice spontaneous kindness which is causeless; he should practice Bodhi kindness which is one flavour (i.e. uniform and unmixed wisdom); he should practice unsurpassed kindness which cuts off all desires; he should practice merciful kindness which leads to the Mahayana (path); he should practice untiring kindness because of deep insight into the void and non-existent ego; he should practice Dharma-bestowing (dana) kindness which is free from regret and repentance; he should practice precepts (sila) upholding kindness to convert those who have broken the commandments; he should practice patient (ksanti) kindness which protects both the self and others; he should practice Zealous (virya) kindness to liberate all living beings; he should practice serene (dhyana) kindness which is unaffected by the five senses; he should practice wise (prajna) kindness which is always timely; he should practice expedient (upaya) kindness to appear at all times for converting living beings; he should practice unhidden kindness because of the purity and cleanliness of the straightforward mind; he should practice profound minded kindness which is free from discrimination; he should practice undeceptive kindness which is without fault; he should practice joyful kindness which bestows the Buddha joy (in nirvana). “Such are the specialities of Bodhisattva kindness.” Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “What should be his compassion (karuna)?” Vimalakirti replied: “His compassion should include sharing with all living beings all the merits he has won.” Manjusri asked: “What should be his joy (mudita)?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should be filled with joy on seeing others win the benefit of the Dharma with no regret whatsoever.” Manjusri asked “What should he relinquish (upeksa)?” Vimalakirti replied: “In his work of salvation, he should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return.” Manjusri asked: “On what should he rely in his fear of birth and death?” Vimalakirti replied: “He

should rely on the power of the Tathagata's moral merits." Manjusri asked: "What should he do to win support from the power of the Tathagata's moral merits?" Vimalakirti replied: "He should liberate all living beings in order to win support from the power of the Tathagata's moral merit." Manjusri asked: "What should he wipe out in order to liberate living beings?" Vimalakirti replied: "When liberating living beings, a Bodhisattva should first wipe out their klesa (troubles and causes of troubles)." Manjusri asked: "What should he do to wipe out klesa?" Vimalakirti replied: "He should uphold right mindfulness." Manjusri asked: "What should he do to uphold right mindfulness?" Vimalakirti replied: "He should advocate the unborn and the undying." Manjusri asked: "What is the unborn and what is the undying?" Vimalakirti replied: "The unborn is evil that does not arise and the undying is good that does not end." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of good and evil?" Vimalakirti replied: "The body is the root of good and evil." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of the body?" Vimalakirti replied: "Craving is the root of the body." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of craving?" Vimalakirti replied: "Baseless discrimination is the root of craving." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of baseless discrimination?" Vimalakirti replied: "Inverted thinking is the root of discrimination." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of inverted thinking?" Vimalakirti replied: "Non-abiding is the root of inverted thinking." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of non-abiding?" Vimalakirti replied: "Non-abiding is rootless. Manjusri, from this non-abiding root all things arise."

### ***III. Bodhisattvas and True Loving-Kindness Toward Living Beings According to the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

***A Summary of Loving Kindness-Compassion-Joy-Equanimity In Buddhist Teachings:*** In Buddhist teachings, true loving kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity are the four immeasurable minds that are inconceivably vast. They not only benefit immeasurable living beings, bringing immeasurable blessings to them, and producing immeasurable highly spiritual attainments in a world, in one life, but they also spread all over immeasurable worlds, in immeasurable future lives, shaping up immeasurable Buddha. The four immeasurables or infinite Buddha-states of mind. Four Immeasurable Minds. The four

virtues of infinite greatness. The four kinds of boundless mind, or four divine abodes. These states are called illimitables because they are to be radiated towards all living beings without limit or obstruction. They are also called brahmaviharas or divine abodes, or sublime states, because they are the mental dwellings of the brahma divinities in the Brahma-world. In fact, there are a lot of small virtues that Zen practitioners need to prepare before and during practicing meditation. Zen practitioners should cultivate to a point that they would be happy with other's success and sympathy with other's miseries. They would keep themselves modest when achieving success. However, the Buddha pointed out four immeasurable minds. These four immeasurable minds are not only benefit immeasurable living beings, bringing immeasurable blessings to them, and producing immeasurable highly spiritual attainments in a world, in one life, but also spreads all over immeasurable worlds, in immeasurable future lives, shaping up immeasurable Buddha. *Mind of Immeasurable Loving Kindness*: Kindness, benevolence, one of the principal Buddhist virtues. Maitri is a benevolence toward all beings that is free from attachment. Maitri can be developed gradually through meditation, first toward persons who are close to us, then to others, and at last to those who are indifferent and ill-disposed to us, for the mind of loving-kindness is the wish for the welfare and happiness of all beings. Loving-kindness (benevolence) is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, good roots prevail in all situations in our daily life. In Buddhism, loving kindness is the greatest love toward all sentient beings. Immeasurable loving kindness is the greatest love dedicated to all sentient beings, together with the desire to bring them joy and happiness. Human joy is totally impermanent; it is governed by misery, that is, when our passions such as greed, anger, and ignorance are satisfied, we feel pleased; but when they are not satisfied, we feel sad. To have a permanent joy, we must first sever all sufferings. Loving kindness generally goes together with pity whose role is to help the subjects sever his sufferings, while the role of loving kindness is to save sentient beings from sufferings and to bring them joy. However, loving-kindness is not an inborn characteristic. If we really want to develop our loving-kindness, we have to devote more time to practice. Practitioners should always remember that to be kind does not mean to

be passive. To be kind in Buddhism means compassionate, and compassionate does not mean to allow others to walk all over you, to allow yourself to be destroyed. We must be kind to everybody, but we have to protect ourselves and protect others. If we need to lock someone up because he is dangerous, then we have to do that. But we have to do it with compassion. Our motivation is to prevent that person from continuing his course of destruction and from feeding his anger. Sitting in meditation alone cannot bring us the so-called “loving-kindness.” In order to achieve the loving-kindness, we must put loving-kindness in actions in our daily life. In our daily activities, we must develop empathy and closeness to others by reflecting on their sufferings. For example, when we know someone suffering, we should try our best to console them by kind words or to help them with our worldly possessions if needed. *Mind of Immeasurable Compassion*: Immeasurable Compassion means sympathy, or pity (compassion) for another in distress and desire to help him or to deliver others from suffering out of pity. The compassion is selfless, non-egoistic and based on the principle of universal equality. ‘Karuna’ means pity or compassion. In Pali and Sanskrit, ‘Karuna’ is defined as ‘the quality which makes the heart of the good man tremble and quiver at the distress of others.’ The quality that rouses tender feelings in the good man at the sight of others’ suffering. Karuna means sympathy, or pity (compassion) for another in distress and desire to help him or to deliver others from suffering out of pity. The compassion is selfless, non-egoistic and based on the principle of universal equality. A compassionate mind is a mind with wholesome thoughts which always wishes others to be released from their sufferings and afflictions. A compassionate mind does not only bring forth happiness and tranquility for others, but also to ourselves. The compassionate mind also helps us dispel our negative thoughts such as anger, envy and jealousy, etc. Compassion extends itself without distinction to all sentient beings. However, compassion must be accompanied by wisdom in order to have right effect. Loving-kindness (benevolence) and compassion are some of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it good roots prevail in all situations in life, also with it we do not kill or harm living beings. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: “To dwell in the house of Compassion is the safest, for it protects our



minds and bodies from the enemies of hatred and afflictions. It allows us to have peace and contentment.” Thus, sincere Buddhists should always consider great pity and compassion their room, gentleness and patience the robes, and the emptiness of all phenomena the seat. *Mind of Immeasurable Inner Joy*: Immeasurable Joy, a mind of great joy, or infinite joy. Boundless joy (gladness), on seeing others rescued from suffering. Here a cultivator, with a heart filled with sympathetic joy. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of sympathetic joy above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with sympathetic joy, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Appreciative joy is the quality of rejoicing at the success and prosperity of others. It is the congratulatory attitude, and helps to eliminate envy and discontent over the success of others. Immeasurable inner joy also means to rejoice in all good, to rejoice in the welfare of others, or to do that which one enjoys, or to follow one’s inclination. *Mind of Perfect Equanimity*: One of the chief Buddhist virtues, that of renunciation, leading to a state of indifference without pleasure or pain, or independence of both. It is defined as the mind in equilibrium, i.e. above the distinction of things or persons, of self or others; indifferent, having abandoned the world and all things, and having no affections or desires. Buddhist practitioners should always observe these four minds of loving-kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity, for they are four excellent virtues conducive to noble living. They banish selfishness and disharmony and promote altruism with other beings, unity in the family, and good brotherhood in communities. In meditation practice, they are four minds of deliverance, for through them we can recognize the good of others. Therefore, the four immeasurable minds can also be considered as excellent subjects of meditation, through them practitioners can develop more sublime states. By cultivating these noble virtues, practitioners can maintain a calm and pure mind. The Zen method of self-analysis, self-reflection, and self-discovery should never be taken to imply that we are to shut ourselves off from communion with our fellow men. To follow the way of Zen is not to become isolated in a cage or cell, but to become free and open in our relations with our fellow beings. The search for self-realization always has its counterpart the development of a new way of relating to others, a way imbued with compassion, love and sympathy with all that live.

***True Loving Kindness-Compassion-Joy-Equanimity Toward Living Beings According to the Vimalakirti Sutra:*** According to chapter “Looking at Living Beings”, when Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “When a Bodhisattva so meditates how should he practise kindness (maitri)? Vimalakirti replied: “When a Bodhisattva has made this meditation, he should think that he ought to teach living beings to meditate in the same manner; this is true kindness; he should practise causeless (nirvanic) kindness which prevents creativeness; he should practice unheated kindness which puts an end to klesa (troubles and causes of troubles); he should practice impartial kindness which covers all the three periods of time (which means that it is eternal involving past, future and present); he should practice passionless kindness which wipes out disputes; he should practice non-dual kindness which is beyond sense organs within and sense data without; he should practice indestructible kindness which eradicates all corruption; he should practice stable kindness which is a characteristic of the undying self-mind; he should practice pure and clean kindness which is spotless like Dharmata; he should practice boundless kindness which is all-pervasive like space; he should practice the kindness of the arhat stage which destroys all bondage; he should practice the Bodhisattva kindness which gives comfort to living beings; he should practice the Tathagata kindness which leads to the state of thatness; he should practice the Buddha kindness which enlightens all living beings; he should practice spontaneous kindness which is causeless; he should practice Bodhi kindness which is one flavour (i.e. uniform and unmixed wisdom); he should practice unsurpassed kindness which cuts off all desires; he should practice merciful kindness which leads to the Mahayana (path); he should practice untiring kindness because of deep insight into the void and non-existent ego; he should practice Dharma-bestowing (dana) kindness which is free from regret and repentance; he should practice precepts (sila) upholding kindness to convert those who have broken the commandments; he should practice patient (ksanti) kindness which protects both the self and others; he should practice Zealous (virya) kindness to liberate all living beings; he should practice serene (dhyana) kindness which is unaffected by the five senses; he should practice wise (prajna) kindness which is always timely; he should practice expedient (upaya) kindness to appear at all

times for converting living beings; he should practice unhidden kindness because of the purity and cleanliness of the straightforward mind; he should practice profound minded kindness which is free from discrimination; he should practice undeceptive kindness which is without fault; he should practice joyful kindness which bestows the Buddha joy (in nirvana). “Such are the specialities of Bodhisattva kindness.” Manjusri also asked Vimalakirti: “What should be his compassion (karuna)?” Vimalakirti replied: “His compassion should include sharing with all living beings all the merits he has won.” Manjusri also asked: “What should be his joy (mudita)?” Vimalakirti replied: He should be filled with joy on seeing others win the benefit of the Dharma with no regret whatsoever.” Manjusri continued to ask “What should he relinquish (upeksa)?” Vimalakirti replied: “In his work of salvation, he should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return.”

#### ***IV. Bodhisattvas Utilize Means For Teaching & Saving Sentient Beings In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

***Skill in Means In Buddhist Point of View:*** “Skill in means” in Buddhism means expediency, method, contrivance, or method.” Expediency and skill, adaptable, suited to conditions, opportunist, the adaptation of teaching to the capacity of the hearer. Means or methods which Buddhas and Bodhisattvas utilize to expound dharma to make it easy for others to understand and practice to reach enlightenment. A means or expedient is a way which one uses to reach one’s aim. Extraordinary Skilful Means is a good and virtuous practice which Buddhas and Maha-Bodhisattvas use to follow and adapt to the individual capacity, personality, and inclination of sentient beings to aid and transform them from unenlightened to enlightened beings. Practitioners who possess wisdom are no longer attached to forms and appearances; because forms and appearances are only expedients for them to advance in cultivation to obtain the Buddhahood. In short, skill in means is the ability to adapt Buddhist teachings and practices to level of understanding of one’s audience. This is particularly important in Mahayana, where “skill in means” is said to be one of the most important abilities developed by Bodhisattvas. It is the seventh of the ten paramitas.

Skill in means or method. Means or methods which Buddhas and bodhisattvas utilize to expound dharma to make it easy for others to understand and practice to reach enlightenment. A means or expedient is a way which one uses to reach one's aim. According to Great Master Tarthang Tulku, one of the most famous masters of the Nyingmapa Sect, "We have a responsibility to work, to exercise our talents and abilities, to contribute our energy to life. Our nature is creative, and by expressing it we constantly generate more enthusiasm and creativity, stimulating an on-going process of enjoyment in the world around us. Working willingly, with our full energy and enthusiasm, is our way of contributing to life. Working in this way is working with skillful means." In Buddhism, skill in means means expediency, method, or contrivance. Skill-in-means or adaptable methods are used for convenience to the place or situation, that are suited to the condition. There are several interpretations. *Phương* is interpreted as method, mode or plan; and *Tiện* is interpreted as convenient for use; so *Phương Tiện* means a convenient or expedient method which is suitable to different sentient beings. *Phương* means correct, *Tiện* means strategically; *Phương tiện* means strategically correct. Skill in means also means partial, temporary, or relative teaching of knowledge of reality, in contrast with *prajna*, and absolute truth, or reality instead of the seeming.

Skill in means is one of the ten paramitas which the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas use as the method of expedient teaching to save sentient beings. This is the most important of the four supplementary paramitas. The term is a translation of the Sanskrit term "Upaya," which means a mode of approach, an expedient, stratagem, device. "Upaya" also means to teach according to the capacity of the hearer, by any suitable method. The Buddha used expedient or partial method in his teaching until near the end of his days, when he enlarged it to the revelation of reality. In *Saddharma Pundarika Sutra*, Chapter II, "Expedient Means," in which the meaning of "Upaya-kausalya" is elucidated through the doctrine of Three Vehicles (Triyanas) of *Sravaka-yana*, *Pratyeka-buddha-yana*, and *Bodhisattva-yana* in order to respond to different temperaments of listeners. Expedient means is the way in which the Bodhisattvas act for saving the beings effectively. Expedient means is not the crafty method of achieving one's objective. It is imbued with

the morality of compassionate action with the purpose of bringing forth merit.

Extraordinary Skillful Means is a good and virtuous practice which Buddhas and Maha-Bodhisattvas use to follow and adapt to the individual capacity, personality, and inclination of sentient beings to aid and transform them from unenlightened to enlightened beings. Practitioners who possess wisdom are no longer attached to forms and appearances; because forms and appearances are only expedients for them to advance in cultivation to obtain the Buddhahood. Skill in means is a weapon of enlightening beings, manifesting in all places. Great Enlightening Beings unite expedient means with transcendent wisdom. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can annihilate the afflictions, bondage, and compulsion accumulated by all sentient beings in the long night of ignorance. Because of the different situations that arise, one has to use methods suited to the particular time and place. Expedient dharma implies that the methods are not constant and changing, but rather impromptu methods set up for a special purpose. Through those expedient methods or strategies, Buddhas or Bodhisattvas can help rescue and lead other beings to Enlightenment. According to Lama Tarthang Tulku in the “Skillful Means”, skillful means is a three-step process that can be applied to any situations or circumstances in our lives. The first step is to become aware of the reality of our difficulties, not simply by intellectual acknowledgement, but by honest observation of ourselves. Only in this way will we find the motivation to take the next step: making a firm resolve to change. When we have clearly seen the nature of our problems and have begun to change them, we can share what we have learned with others. This sharing can be the most satisfying experience of all, for there is a deep and lasting joy in seeing others find the means to make their lives fulfilling and productive. When we use skillful means to realize and strengthen our positive qualities at work, we tap the precious resources that lie awaiting discovery within us. Each of us has the potential to create peace and beauty in the universe. As we develop our abilities and make an effort to share them with others, we can deeply appreciate their value. This deep appreciation makes life truly worth living, for we bring love and joy into all of our actions and experience. By learning to use skillful means in all that we do, we can

transform daily existence into a source of enjoyment and accomplishment that surpasses even our most beautiful dreams.

***Bodhisattvas Utilize Means For Teaching & Saving Sentient Beings in the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:*** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Two, Chapter on Skill in Means, now using upaya he appeared ill and because of his indisposition kings, ministers, elders, upasakas, Brahmins, etc., as well as princes and other officials reaching many thousands came to enquire after his health. So Vimalakirti appeared in his sick body to receive and expound the Dharma to them, saying: “Virtuous ones, the human body is impermanent; it is neither strong nor durable; it will decay and is, therefore, unreliable. It causes anxieties and sufferings, being subject to all kinds of ailments. Virtuous ones, all wise men do not rely on this body which is like a mass of foam, which is intangible. It is like a bubble and does not last for a long time. It is like a flame and is the product of the thirst of love. It is like a banana tree, the centre of which is hollow. It is like an illusion being produced by inverted thoughts. It is like a dream being formed by false views. It is like a shadow and is caused by karma. This body is like an echo for it results from causes and conditions. It is like a floating cloud, which disperses any moment. It is like lightning for it does not stay for the time of a thought. It is without owner for it is like the earth. It is egoless for it is like fire (that kills itself). It is transient like the wind. It is not human for it is like water. It is unreal and depends on the four elements for its existence. It is empty, being neither ego nor its object. It is without knowledge like grass, trees and potsherds. It is not the prime mover, but is moved by the wind (of passions). It is impure and full of filth. It is false, and though washed, bathed, clothed and fed, it will decay and die in the end. It is a calamity being subject to all kinds of illnesses and sufferings. It is like a dry well, for it is pursued by death. It is unsettled and will pass away. It is like a poisonous snake, a deadly enemy, a temporary assemblage (without underlying reality), being made of the five aggregates, the twelve entrances (the six organs and their objects) and the eighteen realms of sense (the six organs, their objects and their perceptions). “Virtuous ones, the (human) body being so repulsive, you should seek the Buddha body. Why? Because the Buddha body is called Dharmakaya, the product of boundless merits

and wisdom; the outcome of discipline, meditation, wisdom, liberation and perfect knowledge of liberation; the result of kindness, compassion, joy and indifference (to emotions); the consequence of (the six perfections or paramitas) charity, discipline, patience, zeal, meditation and wisdom and the sequel of expedient teaching (upaya); the six supernatural powers; the three insights; the thirty-seven stages contributory to enlightenment; serenity and insight; the ten transcendental powers (dasabala); the four kinds of fearlessness; the eighteen unsurpassed characteristics of the Buddha; the wiping out of all evils and the performance of all good deeds; truthfulness, and freedom from looseness and unrestraint. So countless kinds of purity and cleanness produce the body of the Tathagata. Virtuous Ones, if you want to realize the Buddha body in order to get rid of all the illnesses of a living being, you should set your minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi).” Thus, the elder Vimalakirti expounded the Dharma to all those who came to enquire after his health, urging countless visitors to seek supreme enlightenment.

***V. All Living Beings Are Subject to Illness, I Am Ill As Well In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

***A Summary of the Bodhisattva Ideal:*** Some 200 or 300 years after the Buddha’s death, a new variation of the Buddhist ideal began to emerge. Dissatisfied with the seemingly limited goal of the arhat, this new vision emphasized the Bodhisattva as the highest aspiration for all. A Bodhisattva is a being who resolves to become a fully enlightened Buddha and who dedicates his efforts to helping other sentient beings to attain salvation. These compassionate beings figure predominantly in the Mahayana tradition; indeed, the most distinguishing feature of Mahayana Buddhism may be its advocacy of the Bodhisattva as the vehicle to liberation. The Bodhisattva follows a long and arduous path, often described as having ten stages and spanning many lives at the end of which he attains complete Buddhahood. The Mahayana is thus able to consider a host of Bodhisattvas, at different stages along the path, as intervening in the lives of sentient beings. An advanced Bodhisattva, for example, can create “Buddha-Fields,” to which humans can aspire to be reborn by devotion and righteousness. The

notion of the Bodhisattva is at times combined with the doctrine of the “Three Bodies” of the Buddha. This theory maintains that the ultimate form of Buddhahood and the true nature of things is the “Body of Dharma” itself (Dharmakaya). The Body of Dharma is revealed progressively by two other bodies: the “Enjoyment Body” (Sambhogakaya), a subtle form perceptible only to those advanced in the path, and the “Transformation Body” (Nirmanakaya), a physical form apparent to all. According to this scheme, Gautama was merely a Transformation Body, an apparition of ultimate Buddhahood. Other Bodhisattvas, who are Enjoyment Bodies, can also teach and intervene through transformation and apparition. Important Mahayana Bodhisattvas include Avalokitesvara; Manjusri, who personifies great wisdom and is often represented holding a sword, which he uses to cut through the veil of ignorance; and Maitreya, “The Kindly One,” who will be the next Buddha and who, after attaining Buddhahood, will send the next Transformation Body to teach on earth. Other great Buddhist teachers are sometimes associated with Bodhisattvas, and are even seen as their incarnations. One of these is Nagarjuna, who was an abbot at the Buddhist university of Nalanda in the second century A.D. Nagarjuna is considered the founder of the Madhyamaka, a school of Buddhist philosophy that was active in Buddhist India. Madhyamaka greatly influenced certain forms of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, such as Zen, and still flourishes today in Tibet.

In Tibetan, Bodhisattva is translated as “Heroic Being.” The heroic quality of the Bodhisattva is brought out by the Prajnaparamita: “Suppose a hero, endowed with great accomplishments, had gone out with his mother, father, sons, and daughters. By some set of circumstances, they would get into a huge wild forest. The foolish among them would be greatly frightened. The hero would, however, fearlessly say to them ‘Do not be afraid! I will speedily take you out of this great and terrible jungle, and bring you to safety.’ Since he is fearless, vigorous, exceedingly tender, compassionate, courageous and resourceful, it does not occur to him to take himself alone out of the jungle, leaving his relatives behind. Against the Arhat, Mahayana Buddhism claimed that we must take the whole of the creation with us to enlightenment, that we cannot just abandon any beings, as all beings are as near to us as our relatives are. What a man should do is to make



no discrimination between himself and others, and to wait until he had helped everybody into Nirvana before loosing himself into it. The Mahayanists thus claimed that the Arhat had not aimed high enough. According to the Mahayana Buddhism, the ideal man, the aim of the Buddhist effort, was not the rather self-centered, cold and narrow-minded Arhat, but the all compassionate Bodhisattva, who abandoned the world, but not the beings in it. Wisdom had been taught as the highest quality for an Arhat, and compassion as a subsidiary virtue; but to a Bodhisattva, compassion came to rank as equal with wisdom. While the wisdom of an Arhat had been fruitful in setting free in himself. What there was to be set free, it was rather sterile in ways and means of helping ordinary people. The Bodhisattva would be a man who does not only set himself free, but who is also skilful in devising means for bringing out and maturing the latent seeds of enlightenment in others. According to the Prajna-paramita-sutra, the Buddha taught: "Doers of what is hard are the Bodhisattvas, the great beings who have set out to win supreme enlightenment. They do not wish to attain their own private Nirvana. On the contrary, they have survey the highly painful world of being, but they do not tremble at birth-and-death. They have set out for the benefit of the world, for the peace and happiness of the world. They have resolved, and yet desirous to win supreme enlightenment, they do not tremble at birth and death. They have set out for the benefit of the world, for the ease of the world, out of pity for the world. They have resolved: 'We will become a shelter for the world, a refuge for all beings, the world's place of rest, the final belief of all beings, islands of the world, lights of the world, leaders of the world, the world's means of salvation.

According to the Mahayana Buddhism, the ideal of the Bodhisattva was partly due to social pressure on the Order, but to a great extent it was inherent in the practice of the 'Unlimited,' which had trained the monks not to discriminate between themselves and others. As we saw, Buddhism has at its disposal two methods by which it reduces the sense of separateness on the part of individuals. The one is the culture of the social emotions, or sentiments, such as loving-kindness (friendliness) and compassion. The other consists in acquiring the habit of regarding whatever one thinks, feels or does as an interplay of impersonal forces, called 'Dharmas,' weaning oneself slowly from such ideas as 'I' or

‘mine’ or ‘self.’ There is a logical contradiction between the method of wisdom, which sees no persons at all, but only Dharmas, and the method of the ‘Unlimited’ which cultivates relations to people as persons. The meditation on Dharmas dissolves other people, as well as oneself, into a conglomeration of impersonal and instantaneous dharmas. It reduces our manhood into 5 heaps, or pieces, plus a label. If there is nothing in the world except bundles of Dharmas, as cold and as impersonal as atoms, instantaneously perishing all the time, there is nothing which friendliness and compassion could work on. One cannot wish well to a Dharma which is gone by the time one has come to wish it well, nor can one pity a Dharma, say a ‘mind-object,’ or a ‘sight-organ,’ or a ‘sound-consciousness.’ In those Buddhist circles where the method of Dharmas was practiced to a greater extent than the ‘Unlimited,’ it led to a certain dryness of mind, to aloofness, and to lack of human warmth. The true task of the Buddhist is to carry on with both contradictory methods at the same time. As the method of Dharmas leads to boundless expansion of the self, because one identifies oneself with more and more living beings. As the method of wisdom explodes the idea that there are any persons at all in the world, so the method of the ‘Unlimited’ increases the awareness of the personal problems of more and more persons. How then does the Mahayana resolve this contradiction? The Buddhist philosophers differs from philosophers bred in the Aristotelean tradition in that they are not frightened but delighted by a contradiction. They deal with this, as with other contradictions, by merely stating it in an uncompromising form, and then they leave it at that. According to the Diamond Sutra: “Here, oh! Subhuti! A Bodhisattva should think thus ‘As many beings as there are in the universe of beings, be they being egg-born, or from a womb, or moisture-born, or miraculously born; be they with form, or without; be they with perception, without perception, or with neither perception nor no-perception, as far as any conceivable universe of beings is conceived; all these should be led by me into Nirvana, into that realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind. And yet, although innumerable beings have thus been led to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana. And why? If in a Bodhisattva the perception of a ‘being’ should take place, he would not be called an ‘enlightenment-being’ or a Bodhisattva.”

In short, the Bodhisattva ideal originated from Mahayana Buddhism, but the term Bodhisattva is not confined solely to Mahayana Buddhism. In Theravada, Sakyamuni Buddha is referred to as “Bodhisatta” (Bodhisattva) in the past lives described in the Jatakas, during which he is said to have gradually perfected the good qualities of a Buddha. In the Mahayana sense, however, the Bodhisattva concept is an explicit rejection of Nikaya Buddhism’s ideal religious paradigm, the Arhat. In Mahayana the Arhat is characterized as limited and selfish, concerned only with personal salvation, in contrast to the Bodhisattva, who works very hard for all sentient beings. The beginning of the bodhisattva’s career is marked by the dawning of the “mind of awakening” (Bodhi-citta), which is the resolve to become a Buddha in order to benefit others. So, Bodhisattva is considered as a human being with his own karmas at his very birth as all other creatures, but he can be able to get rid of all his inner conflicts, including bad karmas and sufferings, and external crises, including environments, calamities and other dilemma, can change this unfortunate situation and can make a peaceful, prosperous and happy world for all to live in together by using his effort and determination in cultivating a realistic and practical way without depending on external powers. In Mahayana literature, this is commonly followed by a public ceremony of a vow to attain Buddhahood (Pranidhana) in order to benefit other sentient beings. That is to say: “Above to seek bodhi, below to save (transform) beings.” This is one of the great vows of a Bodhisattva. After that point the bodhisattva pursues the goal of Buddhahood by progressively cultivating the six, sometimes ten, “perfections” (Paramita): generosity, ethics, patience, effort, concentration, and wisdom. The two primary qualities in which the Bodhisattva trains are compassion and wisdom, and when the perfections are fully cultivated and compassion and wisdom developed to their highest level, the Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha.

***All Living Beings Are Subject to Illness, I Am Ill As Well In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:*** In Buddhism, a person who is not enlightened is “ill” by definition. The healing process into the aspiration to attain enlightenment. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, at the time of the Buddha, one day Upasaka Vimalakirti was sick, the Buddha asked his great disciples, one after another, to call on

Vimalakirti to enquire after his health, but no one dared to accept. Eventually, Manjusri Bodhisattva accepted the Buddha's command to call on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health. The Buddha then said to Manjusri: "You call on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health." Manjusri said: "World Honoured One, he is a man of superior wisdom and it is not easy to match him (in eloquence). For he has reached reality, and is a skillful expounder of the essentials of the Dharma. His power of speech is unhindered and his wisdom is boundless. He is well versed in all matters pertaining to Bodhisattva development for he has entered the mysterious treasury of all Buddhas. He has overcome all demons, has achieved all transcendental powers and has realized wisdom by ingenious devices (upaya). Nevertheless, I will obey the holy command and will call on him to enquire after his health." The Bodhisattvas, the chief disciples of the Buddha and the rulers of the four heavens who were present, thought to themselves: "As the two Mahasattvas will be meeting, they will certainly discuss the profound Dharma." So, eight thousand Bodhisattvas, five hundred sravakas and hundreds and thousands of devas wanted to follow Manjusri. So Manjusri, reverently surrounded by the Bodhisattvas, the Buddha's chief disciples and the deva, made for Vaisali town. Vimalakirti, who knew in advance that Manjusri and his followers would come, used his transcendental powers to empty his house of all attendants and furniture except a sick bed.

Also according to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Five, when Manjusri arrived to visit Vimalakirti, he asked: "Venerable Upasaka, is your illness bearable? Will it get worse with the wrong treatment? The World Honoured One sends me to inquire after your health, and is anxious to have good news of you. Venerable Upasaka, where does your illness come from; how long since it arose, and how will it come to an end?" Vimalakirti replied: "Stupidity leads to love, which is the origin of my illness. Because all living beings are subject to illness, I am ill as well. When all living beings are no longer ill, my illness will come to an end. Why? A Bodhisattva, because of (his vow to save) living beings, enters the realm of birth and death which is subject to illness; if they are all cured, the Bodhisattva will no longer be ill. For instance, when the only son of an elder falls ill, so do his parents, and when he recovers his health, so do they. Likewise, a Bodhisattva loves

all living beings as if they were his sons; so when they fall ill, the Bodhisattva is also ill, and when they recover, he is no longer ill.” Manjusri asked: “What is the cause of a Bodhisattva’s illness?” Vimalakirti replied: “A Bodhisattva’s illness comes from (his) great compassion.” Manjusri asked: “Why is the Venerable Upasaka’s house empty and without servants?” Vimalakirti replied: “All Buddha lands are also void.” Manjusri asked: “What is the Buddha land void of?” Vimalakirti replied: “It is void of voidness.” Manjusri asked: “Why should voidness be void?” Vimalakirti replied: “Voidness is void in the absence of discrimination.” Manjusri asked: “Can voidness be subject to discrimination?” Vimalakirti replied: “All discrimination is also void.” Manjusri asked: “Where can voidness be sought?” Vimalakirti replied: “It should be sought in the sixty-two false views.” Manjusri asked: “Where should the sixty-two false views be sought?” Vimalakirti replied: “They should be sought in the liberation of all Buddhas.” Manjusri asked: “Where should the liberation of all Buddhas be sought?” Vimalakirti replied: “It should be sought in the minds of all living beings.” He continued: “The virtuous one has also asked why I have no servants; well, all demons and heretics are my servants. Why? Because demons like (the state of) birth and death which the Bodhisattva does not reject, whereas heretics delight in false views in the midst of which the Bodhisattva remains unmoved.” Manjusri asked: “What form does the Venerable Upasaka’s illness take?” Vimalakirti replied: “My illness is formless and invisible.” Manjusri asked: “Is it an illness of the body or of the mind?” Vimalakirti replied: “It is not an illness of the body, for it is beyond body and it is not that of the mind, for the mind is like an illusion.” Manjusri asked: “Of the four elements, earth, water, fire and air, which one is ill?” Vimalakirti replied: “It is not an illness of the element of earth but it is not beyond it; it is the same with the other elements of water, fire and air. Since the illnesses of all living beings originate from the four elements which cause them to suffer, I am ill too.” Manjusri then asked: “What should a Bodhisattva say when comforting another Bodhisattva who falls ill?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should speak of the impermanence of the body but never of the abhorrence and relinquishment of the body. He should speak of the suffering body but never of the joy in nirvana. He should speak of egolessness in the body while teaching and guiding all

living beings (in spite of the fact that they are fundamentally non-existent in the absolute state). He should speak of the voidness of the body but should never cling to the ultimate nirvana. He should speak of repentance of past sins but should avoid slipping into the past. Because of his own illness he should take pity on all those who are sick. Knowing that he has suffered during countless past aeons, he should think of the welfare of all living beings. He should think of his past practice of good virtues to uphold (his determination for) right livelihood. Instead of worrying about troubles (klesa) he should give rise to zeal and devotion (in his practice of the Dharma). He should act like a king physician to cure others' illnesses. Thus, a Bodhisattva should comfort another sick Bodhisattva to make him happy."

#### ***VI. Bodhisattvas' Spirit of Saving Sentient Beings In the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

***The Concept of Salvation & Teaching and Saving of Sentient Beings In Buddhist Teachings:*** Salvation may be understood as the deliverance of someone from destruction, sufferings, afflictions, and so on, and to bring that person to the state of being safe from destructive forces, natural or supernatural. To other religions, salvation means deliverance from sin and death, and admission to a so-called "Eternal Paradise". These are religions of deliverance because they give promise of some form of deliverance. They believe that a person's will is important, but grace is more necessary and important to salvation. Those who wish to be saved must believe that they see a supernatural salvation of an almighty creator in their lives. In Buddhism, the concept of salvation is strange to all sincere Buddhists. One time, the Buddha told His disciples: "The only reason I have come into the world is to teach others. However, one very important thing is that you should never accept what I say as true simply because I have said it. Rather, you should test the teachings yourselves to see if they are true or not. If you find that they are true and helpful, then practice them. But do not do so merely out of respect for me. You are your own savior and no one else can do that for you." One other time, the Buddha gently patted the crazy elephant and turned to tell Ananda: "The only way to destroy hatred is with love. Hatred cannot be defeated with more hatred. This is a very important lesson to learn." Before Nirvana, the Buddha

himself advised his disciples: “When I am gone, let my teachings be your guide. If you have understood them in your heart, you have no more need of me. Remember what I have taught you. Craving and desire are the cause of all sufferings and afflictions. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead devote yourselves to clearing your minds and finding true and lasting happiness.” These are the Buddha’s golden speeches on some of the concepts of salvation.

In salvation, Mahayana Buddhism has temporary manifestation for saving, converting and transporting beings. It is difficult for ordinary people like us to understand the teaching with infinite compassion of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Sometimes, they use their speech to preach the dharma, but a lot of times they use their way of life such as retreating in peace, strictly following the precepts to show and inspire others to cultivate the way. “Temporary manifestation for saving beings” means temporarily appear to save sentient beings. The power of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to transform themselves into any kind of temporal body in order to aid beings. Salvation includes converting and Transporting (to teach and save, to rescue and teach). To transform other beings. The region, condition, or environment of Buddha instruction or conversion. Salvation also means any land which a Buddha is converting, or one in which the transformed body of a Buddha. These lands are of two kinds: pure like Tusita heaven and vile or unclean like this world. T’ien-T’ai defines the transformation realm of Amitabha as the Pure Land of the West. Other schools speak of the transformation realm as the realm on which depends the nirmanakaya. According to Tao-Ch’o (562-645), one of the foremost devotees of the Pure Land school, in his *Book of Peace and Happiness*, one of the principal sources of the Pure Land doctrine. All the Buddhas save sentient beings in four ways. First, by oral teachings such recorded in the twelve divisions of Buddhist literature. Second, by their physical features of supernatural beauty. Third, by their wonderful powers and virtues and transformations. Fourth, by recitating of their names, which when uttered by beings, will remove obstacles and result their rebirth in the presence of the Buddha.

***Bodhisattvas' Spirit of Saving Sentient Beings In the Vimalakirti Sutra:*** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva

called to enquire after Vimalakirti's health, Vimalakirti told Manjusri about "saving sentient beings" as follows: Manjusri asked: "What should a Bodhisattva wipe out in order to liberate living beings?" Vimalakirti replied: "When liberating living beings, a Bodhisattva should first wipe out their klesa (troubles and causes of troubles)?" Manjusri asked: "What should he do to wipe out klesa?" Vimalakirti replied: "He should uphold right mindfulness." Manjusri asked: "What should he do to uphold right mindfulness?" Vimalakirti replied: "He should advocate the unborn and the undying." Manjusri asked: "What is the unborn and what is the undying?" Vimalakirti replied: "The unborn is evil that does not arise and the undying is good that does not end." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of good and evil?" Vimalakirti replied: "The body is the root of good and evil." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of the body?" Vimalakirti replied: "Craving is the root of the body." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of craving?" Vimalakirti replied: "Baseless discrimination is the root of craving." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of baseless discrimination?" Vimalakirti replied: "Inverted thinking is the root of discrimination." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of inverted thinking?" Vimalakirti replied: "Non-abiding is the root of inverted thinking." Manjusri asked: "What is the root of non-abiding?" Vimalakirti replied: "Non-abiding is rootless. Manjusri, from this non-abiding root all things arise."



## ***Chapter Forty-Six***

### ***The Quintessence of Bodhisattvas' Spirit In the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***(A) An Overview of Bodhisattvas In Buddhist Teachings***

Bodhisattva is a Sanskrit term for an Enlightened Being. This is the one whose essence is bodhi whose wisdom is resulting from direct perception of Truth with the compassion awakened thereby. Enlightened being who is on the path to awakening, who vows to forego complete enlightenment until he or she helps other beings attain enlightenment. A Sanskrit term which means “Awakening being” or a “being of enlightenment,” or “one whose essence is wisdom,” or “a being who aspires for enlightenment.” This is the ideal of Mahayana Buddhism. The beginning of the Bodhisattva’s career is marked by the dawning of the “mind of awakening” (Bodhi-citta), which is the resolve to become a Buddha in order to benefit others. So, Bodhisattva is considered as a human being with his own karmas at his very birth as all other creatures, but he can be able to get rid of all his inner conflicts, including bad karmas and sufferings, and external crises, including environments, calamities and other dilemma, can change this unfortunate situation and can make a peaceful, prosperous and happy world for all to live in together by using his effort and determination in cultivating a realistic and practical way without depending on external powers. In Mahayana literature, this is commonly followed by a public ceremony of a vow to attain Buddhahood (Pranidhana) in order to benefit other sentient beings. That is to say: “Above to seek bodhi, below to save (transform) beings.” This is one of the great vows of a Bodhisattva. After that point the Bodhisattva pursues the goal of Buddhahood by progressively cultivating the six, sometimes ten, “perfections” (Paramita): generosity, ethics, patience, effort, concentration, and wisdom. The two primary qualities in which the

Bodhisattva trains are compassion and wisdom, and when the perfections are fully cultivated and compassion and wisdom developed to their highest level, the Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha. The Bodhisattva path is commonly divided into ten levels (Bhumi). The term Bodhisattva is not, however, confined solely to Mahayana Buddhism: in Theravada, Sakyamuni Buddha is referred to as “Bodhisatta” (Bodhisattva) in the past lives described in the Jatakas, during which he is said to have gradually perfected the good qualities of a Buddha. In the Mahayana sense, however, the Bodhisattva concept is an explicit rejection of Nikaya Buddhism’s ideal religious paradigm, the Arhat. In Mahayana the Arhat is characterized as limited and selfish, concerned only with personal salvation, in contrast to the Bodhisattva, who works very hard for all sentient beings. So the term “Bodhisattva” in general, means a “Bodhi being”. It denotes a being who is destined to obtain fullest Enlightenment or Buddhahood. According to the Digha Nikaya, literally, a “Bodhisattva” means one who is an intellectual, or one who is resolved or maintained only to the paths that lead to enlightenment. Several centuries after the Buddha’s parinirvana, Bodhisattva is one of the most important ideas of Mahayana Buddhists. However, the concept was not a sole creation of the Mahayana. The term “Bodhisattva” had been mentioned in the Pali Canon and it stems from the original Pali Buddhism which is used more or less exclusively to designate Sakyamuni Buddha prior to His Enlightenment. According to Sarvastivada School, “Bodhisattva” is defined as a person who is certain to become a Buddha. He is a person who is born of wisdom and protected and served by the wise. According to the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita, nothing real is meant by the word “Bodhisattva,” because a Bodhisattva trains himself in non-attachment to all dharmas. For the Bodhisattva, the great being awakes in non-attachment to full enlightenment in the sense that he understands all the dharmas, because he has enlightenment as his aim, an enlightened being. In short, a Bodhisattva is an enlightener of sentient beings. He usually vows to take the enlightenment that he has been certified as having attained and the wisdom that he has uncovered to enlighten all other sentient beings. A Bodhisattva’s job is not easy at all. Though his appearance is not rare as that of a Buddha, but it is extremely difficult for a Bodhisattva to appear, and it is also extremely

difficult for ordinary people to encounter a real Bodhisattva. A Bodhisattva is a Mahasattva as defined in Sanscrit language. 'Maha' means 'great' and 'sattva' means either 'being' or 'courage'. Nagarjuna gives a number of reasons why Bodhisattvas are called 'great beings'. It is because they achieve a great work, stand at the head of a great many beings, activate great friendliness and great compassion, save a great number of beings. The Tibetans translate Mahasattvas as 'great spiritual hero' and their aspirations are truly on a heroic scale. They desire to discipline all beings everywhere, to serve and honor all the Buddhas everywhere. They want to retain firmly in their minds all the teachings of the Buddhas, to have a detailed knowledge of all the Buddha-fields to comprehend all the assemblies which anywhere gather around a Buddha, to plunge into the thoughts of all beings, to remove their defilements and to fathom their potentialities. In other words, Mahasattva is like Bodhisattva who will be able to eliminate all his bad karmas and sufferings and will show the emancipation way to all beings with all skills by his compassion. A Bodhisattva is the one who benefits himself to help others. A great creature, having a great or noble essence, or being. Mahasattva is a perfect Bodhisattva, greater than any other being except a Buddha. Also great being is one with great compassion and energy, who brings salvation to all living beings. In the beginning of the Astasahasrika Prajna paramita, the Buddha explained the meaning of 'Mahasattva' (great being) when Subhuti asked about it. The Buddha says that a Bodhisattva is called 'a great being' in the sense that he will demonstrate Dharma so that the great errors should be forsaken, such erroneous views as the assumption of a self, a being, a living soul, a person, of becoming, of not becoming, of annihilation, of eternity, of individuality, etc. According to the Saddharmapundarika Sutra, Mahasattvas have good qualities and method of practice paramita and under many hundred thousands of Buddhas had planted the roots of goodness. In the Theravada Buddhism, a Bodhisattva is a person in the school of the elders who is desirous of acquiring the characteristics of a perfect being, the enlightened one. It appears as such in the Pali Nikayas. The accomplishment of such a state makes him content. But the ideal of Mahayana induces him to greater effort based on dynamic activity to help other beings attain ultimate bliss; before that he does

not lay ore to save beings from the state of suffering. Not satisfied with his own mitigation of desire some actions that make him subjected to malice and all kind of craving, he strives up on helping all other beings to overcome their afflictions. While the Buddha reminded Mahamati in the Lankavatara Sutra as follows: “Oh Mahamati, the distinction between the Bodhisattva and the Two Vehicles is emphasized, as the latter are unable to go up further than the sixth stage where they enter into Nirvana. At the seventh stage, the Bodhisattva goes through an altogether new spiritual experience known as anabhogacarya, which may be rendered “a purposeless life.” But, supported by the majestic power of the Buddhas, which enters into the great vows first made by the Bodhisattva as he started in his career, the latter now devises various methods of salvation for the sake of his ignorant and confused fellow-beings. But from the absolute point of view of the ultimate truth in the Lankavatara Sutra, attained by the Bodhisattva, there is no such graded course of spirituality in his life; for here is really no gradation (krama), no continuous ascension (kramanusandhi), but the truth (dharma) alone which is imageless (nirabhasa), and detached altogether from discrimination.

### ***(B) Bodhisattva's Practices In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. A Summary of Bodhisattva's Practices In Buddhist Teachings:***

***An Overview of Bodhisattva's Practices:*** Bodhisattva practice (Bodhisattva's practising) according to the tradition of Northern Buddhism. A Bodhisattva must achieve the following Bodhisattva's practices: to vow to devote the mind to bodhi (bodhicita), to practise the four immeasurables, to practise the six Paramitas, and to practise the four all-embracing virtues. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Bodhisattvas are those who were well known for having achieved all the perfections that lead to the great wisdom. They had received instructions from many Buddhas and formed a Dharma-protecting citadel. By upholding the right Dharma, they could fearlessly give the lion's roar to teach sentient beings; so their names were heard in the

ten directions. They were not invited but came to the assembly to spread the teaching on the Three Treasures to transmit it in perpetuity. They had overcome all demons and defeated heresies; and their six faculties, karmas of deeds, words and thoughts were pure and clean; being free from the (five) hindrances and the (ten) bonds. They had realized serenity of mind and had achieved unimpeded liberation. They had achieved right concentration and mental stability, thereby acquiring the uninterrupted power of speech. They had achieved all the (six) paramitas: charity (dana), discipline (sila), patience (ksanti), devotion (virya), serenity (dhyana) and wisdom (prajna), as well as the expedient method (upaya) of teaching which completely benefit self and others. However, to them these realizations did not mean any gain whatsoever for themselves, so that they were in line with the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti). They were able to turn the wheel of the Law that never turns back. Being able to interpret the (underlying nature of) phenomena, they knew very well the roots (propensities) of all living beings; they surpassed them all and realized fearlessness. They had cultivated their minds by means of merits and wisdom with which they embellished their physical features which were unsurpassable, thus giving up all earthly adornments. Their towering reputation exceeded the height of Mount Sumeru. Their profound faith in the uncreated was unbreakable like a diamond. Their treasures of the Dharma illuminated all lands and rained down nectar. Their speeches were profound and unsurpassable. They entered deep into all (worldly) causes, but cut off all heretical views for they were already free from all dualities and had rooted out all (previous) habits. They were fearless and gave the lion's roar to proclaim the Dharma, their voices being like thunder. They could not be gauged for they were beyond all measures. They had amassed all treasures of the Dharma and acted like (skillful) seafaring pilots. They were well versed in the profound meanings of all Dharmas. They knew very well the mental states of all living beings and their comings and goings (within the realms of existence). They had reached the state near the unsurpassed sovereign wisdom of all Buddhas, having acquired the ten fearless powers (dasabala) giving complete knowledge and the eighteen different characteristics (of a Buddha as compared with Bodhisattvas (avenikadharma). Although they were free from (rebirth

in) evil existences, they appeared in five mortal realms as royal physicians to cure all ailments, prescribing the right medicine in each individual case, thereby winning countless merits to embellish countless Buddha lands. Each living being derived great benefit from seeing and hearing them, for their deeds were not in vain. Thus they had achieved all excellent merits.

***According to the Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 21 (Ten Practices), There Are Ten Kinds of Practices, Which Are Expounded by the Buddhas of Past, Present and Future:*** the practice of giving joy, beneficial practice, practice of nonopposition, practice of indomitability, practice of nonconfusion, practice of good manifestation, practice of nonattachment, practice of that which is difficult to attain, practice of good teachings, and practice of truth.

***According to The Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38, There Are Ten Kinds of Action of Great Enlightening Beings:*** Enlightening Beings who abide by these can achieve the action of Buddhas that has no coming or going. *First*, hearing the Teaching, out of fondness for truth. *Second*, expounding the Teaching to benefit sentient beings. *Third*, getting rid of covetousness, anger, delusion, and fear, by taming their own minds. *Fourth*, action in the realm of desire, to teach beings in that realm. *Fifth*, concentration in the realm of form and formlessness, to foster quick return to noncontamination. *Sixth*, aiming for the meaning of the Teaching, to quickly attain wisdom. *Seventh*, action in the realm of life, to freely edify sentient beings. *Eighth*, action in all Buddha-lands, honoring all Buddhas. *Ninth*, nirvanic action, not cutting off the continuity of birth and death. *Tenth*, fulfilling all qualities of Buddhahood without giving up application of the principles of Enlightening Beings.

***According to the Buddha in The Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38, Great Enlightening Beings have ten kinds of practice which help them attain the practice of the unexcelled knowledge and wisdom of Buddhas:*** *The first practice* is the practice dealing with all sentient beings, to develop them all to maturity. *The second practice* is the practice seeking all truths, to learn them all. *The third practice* is the practice of all roots of goodness, to cause them all to grow. *The fourth practice* is the practice of all concentration, to be single-minded, without distraction. *The fifth practice* is the practice of all knowledge, to know everything. *The sixth practice* is the practice of

all cultivations, to be able to cultivate them all. *The seventh practice* is the practice dealing with all Buddha-lands, to adorn them all. *The eighth practice* is the practice dealing with all good companions, respecting and supporting them. *The ninth practice* is the practice dealing with all Buddhas, honoring and serving them. *The tenth practice* is the practice of all supernatural powers, to be able to transform anywhere, anytime to help sentient beings. ***Also According to the Avatamsaka Sutra, Great Bodhisattvas Have Ten Qualities:*** *First*, their meritorious deeds are of universal character and illuminating. *Second*, their attainment of the Samadhi is full of the light of knowledge which is derived from walking the path of righteousness. *Third*, they are able to produce the great ocean of merit. *Fourth*, they are never tired of amassing all kinds of purities. *Fifth*, they are ever ready to associate with good friends and attend upon them with reverence. *Sixth*, they are not accumulators of wealth and never hesitate to give up their lives for a good cause. *Seventh*, they are free from the spirit of arrogance and like the great earth treat others impartially. *Eighth*, their hearts being filled with love and compassion; they are always thinking of the welfare of others. *Ninth*, they are always friendly disposed towards all beings in various paths of existence. *Tenth*, they are ever desirous of being admitted into the community of Buddhas. ***According to the Lotus Sutra, There Are Ten Practices of Respects of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva:*** *First*, worship and respect all Buddhas. *Second*, praise the Thus Come Ones. *Third*, make abundant offerings. *Fourth*, repent misdeeds and hindrances. *Fifth*, rejoice at others' merits and virtues. *Sixth*, request the Buddha to turn the Dharma Wheel. *Seventh*, request the Buddha to remain in the world. *Eighth*, follow the teachings of the Buddha at all times. *Ninth*, accommodate and benefit all sentient beings. *Tenth*, transfer merits and virtues universally. ***Ten principles of Universally Good which Enlightening Beings have according to the Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38:*** *First*, vowing to live through all future ages. *Second*, vowing to serve and honor all Buddhas of the future. *Third*, vowing to settle all sentient beings in the practice of Universally Good Enlightening Beings. *Fourth*, vowing to accumulate all roots of goodness. *Fifth*, vowing to enter all ways of transcendence. *Sixth*, vowing to fulfill all practices of Enlightening Beings. *Seventh*, vowing to adorn all worlds. *Eighth*, vowing to be born

in all Buddha-lands. *Ninth*, vowing to carefully examine all things. *Tenth*, vowing to attain supreme enlightenment in all Buddha-lands.

***In the Surangama Sutra, the Buddha Reminded Ananda About the Ten Necessary Activities, or Practices of a Bodhisattva:*** *The first practice is the conduct of happiness:* The practice of joyful service, or giving joy. The Buddha told Ananda: “Ananda! After these good men have become sons of the Buddha, they are replete with the limitlessly many wonderful virtues of the Thus Come Ones, and they comply and accord with beings throughout the ten directions. This is called the conduct of happiness.” *The second practice is the conduct of benefitting:* The practice of beneficial service, or beneficial practice. The Buddha told Ananda: “Being well able to accommodate all living beings is called the conduct of benefitting.” *The third practice is the conduct of non-opposition:* The practice of never resenting, or non-opposition. The Buddha told Ananda: “Enlightening oneself and enlightening others without putting forth any resistance is called the conduct of non-opposition.” *The fourth practice is the conduct of endlessness:* The practice of indomitability, or without limit in helping others. The Buddha told Ananda: “To undergo birth in various forms continuously to the bounds of the future, equally throughout the three periods of time and pervading the ten directions is called the conduct of endlessness.” *The fifth practice is the conduct of freedom from deluded confusion:* The practice of nonconfusion. The Buddha told Ananda: “When everything is equally in accord, one never makes mistakes among the various dharma doors. This is called the conduct of freedom from deluded confusion.” *The sixth practice is the conduct of wholesome manifestation:* The practice of good manifestation, or appearing in any form at will to save sentient beings. The Buddha told Ananda: “Then within what is identical, myriad differences appear; the characteristics of every difference are seen, one and all, in identity. This is called the conduct of wholesome manifestation.” *The seventh practice is the conduct of non-attachment:* The practice of nonattachment, or unimpeded practice. The Buddha told Ananda: “This continues until it includes all the dust motes that fill up empty space throughout the ten directions. In each and every mote of dust there appear the worlds of the ten directions. And yet the appearance of worlds do not interfere with one another. This is called the conduct of



non-attachment.” *The eighth practice is the conduct of veneration:* The practice of exalting the paramitas amongst all beings, or the practice of that which is difficult to attain. The Buddha told Ananda: “Everything that appears before one is the foremost paramita. This is called the conduct of veneration.” *The ninth practice is the conduct of wholesome Dharma:* The practice of good teaching, or perfecting the Buddha-law by complete virtue. The Buddha told Ananda: “With such perfect fusion, one can model oneself after all the Buddhas of the ten directions. This is called the conduct of wholesome dharma.” *The tenth practice is the conduct of true actuality:* The practice of truth, or manifest in all things the pure, final and true reality. The Buddha told Ananda: “To then be pure and without outflows in each and every way is the primary truth, which is unconditioned, the essence of the nature. This is called the conduct of true actuality.”

## ***II. Bodhisattvas' Practices In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter 11, Chapter on the Bodhisattvas' Practices, the Buddha was expounding the Dharma at Amravata park which suddenly became majestic and extensive while all those present turned golden hued. Ananda asked the Buddha: “World Honoured One, what is the cause of these auspicious signs, why does this place become extensive and majestic and why does the assembly turn golden hued?” The Buddha replied: “This is because Vimalakirti and Manjusri, with their followers circumambulating them, want to come here; hence these auspicious signs.” At Vaisali, Vimalakirti said to Manjusri: “We can now go and see the Buddha, so that we and the Bodhisattvas can pay reverence and make offerings to Him.” Manjusri said: “Excellent, let us go; it is now time to start.” Vimalakirti then used his transcendental powers to carry the whole meeting with the lion thrones on the palm of his right hand and flew (in the air) to the Buddha’s place. When they landed there, Vimalakirti bowed his head at His feet, walked round Him from the right seven times, and bringing his palms together, stood at one side. The Bodhisattvas left their lion thrones to bow their heads at His feet, and also walked round Him seven times and stood at one side. The Buddha’s chief disciples with Indra, Brahma (both as protectors of the Dharma) and the four deva kings of the four heavens, also left their

lion thrones, bowed their heads at His feet, walked round Him seven times and then stood at one side. The Buddha comforted the Bodhisattvas and ordered them to take their seats to listen to His teaching. After they had sat down the Buddha asked Sariputra: "Have you seen what the great Bodhisattvas have done with their transcendental powers?" Sariputra replied that he had. The Buddha asked: "What do you think of all this?" Sariputra answered: "I saw them do inconceivable (feats), which the mind can neither think of nor anticipate." Ananda then asked the Buddha: "World Honoured One, the fragrance we are smelling was never perceived before; what is it?" The Buddha replied: "Ananda, it is the fragrance given out by the pores of these Bodhisattvas." At that, Sariputra said to Ananda: "Our pores also give the same fragrance!" Ananda asked Sariputra: "Where does it come from?" Sariputra replied: "It is this Upasaka Vimalakirti who obtained what was left over from the Buddha's meal in the Fragrant Land, and those who ate it at his abode give out this fragrance from their pores." Ananda then asked Vimalakirti: "How long does this fragrance last?" Vimalakirti replied: "It lasts until the rice has been digested." Ananda asked: "How long does this take?" Vimalakirti replied: "It will be digested after a week. Ananda, sravakas who have not reached the right position (nirvana) will attain it after taking this rice which will then be digestible, and those who have attained nirvana will realize liberation of their minds (from the subtle conception of nirvana) and then the rice will be digested. Those who have not developed the Mahayana mind will develop it and then the rice will be digested. Those who have developed it and take this rice will achieve the patient endurance of the uncreate, and the rice will then be digestible. Those who have achieved the patient endurance of the uncreate and take this rice will reincarnate once more for final development into Buddhahood and the rice will be digested. Like an effective medicine which cures an ailment before wasting away, this rice will be digestible after it has killed all troubles and afflictions (klesa)."

Ananda said to the Buddha: "World Honoured One, it is indeed a rare thing that this fragrant rice performs the Buddha work of salvation." The Buddha said: "It is so, Ananda, it is so." The Buddha told Ananda: "Ananda! There are Buddha lands where the Buddha

light performs the work of salvation; where the Bodhisattvas perform it; where illusory men created by the Buddha do it; where the Bodhi-trees do it; where the Buddha's robe and bedding do it; where the rice taken by the Buddha does it; where parks and temples do it; where (the Buddha's) thirty-two physical marks and their eighty notable characteristics do it; where the Buddha's body (rupa-kaya) does it; where empty space does it. Living beings practice discipline with success because of these causes. Also used for the same purpose are dream, illusion, shadow echo, the image in a mirror, the moon reflected in water, the flame of a fire, sound, voice, word, speech and writing. The pure and clean Buddha land, silence with neither word nor speech, neither pointing, discerning, action nor activity. Thus, Ananda, whatever the Buddhas do by either revealing or concealing their awe-inspiring majesty, is the work of salvation. Ananda, because of the four basic delusions (in reference to the ego) divided into 84,000 defilements which cause living beings to endure troubles and tribulations, the Buddhas avail themselves of these trials to perform their works of salvation. This is called entering the Buddha's Dharma door to enlightenment (Dharmaparyaya). "When entering this Dharma door, if a Bodhisattva sees all the clean Buddha lands, he should not give rise to joy, desire and pride, and if he sees all the unclean Buddha lands he should not give rise to sadness, hindrance and disappointment; he should develop a pure and clean mind to revere all Tathagatas who rarely appear and whose merits are equal in spite of their appearance in different lands (clean and unclean) to teach and convert living beings. Ananda, you can see different Buddha lands (i.e. clean and unclean) but you see no difference in space which is the same everywhere. Likewise, the physical bodies of Buddhas differ from one another but their omniscience is the same. Ananda, the (underlying) nature of the physical bodies of the Buddhas, their discipline, serenity, liberation and full knowledge of liberation, their (ten) powers, their (four) fearlessnesses, their eighteen unsurpassed characteristics, their boundless kindness and compassion, their dignified deeds, their infinite lives, their preaching of the Dharma to teach and convert living beings and to purify Buddha lands are all the same. Hence, their titles of Samyaksambuddha, Tathagata and Buddha. Ananda, if I am to give you the full meaning of these three titles, you will pass the whole aeon

without being able to hear it completely. Even if the great chiliocosm is full of living beings who are all good listeners and like you can hold in memory everything they hear about the Dharma, they will also pass the whole aeon without being able to hear my full explanation (of these three titles). For, Ananda, the Buddha's supreme enlightenment is boundless and his wisdom and power of speech are inconceivable." Ananda said: "From now on I dare no more claim to have heard much of the Dharma." The Buddha said: "Ananda, do not give way to backsliding. Why? Because I have said that you have heard much more about the Dharma than the sravakas but not than the Bodhisattvas. Ananda, a wise man should not make a limited estimate of the Bodhisattva stage (because) the depths of the oceans can be measured but the Bodhisattva's serenity, wisdom, imperturbability, power of speech and all his merits cannot be measured. Ananda, let us put aside the Bodhisattva conduct. The transcendental powers which Vimalakirti has demonstrated today cannot be achieved by all sravakas and pratyeka-buddhas using their spiritual powers for hundreds and thousands of aeons." At that time, the visiting Bodhisattvas put their palms together and said to the Buddha: "World Honoured One, when we first saw this world we thought of its inferiority but we now repent of our wrong opinion. Why? Because the expedients (upaya) employed by all Buddhas are inconceivable; their aim being to deliver living beings they appear in different Buddha lands suitable for the purpose." World Honoured One, will you please bestow upon us some little Dharma so that when we return to our own land we can always remember you."

### ***(C) Two Categories of Bodhisattvas In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. A Summary of the Origination of the Bodhisattva Ideal:***

Some 200 or 300 years after the Buddha's death, a new variation of the Buddhist ideal began to emerge. Dissatisfied with the seemingly limited goal of the arhat, this new vision emphasized the Bodhisattva as the highest aspiration for all. A Bodhisattva is a being who resolves to become a fully enlightened Buddha and who dedicates his efforts to

helping other sentient beings to attain salvation. These compassionate beings figure predominantly in the Mahayana tradition; indeed, the most distinguishing feature of Mahayana Buddhism may be its advocacy of the Bodhisattva as the vehicle to liberation. The Bodhisattva follows a long and arduous path, often described as having ten stages and spanning many lives at the end of which he attains complete Buddhahood. The Mahayana is thus able to consider a host of Bodhisattvas, at different stages along the path, as intervening in the lives of sentient beings. An advanced Bodhisattva, for example, can create “Buddha-Fields,” to which humans can aspire to be reborn by devotion and righteousness. The notion of the Bodhisattva is at times combined with the doctrine of the “Three Bodies” of the Buddha. This theory maintains that the ultimate form of Buddhahood and the true nature of things is the “Body of Dharma” itself (Dharmakaya). The Body of Dharma is revealed progressively by two other bodies: the “Enjoyment Body” (Sambhogakaya), a subtle form perceptible only to those advanced in the path, and the “Transformation Body” (Nirmanakaya), a physical form apparent to all. According to this scheme, Gautama was merely a Transformation Body, an apparition of ultimate Buddhahood. Other Bodhisattvas, who are Enjoyment Bodies, can also teach and intervene through transformation and apparition. Important Mahayana Bodhisattvas include Avalokitesvara; Manjusri, who personifies great wisdom and is often represented holding a sword, which he uses to cut through the veil of ignorance; and Maitreya, “The Kindly One,” who will be the next Buddha and who, after attaining Buddhahood, will send the next Transformation Body to teach on earth. Other great Buddhist teachers are sometimes associated with Bodhisattvas, and are even seen as their incarnations. One of these is Nagarjuna, who was an abbot at the Buddhist university of Nalanda in the second century A.D. Nagarjuna is considered the founder of the Madhyamaka, a school of Buddhist philosophy that was active in Buddhist India. Madhyamaka greatly influenced certain forms of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, such as Zen, and still flourishes today in Tibet.

In Tibetan, Bodhisattva is translated as “Heroic Being.” The heroic quality of the Bodhisattva is brought out by the Prajnaparamita: “Suppose a hero, endowed with great accomplishments, had gone out

with his mother, father, sons, and daughters. By some set of circumstances, they would get into a huge wild forest. The foolish among them would be greatly frightened. The hero would, however, fearlessly say to them 'Do not be afraid! I will speedily take you out of this great and terrible jungle, and bring you to safety.' Since he is fearless, vigorous, exceedingly tender, compassionate, courageous and resourceful, it does not occur to him to take himself alone out of the jungle, leaving his relatives behind. Against the Arhat, Mahayana Buddhism claimed that we must take the whole of the creation with us to enlightenment, that we cannot just abandon any beings, as all beings are as near to us as our relatives are. What a man should do is to make no discrimination between himself and others, and to wait until he had helped everybody into Nirvana before loosing himself into it. The Mahayanists thus claimed that the Arhat had not aimed high enough. According to the Mahayana Buddhism, the ideal man, the aim of the Buddhist effort, was not the rather self-centered, cold and narrow-minded Arhat, but the all compassionate Bodhisattva, who abandoned the world, but not the beings in it. Wisdom had been taught as the highest quality for an Arhat, and compassion as a subsidiary virtue; but to a Bodhisattva, compassion came to rank as equal with wisdom. While the wisdom of an Arhat had been fruitful in setting free in himself. What there was to be set free, it was rather sterile in ways and means of helping ordinary people. The Bodhisattva would be a man who does not only set himself free, but who is also skilful in devising means for bringing out and maturing the latent seeds of enlightenment in others. According to the Prajna-paramita-sutra, the Buddha taught: "Doers of what is hard are the Bodhisattvas, the great beings who have set out to win supreme enlightenment. They do not wish to attain their own private Nirvana. On the contrary, they have survey the highly painful world of being, but they do not tremble at birth-and-death. They have set out for the benefit of the world, for the peace and happiness of the world. They have resolved, and yet desirous to win supreme enlightenment, they do not tremble at birth and death. They have set out for the benefit of the world, for the ease of the world, out of pity for the world. They have resolved: 'We will become a shelter for the world, a refuge for all beings, the world's place of rest, the final belief of all beings, islands of the world, lights of the world, leaders of the world, the world's means of salvation.

According to the Mahayana Buddhism, the ideal of the Bodhisattva was partly due to social pressure on the Order, but to a great extent it was inherent in the practice of the 'Unlimited,' which had trained the monks not to discriminate between themselves and others. As we saw, Buddhism has at its disposal two methods by which it reduces the sense of separateness on the part of individuals. The one is the culture of the social emotions, or sentiments, such as loving-kindness (friendliness) and compassion. The other consists in acquiring the habit of regarding whatever one thinks, feels or does as an interplay of impersonal forces, called 'Dharmas,' weaning oneself slowly from such ideas as 'I' or 'mine' or 'self.' There is a logical contradiction between the method of wisdom, which sees no persons at all, but only Dharmas, and the method of the 'Unlimited' which cultivates relations to people as persons. The meditation on Dharmas dissolves other people, as well as oneself, into a conglomeration of impersonal and instantaneous dharmas. It reduces our manhood into 5 heaps, or pieces, plus a label. If there is nothing in the world except bundles of Dharmas, as cold and as impersonal as atoms, instantaneously perishing all the time, there is nothing which friendliness and compassion could work on. One cannot wish well to a Dharma which is gone by the time one has come to wish it well, nor can one pity a Dharma, say a 'mind-object,' or a 'sight-organ,' or a 'sound-consciousness.' In those Buddhist circles where the method of Dharmas was practiced to a greater extent than the 'Unlimited,' it led to a certain dryness of mind, to aloofness, and to lack of human warmth. The true task of the Buddhist is to carry on with both contradictory methods at the same time. As the method of Dharmas leads to boundless expansion of the self, because one identifies oneself with more and more living beings. As the method of wisdom explodes the idea that there are any persons at all in the world, so the method of the 'Unlimited' increases the awareness of the personal problems of more and more persons. How then does the Mahayana resolve this contradiction? The Buddhist philosophers differs from philosophers bred in the Aristotelean tradition in that they are not frightened but delighted by a contradiction. They deal with this, as with other contradictions, by merely stating it in an uncompromising form, and then they leave it at that. According to the Diamond Sutra: "Here, oh! Subhuti! A Bodhisattva should think thus 'As many beings

as there are in the universe of beings, be they being egg-born, or from a womb, or moisture-born, or miraculously born; be they with form, or without; be they with perception, without perception, or with neither perception nor no-perception, as far as any conceivable universe of beings is conceived; all these should be led by me into Nirvana, into that realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind. And yet, although innumerable beings have thus been led to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana. And why? If in a Bodhisattva the perception of a 'being' should take place, he would not be called an 'enlightenment-being' or a Bodhisattva."

In short, the Bodhisattva ideal originated from Mahayana Buddhism, but the term Bodhisattva is not confined solely to Mahayana Buddhism. In Theravada, Sakyamuni Buddha is referred to as "Bodhisatta" (Bodhisattva) in the past lives described in the Jatakas, during which he is said to have gradually perfected the good qualities of a Buddha. In the Mahayana sense, however, the Bodhisattva concept is an explicit rejection of Nikaya Buddhism's ideal religious paradigm, the Arhat. In Mahayana the Arhat is characterized as limited and selfish, concerned only with personal salvation, in contrast to the Bodhisattva, who works very hard for all sentient beings. The beginning of the bodhisattva's career is marked by the dawning of the "mind of awakening" (Bodhi-citta), which is the resolve to become a Buddha in order to benefit others. So, Bodhisattva is considered as a human being with his own karmas at his very birth as all other creatures, but he can be able to get rid of all his inner conflicts, including bad karmas and sufferings, and external crises, including environments, calamities and other dilemma, can change this unfortunate situation and can make a peaceful, prosperous and happy world for all to live in together by using his effort and determination in cultivating a realistic and practical way without depending on external powers. In Mahayana literature, this is commonly followed by a public ceremony of a vow to attain Buddhahood (Pranidhana) in order to benefit other sentient beings. That is to say: "Above to seek bodhi, below to save (transform) beings." This is one of the great vows of a Bodhisattva. After that point the bodhisattva pursues the goal of Buddhahood by progressively cultivating the six, sometimes ten, "perfections" (Paramita): generosity, ethics, patience, effort, concentration, and



wisdom. The two primary qualities in which the Bodhisattva trains are compassion and wisdom, and when the perfections are fully cultivated and compassion and wisdom developed to their highest level, the Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha.

## ***II. Two Kinds of Bodhisattvas In Buddhist Teachings:***

Great Compassion is the life calling of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Thus, those who have developed the Bodhi Mind, wishing to rescue and ferry other sentient beings across, should simply vow to be reborn in the Triple Realm, among the five turbidities and the three evil paths. If we abandon sentient beings to lead a selfish life of tranquility, we lack compassion. A preoccupation with egoistic needs contrary to the path of enlightenment. ***According to Masters Chih-I and T'ien-Ju in The Pure Land Buddhism, there are two types of Bodhisattvas: First, those who have realized the Dharma of non-appearance:*** Those who have followed the Bodhisattva path for a long time and attained the Tolerance of Non-Birth or insight into the non-origination of phenomena. These Bodhisattvas can vow to be reborn in this evil realm to rescue sentient beings without fear of being drown in the sea of Birth and Death with sentient beings. The Perfection of Wisdom Treatise states: "Take the case of the person who watches a relative drowning in the river, a person, more intelligent and resourceful, hurries off to fetch a boat and sails to rescue his relative. Thus both persons escape drowning. This is similar to the case of a Bodhisattva who has attained Tolerance of Non-Birth, has adequate skills and means to save sentient beings." ***Second, those who have not realized the Dharma of non-appearance:*** Bodhisattvas who have not attained the Tolerance of Non-Birth, as well as ordinary people who have just developed the Bodhi Mind. If these Bodhisattvas aspire to perfect that Tolerance and enter the evil life of the Triple Realm to save sentient beings, they should always remain close to the Buddhas and Good Advisors. The Perfection of Wisdom Treatise states: "It is unwise for human beings who are still bound by all kinds of afflictions, even if they possess a great compassionate Mind, to seek a premature rebirth in this evil realm to rescue sentient beings. Why is this so? It is because this evil, defiled world, afflictions are powerful and widespread. Those who lack the power of Tolerance of Non-Birth are bound to be swayed by

external circumstances. They then become slaves to form and sound, fame and fortune, with the resulting karma of greed, anger and delusion. Once this occurs, they cannot even save themselves, how can they save others?" If, for example, they are born in the human realm, in this evil environment full of non-believers and externalists, it is difficult to encounter genuine sages. Therefore, it is not easy to hear the Buddha Dharma nor achieve the goals of the sages. Of those who planted the seeds of generosity, morality and blessings in previous lives and are thus now enjoying power and fame, how many are not infatuated with a life of wealth and honor, allowing in endless greed and lust? Therefore, even when they are counselled by enlightened teachers, they do not believe them nor act accordingly. Moreover, to satisfy their passions, they take advantage of their existing power and influence, creating a great deal of bad karma. Thus, when their present life comes to an end, they descend upon the three evil paths for countless eons. After that, they are reborn as humans of low social and economic status. If they do not then meet good spiritual advisors, they will continue to be deluded, creating more bad karma and descending once again into the lower more realms. From time immemorial, sentient beings caught in the cycles of Birth and Death have been in this predicament. The Vimalakirti Sutra also states: "If you cannot even cure your own illness, how can you cure the illnesses of others?" The Perfection of Wisdom Treatise further states: "Take the case of two persons, each of whom watches a relative drowning in the river. The first person, acting on impulse, hastily jumps into the water. However, because he lacks capabilities and the necessary means, in the end, both of them drown." Thus newly aspiring Bodhisattvas are like the first individual, who still lacks the power of Tolerance of Non-Birth and cannot save sentient beings. The Perfection of Wisdom Treatise further teaches: "This is not unlike a young child he should not leave his mother, lest he fall into a well, drown in the river or die of starvation; or a young bird whose wings are not fully developed. It must bide its time, hopping from branch to branch, until it can fly afar, leisurely and unimpeded. In the same manner, ordinary people who lack the Tolerance of Non-Birth should limit themselves to Buddha Recitation, to achieve one-pointedness of Mind. Once that goal is reached, at the time of death, they will certainly be reborn in the Pure Land. Having

seen Amitabha Buddha and reached the Tolerance of Non-Birth, they can steer the boat of that Tolerance into the sea of Birth and Death, to ferry sentient beings across and accomplish countless Buddha deeds at will.”

### ***III. Two Categories of Bodhisattvas In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter 14, Chapter on Injunction to Spread This Sutra, the Buddha then said: to Maitreya: “Maitreya, I now entrust you with the Dharma of supreme enlightenment which I have collected during countless aeons. In the third (and last) period of the Buddha kalpa you should use transcendental power to proclaim widely in Jambuvipa (the earth) (profound) sutras such as this one, without allowing them to be discontinued. For in future generations there will be virtuous men and women, as well as heavenly dragons, ghosts, spirits, gandharvas, and raksasas who will take pleasure in the great Dharma and will set their minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment; if they do not hear about such sutras they will miss a great advantage. For these people are fond of and believe in these sutras, which they will readily accept by placing them on their heads and which they will widely proclaim for the profit of living beings. Maitreya, you should know that **there are two categories of Bodhisattvas**: those who prefer proud words and a racy style, and those who are not afraid (of digging out) the profound meanings which they can penetrate. Fondness of proud words and a racy style denotes the superficiality of a newly initiated Bodhisattva; but he who, after hearing about the freedom from infection and bondage as taught in profound sutras, is not afraid of their deep meanings which he strives to master, thereby developing a pure mind to receive, keep, read, recite and practise (the Dharma) as preached is a Bodhisattva who has trained for a long time. Maitreya, there are two classes of newly initiated Bodhisattvas who cannot understand very deep Dharmas: those who have not heard about profound sutras and who, giving way to fear and suspicion, cannot keep them but indulge in slandering them, saying: ‘I have never heard about them; where do they come from?’, and those who refuse to call on, respect and make offerings to the preachers of profound sutras or who find fault with the

latter; these are two classes of newly initiated Bodhisattvas who cannot control their minds when hearing the deep Dharma, thereby harming themselves. Maitreya, further, **there are two categories of Boshisattvas** who harm themselves and fail to realize the patient endurance of the uncreate in spite of their belief and understanding of the deep Dharma: they are (firstly) those who belittle newly initiated Boshisattva and do not teach and guide them; and (secondly) those who, despite their faith in the deep Dharma, still give rise to discrimination between form and formlessness.” After hearing the Buddha expound the Dharma, Maitreya said: “World Honoured One, I have not heard all this before. As you have said, I shall keep from these evils and uphold the Dharma of supreme enlightenment which the Tathagata has collected during countless aeons. In future, if there are virtuous men and women who seek for Mahayana, I shall see to it that this sutra will be placed in their hands, and shall use transcendental power to make them remember it so that they can receive, keep, read, recite and proclaim it widely. “World Honoured One, in the coming Dharma ending age, if there are those who can receive, keep, read and recite this sutra and expound it widely, they will do so under the influence of my transcendental power.” The Buddha said: “Excellent, Maitreya, excellent; as you have said, I will help you achieve this great joy.” At that, all the Bodhisattvas in the assembly brought their palms together and said to the Buddha: After your nirvana, we will also proclaim this Dharma of supreme enlightenment widely in the ten directions and will guide preachers of Dharma to obtain this sutra.” The four kings of devas said to the Buddha: “World Honoured One, in all towns and villages, in the groves and wilderness, and where there is this sutra and people reading, reciting, explaining and proclaiming it, I will lead local officials to go to their places to listen to the Dharma and to protect them so that no one dares to one within one hundred yojanas of their places to trouble them.” The Buddha then said to Ananda: “Ananda, you too should receive, keep and spread this sutra widely.” Ananda said: “Yes, World Honoured One, I have received this sutra and will keep it. What is its title?” The Buddha said: “Ananda, its title is ‘The Sutra spoken by Vimalakirti’, or ‘The Inconceivable Door to Liberation’, under which you should receive and keep it.” After the Buddha had expounded this sutra, the old upasaka Vimalakirti,

Manjusri, Sariputra, Ananda and others as well as devas, asuras and all those present were filled with joy; believed, received and kept it; paid reverence and went away.

***(D) Compassion of Bodhisattvas  
In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

***I. An Overview of Compassion In Buddhist Point of View:***

According to Buddhism, the thought of compassion is the thought that broadly spreads out for the happiness of beings. The Buddha died at 80 instead of 100. He left 20 years of his own happiness to his disciples, and also the Tripitaka for universal salvation. Here a Buddhist, with a heart filled with compassion. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of compassion, above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with compassion, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Compassion also makes the heart quiver when other are subject to suffering. It is the wish to remove the suffering of others, and it is opposed to cruelty. Karuna means sympathy, or pity (compassion) for another in distress and desire to help him or to deliver others from suffering out of pity. The compassion is selfless, non-egoistic and based on the principle of universal equality. A compassionate mind is a mind with wholesome thoughts which always wishes others to be released from their sufferings and afflictions. A compassionate mind does not only bring forth happiness and tranquility for others, but also to ourselves. The compassionate mind also helps us dispel our negative thoughts such as anger, envy and jealousy, etc. Compassion extends itself without distinction to all sentient beings. However, compassion must be accompanied by wisdom in order to have right effect. Karuna or compassion is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we do not kill or harm living beings.

***II. Compassion of Bodhisattvas In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Seventh, Contemplating on Living Beings, when Manjusri Bodhisattava called

on to enquire after Vimalakirti's health, he asked Vimalakirti about "Karuna" as follows: Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "What should be compassion (karuna) of a Bodhisattva?" Vimalakirti replied: "A Bodhisattva's compassion should include sharing with all living beings all the merits he has won." Bodhisattvas' compassion is inconceivable. Bodhisattvas are enlightenment-beings, Buddhas-to-be, however, they vow to continue stay in this world for a long period of time. Why? For the good of others, because they want to become capable of pulling others out of this great flood of sufferings and afflictions. But what personal benefit do they find in the benefit of others? To Bodhisattvas, the benefit of others is their own benefit, because they desire it that way. However, in saying so, who could believe that? It is true that some people devoid of pity and think only of themselves, find it hard to believe in the altruism of the Bodhisattvas. But compassionate people do so easily. Do we not see that certain people, confirmed in the absence of pity, find pleasure in the suffering of others, even when it is not useful to them? And we must admit that the Bodhisattvas, confirmed in pity, find pleasure in doing good to others without any egoistic preoccupation. Do we not see that certain, ignorant of the true nature of the conditioned Dharma which constitute their so-called "Self", attach themselves to these dharmas, as a result, they suffer pains and afflictions because of this attachment. While we must admit that the Bodhisattvas, detach themselves from the conditioned Dharma, no longer consider these Dharma as "I" or "Mine", growing in pitying solicitude for others, and are ready to suffer pains for this solitude?

In short, Bodhisattvas are enlightening beings who, deferring their own full Buddhahood, dedicate themselves to helping others attain liberation, and vow to forego complete enlightenment until they help all other beings attain enlightenment. In their self-mastery, wisdom, and compassion Bodhisattvas represent a high stage of Buddhahood, but they are not yet the supreme enlightened, or fully perfected Buddha. Bodhisattvas have numerous different ways that they manifest to help beings, but here, we only mention some typical ways of compassion that Bodhisattvas have practiced. If practitioners want to follow in the footsteps of Bodhisattvas, we should try to cultivate some typical methods of Bodhisattvas' ways of cultivation. It should be

reminded that the mind of compassion is an infinite pity for all, one of the four immeasurable minds (catvari-apramanani). Boundless pity, to save from suffering. Here a monk, with a heart filled with compassion. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of compassion, above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with compassion, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Compassion also makes the heart quiver when other are subject to suffering. It is the wish to remove the suffering of others, and it is opposed to cruelty. However, a Bodhisattva always has two characteristics that go simultaneously in cultivation: pity and wisdom, for these two characteristics of a bodhisattva seeking to attain perfect enlightenment and the salvation of all beings. Karuna or compassion means below is to save sentient beings. Jnana or wisdom means above is to seek Bodhi. In Mahayana Buddhism, Pity is typified by Avalokitesvara and wisdom by Mahasthamaprapta. In the esoteric sects, pity is represented by the garbhadhatu or the womb treasury, while wisdom is represented by the vajradhatu or the diamond treasury. Besides, compassion and wisdom are also two doors (of Karuna and Jnana) that help practitioners with two aims: above to seek bodhi, below to save (transform) beings. This is also one of the great vow of a Bodhisattva. First, Buddha-pity, or Bodhisattva-pity, the way of pity directed to others. Second, Wisdom gate or Buddha-wisdom, or the way of enlightenment.

***(E) Bodhisattvas' Excellent Deeds & Liberation of  
Living Beings in the Saha World  
In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

***I. A Summary of Bodhisattvas and Living Beings:***

“Enlightened Being” (Bodhisattva) is a Chinese Buddhist term that means an enlightened being (bodhi-being), or a Buddha-to-be, or a being who desires to attain enlightenment, or a being who seeks enlightenment, including Buddhas, Pratyeka-buddhas, or any disciples of the Buddhas. An enlightened being who does not enter Nirvana but chosen to remain in the world to save other sentient beings. Any person who is seeking Buddhahood, or a saint who stands right on the edge of

nirvana, but remains in this world to help others achieve enlightenment. One who vows to live his or her life for the benefit of all sentient beings, vowing to save all sentient beings from affliction and aspiring to attainment of the Buddha-hood. One whose being or essence is bodhi whose wisdom is resulting from direct perception of Truth with the compassion awakened thereby. Enlightened being who is on the path to awakening, who vows to forego complete enlightenment until he or she helps other beings attain enlightenment. A Bodhisattva is one who adheres to or bent on the ideal of enlightenment, or knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (Bodhi), especially one who is aspirant for full enlightenment (samma sambodhi). A Bodhisattva fully cultivates ten perfections (thập thiện: Parami) which are essential qualities of extremely high standard initiated by compassion, understanding and free from craving, pride and false views. There are five Bodhisattvas who have cultivated over countless lifetimes and expand in his life for the benefit of others. Therefore, a Bodhisattva is one who is enlightened, literally he is an Enlightenment-being, a Buddha-to-be, or one who wishes to become a Buddha. It would be a mistake to assume that the conception of a Bodhisattva was a creation of the Mahayana. For all Buddhists each Buddha had been, for a long period before his enlightenment, a Bodhisattva. But why does a Bodhisattva have such a vow? Why does he want to undertake such infinite labor? For the good of others, because they want to become capable of pulling others out of this great flood of sufferings and afflictions. But what personal benefit does he find in the benefit of others? To a Bodhisattva, the benefit of others is his own benefit, because he desires it that way. Who could believe that? It is true that people devoid of pity and who think only of themselves, find it hard to believe in the altruism of the Bodhisattva. But compassionate people do so easily.

The term “Living Beings” refer to all creatures that possess life-force. Each individual living being comes into being as the result of a variety of different causes and conditions. The smallest living beings as ants, mosquitoes, or even the most tiniest parasites are living beings. Every being is a combination of five elements: rupa, vedana, sanna, sankhara, and vinnana. Hence, one being is not essentially different from another, an ordinary man is not different from a perfect saint. But



is the nature and proportion of each of the five constituents existing in an individual be taken into account, then one being is different from another, an ordinary man is different from a perfect saint. The combination of elements is the outcome of Karma and is happening every moment, implying that the disintegration of elements always precedes it. The elements in a combined state pass as an individual, and from time immemorial he works under misconception of a self and of things relating to a self. His vision being distorted or obscured by ignorance of the truth he can not perceive the momentary combination and disintegration of elements. On the other hand, he is subject to an inclination for them. A perfect man with his vision cleared by the Buddhist practices and culture realizes the real state of empirical things that an individual consists of the five elements and does not possess a permanent and unchanging entity called soul. In the "Song of Meditation," Hakuin Zenji says, "All sentient beings are intrinsically Buddhas." We are all right to begin with. So when called, just answer. If you cannot answer, that, too, is okay. Regardless of whether you answer or not, you are this fundamentally, originally enlightened ground. We practice on this ground of original enlightenment because that is our life. We do not need to look for anything else because everything is already right here. This life itself, your life itself, is the valley that has no echo. When you look for something else, you are putting another head on top of your own. How do we appreciate the life that we have? Unfortunately, we often experience this life as if it were a roller coaster, spinning around in the six realms. Sometimes you feel marvelous. The next day, you hit bottom. You go from heaven to hell and all kinds of spheres in between from day to day, maybe even in one day. What are you doing with this life? You wonder, "Am I really the same as the Buddhas?" Many of you respond, "Hardly." So what will you do? This is a very common dilemma. That is why if we just rely on one perspective, such as "We are all okay, be just as you are." we fall into a trap. It sounds good, but unfortunately, not all of us can live like that. Something is not quite right. We, Zen practitioners, must examine who we are and truly see what this life is, what is the very nature of existence. This is a very natural inquiry.

The two words of "Cause and Effect", not only living beings who cannot escape them (cause and effect); even the Buddhas (before

becoming enlightened) and Bodhisattvas cannot avoid them either. However, because Bodhisattvas have far-ranging vision, they avoid creating bad causes and only receive joyful rewards. Living beings, on the other hand, are very short-sighted. Seeing only what is in front of them, they often plant evil causes, and so they must often suffer the bitter retribution. Because the Bodhisattvas are afraid of bad consequences in the future, not only they avoid planting evil-causes or evil karma in the present, but they also diligently cultivate to gradually diminish their karmic obstructions; at the same time to accumulate their virtues and merits, and ultimately to attain Buddhahood. However, sentient beings complete constantly to gather evil-causes; therefore, they must suffer evil effect. When ending the effect of their actions, they are not remorseful or willing to repent. Not only do they blame Heaven and other people, but they continue to create more evil karma in opposition and retaliation. Therefore, enemies and vengeance will continue to exist forever in this vicious cycle.

## ***II. Bodhisattvas Break the False and Make Manifest the Right:***

Buddhas and Bodhisattvas save all sentient beings by “Breaking (disproving) the false and making manifest the right.” According to the Madhyamika School, the doctrine of the school has three main aspects, the first aspect is the “refutation itself of a wrong view, at the same time, the elucidation of a right view.” Refutation is necessary to save all sentient beings who are drowned in the sea of attachment while elucidation is also important in order to propagate the teaching of the Buddha. ***First, refutation of all wrong views:*** Refutation means to refute all views based on attachment. Also views such as the ‘self’ or atman, the theory of Brahmanic philosophers. The pluralistic doctrines of the Buddhist Abhidharma schools (Vaibhasika, Kosa, etc) and the dogmatic principles of Mahayana teachers are never passed without a detailed refutation. The Realistic or all exists, and the Nihilistic or nothing exists are equally condemned. ***Second, elucidation of a right view:*** According to Prof. Takakusu in *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, the Madhyamika School strongly believed that the truth can be attained only by negation or refutation of wrong views within and without Buddhism, and of errors of both the Great and Small

Vehicles. When retaining wrong views or error, one will be blind to reason. How can a blind man get a right view without which the two extremes can never be avoided? The end of verbal refutation is the dawn of the Middle Path. Refutation and refutation only, can lead to the ultimate truth. The Middle Path, which is devoid of name and character is really the way of elucidation of a right view.

### ***III. Bodhisattvas' Teaching & Saving of Sentient Beings:***

Salvation may be understood as the deliverance of someone from destruction, sufferings, afflictions, and so on, and to bring that person to the state of being safe from destructive forces, natural or supernatural. To other religions, salvation means deliverance from sin and death, and admission to a so-called “Eternal Paradise”. These are religions of deliverance because they give promise of some form of deliverance. They believe that a person’s will is important, but grace is more necessary and important to salvation. Those who wish to be saved must believe that they see a supernatural salvation of an almighty creator in their lives. In Buddhism, the concept of salvation is strange to all sincere Buddhists. One time, the Buddha told His disciples: “The only reason I have come into the world is to teach others. However, one very important thing is that you should never accept what I say as true simply because I have said it. Rather, you should test the teachings yourselves to see if they are true or not. If you find that they are true and helpful, then practice them. But do not do so merely out of respect for me. You are your own savior and no one else can do that for you.” One other time, the Buddha gently patted the crazy elephant and turned to tell Ananda: “The only way to destroy hatred is with love. Hatred cannot be defeated with more hatred. This is a very important lesson to learn.” Before Nirvana, the Buddha himself advised his disciples: “When I am gone, let my teachings be your guide. If you have understood them in your heart, you have no more need of me. Remember what I have taught you. Craving and desire are the cause of all sufferings and afflictions. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead devote yourselves to clearing your minds and finding true and lasting happiness.” These are the Buddha’s golden speeches on some of the concepts of salvation.

In salvation, Mahayana Buddhism has temporary manifestation for saving, converting and transporting beings. It is difficult for ordinary people like us to understand the teaching with infinite compassion of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Sometimes, they use their speech to preach the dharma, but a lot of times they use their way of life such as retreating in peace, strictly following the precepts to show and inspire others to cultivate the way. “Temporary manifestation for saving beings” means temporarily appear to save sentient beings. The power of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to transform themselves into any kind of temporal body in order to aid beings. Salvation includes converting and Transporting (to teach and save, to rescue and teach). To transform other beings. The region, condition, or environment of Buddha instruction or conversion. Salvation also means any land which a Buddha is converting, or one in which the transformed body of a Buddha. These lands are of two kinds: pure like Tusita heaven and vile or unclean like this world. T’ien-T’ai defines the transformation realm of Amitabha as the Pure Land of the West. Other schools speak of the transformation realm as the realm on which depends the nirmanakaya. According to Tao-Ch’o (562-645), one of the foremost devotees of the Pure Land school, in his Book of Peace and Happiness, one of the principal sources of the Pure Land doctrine. All the Buddhas save sentient beings in four ways. First, by oral teachings such recorded in the twelve divisions of Buddhist literature. Second, by their physical features of supernatural beauty. Third, by their wonderful powers and virtues and transformations. Fourth, by recitating of their names, which when uttered by beings, will remove obstacles and result their rebirth in the presence of the Buddha.

***IV. Bodhisattvas’ Excellent Deeds & Liberation of Living Beings  
in the Saha World In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva called to enquire after Vimalakirti’s health, Vimalakirti told Manjusri about “saving sentient beings”. Manjusri asked: “What should a Bodhisattva wipe out in order to liberate living beings?” Vimalakirti replied: “When liberating living beings, a Bodhisattva should first wipe out their klesa (troubles and causes of troubles)?” Manjusri asked: “What should he do to wipe out klesa?” Vimalakirti replied: “He

should uphold right mindfulness.” Manjusri asked: “What should he do to uphold right mindfulness?” Vimalakirti replied: “He should advocate the unborn and the undying.” “Manjusri asked: “What is the unborn and what is the undying?” Vimalakirti replied: “The unborn is evil that does not arise and the undying is good that does not end.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of good and evil?” Vimalakirti replied: “The body is the root of good and evil.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of the body?” Vimalakirti replied: “Craving is the root of the body.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of craving?” Vimalakirti replied: “Baseless discrimination is the root of craving.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of baseless discrimination?” Vimalakirti replied: “Inverted thinking is the root of discrimination.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of inverted thinking?” Vimalakirti replied: “Non-abiding is the root of inverted thinking.” Manjusri asked: “What is the root of non-abiding?” Vimalakirti replied: “Non-abiding is rootless. Manjusri, from this non-abiding root all things arise.” Also according to the Vimalakirti, Chapter Tenth, Vimalakirti said: “As you have said, the Bodhisattvas of this world have strong compassion and their lifelong works of salvation for all living beings surpass those done in other pure lands during hundreds and thousands of aeons. Why? Because they achieved ten excellent deeds which are not required in other pure lands: *First*, charity (dana) to succour the poor. *Second*, precept-keeping (sila) to help those who have broken the commandments. *Third*, patient endurance (ksanti) to subdue their anger. *Fourth*, zeal and devotion (virya) to cure their remissness. *Fifth*, serenity (dhyana) to stop their confused thoughts. *Sixth*, wisdom (prajna) to wipe out ignorance. *Seventh*, putting an end to the eight distressful conditions for those suffering from them. *Eighth*, teaching Mahayana to those who cling to Hinayana. *Ninth*, cultivation of good roots for those in want of merits. *Tenth*, the four Bodhisattva winning devices for the purpose of leading all living beings to their goals (in Bodhisattva development).”

***(F) Bodhisattvas Enter the Buddha Path  
In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

To understand and attain the cores of Buddhist teachings thoroughly. In Buddhism, Bodhisattvas who understand and attain the

cores of Buddhist teachings thoroughly have the ability to transform all beings by developing their Buddha-nature and causing them to obtain enlightenment. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Eight, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “How does a Bodhisattva enter the Buddha path?” Vimalakirti replied: “If a Bodhisattva treads the wrong ways (without discrimination), he enters the Buddha path.” Manjusri asked: “What do you mean by a Bodhisattva treading the wrong ways?” Vimalakirti replied: “(In his work of salvation) if a Bodhisattva is free from irritation and anger while appearing in the fivefold uninterrupted hell; is free from the stain of sins while appearing in (other) hells; is free from ignorance, arrogance and pride while appearing in the world of animals; is adorned with full merits while appearing in the world of hungry ghosts; does not show his superiority while appearing in the (heavenly) worlds of form and beyond form; is immune from defilements while appearing in the world of desire; is free from anger while appearing as if he were resentful; uses wisdom to control his mind while appearing to be stupid; appears as if he were greedy but gives away all his outer (i.e. money and worldly) and inner (i.e. bodily) possessions without the least regret for his own life; appears as if he broke the prohibitions while delighting in pure living and being apprehensive of committing even a minor fault; appears as if he were filled with hatred while always abiding in compassionate patience; appears as if he were remiss while diligently practicing all meritorious virtues; appears as if he were disturbed while always remaining in the state of serenity; appears as if he were ignorant while possessing both mundane and supramundane wisdoms; appears as if he delighted in flattering and falsehood while he excels in expedient methods in conformity with straightforwardness as taught in the sutras; shows arrogance and pride while he is as humble as a bridge; appears as if he were tormented by troubles while his mind remains pure and clean; appears in the realm of demons while defeating heterodox doctrines to conform with the Buddha wisdom; appears in the realm of sravakas where he expounds the unheard of supreme Dharma; appears in the realm of pratyeka-buddhas where he converts living beings in fulfillment of great compassion; appears amongst the poor but extends to them his precious hand whose merits are inexhaustible; appears amongst the crippled and disabled with his own body adorned with the

excellent physical marks (of the Buddha); appears amongst the lower classes but grows the seed of the Buddha nature with all relevant merits; appears amongst the emaciated and ugly showing his strong body to the admiration of them all; appears as an old and ill man but is actually free from all ailments with no fear of death; appears as having all the necessities of life but always sees into impermanence and is free from greed; appears to have wives, concubines and maids but always keeps away from the morass of the five desires; appears amongst the dull-witted and stammerers to help them win the power of speech derived from the perfect control of mind; appears amongst heretics to teach orthodoxy and deliver all living beings; enters all worlds of existence to help them uproot the causes leading thereto; and appears as if entering nirvana but without cutting off birth and death; Manjusri, this Bodhisattva can tread heterodox ways because he has access to the Buddha path.”

Vimalakirti then asked Manjusri: “What are the seeds of the Tathagata?” Manjusri replied: “Body is seed of the Tathagata, ignorance and craving are its (two) seeds; desire, hate and stupidity its (three) seeds; the four inverted views its (four) seeds; the five covers (or screens) its (five) seeds; the six organs of sense its (six) seeds; the seven abodes of consciousness its (seven) seeds; the eight heterodox views its (eight) seeds; the nine causes of klesa (troubles and their causes) its (nine) seeds; the ten evils its (ten) seeds. To sum up, all the sixty-two heterodox views and all sorts of klesa are the seeds of Buddhahood. Vimalakirti asked Manjusri: “Why is it so?” Manjusri replied: “Because he who perceives the inactive (wu wei) state and enters its right (nirvanic) position, is incapable of advancing further to achieve supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi). For instance, high ground does not produce the lotus, which grows only in marshy land. Likewise, those perceiving nirvana and entering its right position, will not develop into Buddhahood, whereas living beings in the mire of klesa can eventually develop the Buddha Dharma. This is also like seeds scattered in the void, which do not grow, but if they are planted in manured fields they will yield good harvests. Thus, those entering the right position (of nirvana) do not develop the Buddha Dharma, whereas those whose view of the ego is as great as (Mount) Sumeru may (because of the misery of life) eventually set their minds

on the quest of supreme enlightenment, thereby developing the Buddha Dharma. “Therefore, we should know that all sorts of klesa are the seeds of the Tathagata. This is like one who does not plunge into the ocean will never find the priceless pearl. Likewise, a man who does not enter the ocean of klesa will never win the gem of all-knowledge (sarvajna).”

At that time, Mahakasyapa exclaimed: “Excellent, Manjusri, excellent, your sayings are most gratifying. As you have said, those suffering from klesa are the seeds of the Tathagata. So we are no longer capable of developing a mind set on enlightenment. Even those committing the five deadly sins can eventually set their minds on the quest of the Buddha Dharma but we are unable to do so, like persons whose defective organs prevent them from enjoying the five objects of the senses. Likewise, the sravakas who have cut off all bonds (of transmigration) are no longer interested in the Buddha Dharma and will never want to realize it. Therefore, Manjusri, the worldly man still reacts (favourably) to the Buddha Dharma whereas the sravaka does not. Why? Because when the worldly man hears about the Buddha Dharma, he can set his mind on the quest of the supreme path, thereby preserving for ever the Three Treasures (of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), whereas the sravaka, even if he passes his lifetime listening to the Dharma and witnessing the fearlessness of the Buddha, etc., will never dream of the supreme way.”

A Bodhisattva called Universal Manifestation, who was present asked Vimalakirti: “Who are your parents, wife and children, relatives and kinsmen, official and private friends, and where are your pages and maids, elephants and horse carts?” In reply Vimalakirti chanted the following: “Wisdom-perfection is a Bodhisattva’s Mother, his father is expedient method, For the teachers of all living beings come, Only from these two (upaya and prajna). His wife is joy in Dharma’s law; Kindness and pity are his daughters; His sons morality and truthfulness; Absolute voidness his quiet abode. Passions are his disciples Whom he transforms at will. Bodhipaksita dharma are his friends. Helping him to win supreme enlightenment. All other perfections are his companions. The four winning methods are his courtesans, hymns, chants and intonations of Dharma are his melodies. Complete control over passions is his domain, passionlessness is his grove. The (seven) grades



of bodhi are the flowers bearing the fruit of wisdom's liberation. The pool of eightfold liberation holds calm water, which is clear and full. The seven blossoms of purity are well arranged to bathe this undefiled (Bohdisattva) man. Whose five supernatural powers are walking elephants and horses while the Mahayana is his vehicle, which controlled by the one mind, rolls through the eight noble paths. (Thirty-two) distinctive marks dignify his body; while (eighty) excellences add to it their grace. Shamefulness is his raiment, and deep mind his coiffure. The seven riches that he owns are his assets which, used to teach others, earn more dividends. Dedicating all merits (to Buddhahood), his practice of the Dharma has received wins far greater profit. The four dhyanas are his meditation bed, which from pure living originates. Much learning increases wisdom announcing self-awakening. His broth is the flavour of release. The precepts are his perfumed. Salve and pure mind is his bath. By killing the culprit klesa is his boldness unsurpassed. By defeating the four demons, he plants his triumphant banner as a bodhimandala. Though he knows there is neither birth nor death, he is reborn to show himself to all, appearing in many countries. Like the sun seen by everyone. When making offerings to countless Buddhas in the ten directions, he does not discriminate between himself and them.

Although He knows that Buddha lands are void like living beings. He goes on practicing the Pure Land (Dharma) to teach and convert men. In their kinds, features, voices and bearing, this fearless Bodhisattva can appear the same as they. He, knows the mischief demons, do but appears as one of them. Using wise expedient means to look like them at will. Or he appears old, ill and dying to make living beings realize that all things are but illusion, to free them from all handicaps. Or he shows the aeon's end with fire destroying heaven and earth, so that those clinging to permanence realize the impermanence of things. Then countless living beings call on this Bodhisattva, inviting Him to their homes to convert them to the Buddha path. In heterodox books, spells, skills, magic, arts and talents, he appears to be an expert to help and benefit (all) living beings. Appearing in their midst, he joins the Sangha in order to release them from defilement, to prevent their slipping into heresy. Then, is he seen as the sun, moon or heaven as Brahma or the lord of (all) the world. At times, as earth or water or as

the wind and fire. When they fall ill or epidemics rage, he prepares medicinal herbs for them to take to cure their illness or infection. When famine prevails, he makes food and drink to save them from thirst and hunger, before teaching them the Dharma. In times of war, he teaches kindness mercy to convert living beings, so that they can live in peace. When armies line up for battle, he gives equal strength to both. With his authority and power, he forces them to be reconciled and live in harmony. To all countries where there are hells, he comes unexpectedly to relieve their sufferings. Wherever animals devour one another, he appears among them urging them to do good. Seeming to have the five desires, he is always meditating to upset the demons and prevent their mischief. Like that thing most rare, a lotus blossoming in a scorching fire, he meditates amidst desires, which also is a thing most rare. Or, he appears as a prostitute to entice those, who to lust is a given. First, using temptation to hook them, he then leads them to the Buddha wisdom. He appears as a district magistrate, or as a chief of the caste of traders, a state preceptor or high official to protect living beings. To the poor and destitute, he appears with boundless purse to advise and guide them until they develop the bodhi mind. To the proud and arrogant, he appears as powerful to overcome their vanity until they tread the path supreme. Then he comes to comfort people who are cowards, first he makes them fearless, then urges them to seek the truth. Or he appears without desires and acts, like a seer with five spiritual powers to convert living beings by teaching them morality, patience and mercy. To those needing support and help, he may appear as a servant to please and induce them to grow the Tao mind. Providing them with all they need to enter on the Buddha path; thus using expedient methods to supply them with all their needs. Then as with boundless truth, his deeds are also endless; with his wisdom that has no limit, he frees countless living beings. If all the Buddhas were to spend countless aeons in praising his merits, they could never count them fully. Who, after hearing this Dharma, develops not the bodhi mind, can only be a worthless man without wisdom.”

***(G) Lands of Purity of Bodhisattvas  
In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

***I. A Summary of the Pure Land In Buddhist Teachings:***

In Buddhism, the Pure Land is described as a place in which there is no suffering, no gender, and in which conditions are optimal for attainment of Buddhahood. The central doctrine of the Pure Land sects is that all who evoke the name of Amitabha with sincerity and faith in the saving grace of his vow will be reborn in his Pure Land of peace and bliss. Thus, the most important practice of contemplation in the Pure Land sects is the constant voicing of the words “Namo Amitabha Buddha” or “I surrender myself to Amitabha Buddha.” Practices which are required for the attainment of birth in the Pure Land. Vasubandhu presented the five mindful practices and Shan Tao systematized the Five Right Acts. Two ways of attaining liberation in the Pure Land Sect: 1) By discipline to attain to temporary nirvana; 2) Happy salvation to Amitabha’s paradise through trust in him. Pure Land School is a Buddhist tradition popular in East Asia, whose adherents strive for rebirth in Sukhavati, the “buddha-realm” (buddha-ksetra) of Amitabha Buddha. This is regarded by its adherents as an “easy practice,” because it does not require the difficult meditations that are considered necessary for the attainment of buddhahood in Indian Mahayana Buddhism. Instead, practitioners rely on the “other-power” of Amitabha. This is based on Amitabha’s eighteenth vow as reported in the Sukhavati-Vyuha-Sutra, in which he promised who have faith in him will be reborn in his pure pure land and attain Buddhahood easily. Adherents of this school commonly demonstrate this faith by chanting the nien-fo (Nembutsu (jap) or “Praise to Amitabha Buddha.” The school traces itself back to Hui-Yuan (344- 416), the first Chinese patriarch of the tradition, which claims Nagarjuna as its first Indian patriarch. Nowadays, many Buddhist followers in China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam are practitioners of the Pure Land sect because they don’t have to be ordained in order to be reborn in the Pure Land. They believe that even lay people can also be reborn there.

## ***II. Lands of Purity of Bodhisattvas In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, after chanting the gatha, Ratna-rasi said to the Buddha: “World Honoured One, these five hundred sons of elders have set their minds on seeking supreme enlightenments (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi); they all wish to know how to win the pure and clean land of the Buddha. Will the World Honoured One teach us the Bodhisattva deeds that leads to the realization of the Pure Land?” The Buddha said: “Excellent, Ratna-rasi, it is good that you can ask on behalf of these Bodhisattvas about deeds that lead to the realization of the Buddha’s Pure Land. Listen carefully and ponder over all what I now tell you.” At that time, Ratna-rasi and the five hundred sons of elders listened attentively to His instruction. The Buddha said: “Ratna-rasi, all species of living beings are the Buddha land sought by all Bodhisattvas. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva wins the Buddha land, according to the living beings converted by him (to the Dharma); according to the living beings tamed by him; according to the country (where they will be reborn to) realize the Buddha-wisdom and in which they will grow the Bodhisattva root. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva wins the pure land solely for the benefit of all living beings. For instance, a man can build palaces and houses on vacant ground without difficulty, but he will fail if he attempts to build them in (empty) space. So, a Bodhisattva, in order to bring living beings to perfection seeks the Buddha land which cannot be sought in (empty) space. “Ratna-rasi, you should know that: a) The straightforward mind is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he realizes Buddhahood, beings who do not flatter will be reborn in his land. b) The profound mind is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he realizes Buddhahood, living beings who have accumulated all merits will be reborn there. c) The Mahayana (Bodhi) mind is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood all living beings seeking Mahayana will be reborn there. d) Charity (dana) is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who can give away (to charity) will be reborn there. e) Discipline (sila) is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he realizes Buddhahood, living beings who have kept the ten prohibitions will be reborn there. f) Patience (ksanti) is the Bodhisattva’s pure land, for when he attains

Buddhahood, living beings endowed with the thirty-two excellent physical marks will be reborn there. g) Devotion (vīrya) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who are diligent in their performance of meritorious deeds will be reborn there. h) Serenity (dhyāna) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings whose minds are disciplined and unstirred will be reborn there. i) Wisdom (prajñā) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have realized samādhi will be reborn there. j) The four boundless minds (catvāri apramāṇāni) are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have practiced and perfected the four infinities: kindness, compassion, joy and indifference, will be reborn there. k) The four persuasive actions (catuḥ-saṃgraha-vastu) are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have benefited from his helpful persuasion will be reborn there. l) The expedient methods (upāya) of teaching the absolute truth are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings conversant with upāya will be reborn there. m) The thirty-seven contributory states to enlightenment (bodhipākṣika-dharma) are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, living beings who have successfully practised the four states of mindfulness (smṛtyu-paśṭhāna), the four proper lines of exertion (samyakpra-hāna), the four steps towards supramundane powers (rddhipada), the five spiritual faculties (pañca indriyāni), the five transcendental powers (pañca balāni), the seven degrees of enlightenment (sapta bodhyānga) and the eightfold noble path (āṣṭa-mārga) will be reborn in his land. n) Dedication (of one's merits to the salvation of others) is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, his land will be adorned with all kinds of meritorious virtues. o) Preaching the ending of the eight sad conditions is the Buddhahood his land will be free from these evil states. p) To keep the precepts while refraining from criticizing those who do not is the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, his country will be free from people who break the commandments. q) The ten good deeds are the Bodhisattva's pure land, for when he attains Buddhahood, he will not die young, he will be wealthy, he will live purely, his words are true, his speech is gentle, his encourage will not

desert him because of his gift of conciliation, his talk is profitable to others and living beings free from envy and anger and holding right views will be reborn in his land. So, Ratna-rasi, because of his straightforward mind, a Bodhisattva can act straightforwardly; because of his straightforward deeds, he realizes the profound mind; because of his profound mind his thoughts are kept under control; because of his controlled thoughts, his acts accord with the Dharma (he has heard); because of his deeds in accord with the Dharma, he can dedicate his merits to the benefit of others; because of this dedication, he can make use of expedient methods (upaya); because of his expedient methods, he can bring living beings to perfection; because he can bring them to perfection, his Buddha land is pure; because of his pure Buddha land, his preaching of the Dharma is pure; because of his pure preaching, his wisdom is pure; because of his pure wisdom, his mind is pure, and because of his pure mind, all his merits are pure. Therefore, Ratna-rasi, if a Bodhisattva wants to win the pure land, he should purify his mind and because of his pure mind, the Buddha land is pure.”

As Sariputra was fascinated by the Buddha’s awe-inspiring majesty, he thought: “If the Buddha land is pure, because of the Bodhisattva’s pure mind, is it because the mind of the World Honoured One was not pure when He was still in the Bodhisattva stage, that this Buddha land (i.e. this world) is so unclean (as we see it now)?” The Buddha knew of his thought and said to Sariputra: “Are the sun and the moon not clean when a blind man does not see their cleanliness?” Sariputra said: “World Honoured One, this is the fault of the blind man and not that of the sun and the moon.” The Buddha said: “Sariputra, because of their (spiritual) blindness, living beings do not see the imposing majesty of the Tathagata’s pure land; this is not the fault of the Tathagata. Sariputra, this land of mine is pure but you do not see its purity.” Thereupon, Brahma with a tuft of hair on his head (resembling a conch) said to Sariputra: “Don’t think this Buddha land is impure. Why? Because I see that the land of Sakyamuni Buddha is pure and clean, like a heavenly palace.” Sariputra said: “I see that this world is full of hills, mountains, pits, thorns, stones and earth, which are all unclean.” Brahma said: “Because your mind is up and down and disagrees with the Buddha-wisdom, you see that this land is unclean. Sariputra, because a Bodhisattva is impartial towards all living beings

and his profound mind is pure and clean in accord with the Buddha Dharma, he can see that this Buddha land is (also) pure and clean.” At that time, the Buddha pressed the toes of His (right ) foot on the ground and the world was suddenly adorned with hundreds and thousands of rare and precious gems of the great chiliocosm, like the precious Majestic Buddha’s pure land adorned with countless precious merits, which the assembly praised as never seen before; in addition each person present found himself seated on a precious lotus throne. The Buddha said to Sariputra: “Look at the majestic purity of this Buddha land of mine.” Sariputra said: “World Honoured One, I have never seen and heard of this Buddha land in its majestic purity.” The Buddha said: “This Buddha land of mine is always pure, but appears filthy so that I can lead people of inferior spirituality to their salvation. This is like the food of devas which takes various colours according to the merits of each individual eater. So, Sariputra, the man whose mind is pure sees this world in its majestic purity.” When this Buddha land (i.e. the world) appeared in its majestic purity, the five hundred sons of elders, who came with Ratna-rasi, realized the patient endurance of the uncreate (anupattika-dharma-ksanti), and eighty-four thousand people developed their minds set on Supreme Enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi). The Buddha then stopped pressing His toes on the ground and the world returned to its previous (filthy) condition. Thirty-two thousand devas and men aspiring to the sravaka stage understood the impermanence of all phenomena, kept from earthly impurities and achieved the Dharma-eye (which sees the truth of the four noble truths); eight thousand bhiksus kept from phenomena and succeeded in putting an end to the stream of transmigration (thus realizing arhatship).





## *Chapter Forty-Seven*

### *The Quintessence of Enlightenment In the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. A Summary of Meanings of Enlightenment In Buddhist Teachings:*

The term Enlightenment is from the Sanskrit word of “Bodhi” from the root “Bodha” which means knowing, understanding, and illumination. Buddhiboddhavya also means knowing and knowable. To enlighten means to awaken in regard to the real in contrast to the seeming, as to awake from a deep sleep. To enlighten also means to realize, to perceive, or to apprehend illusions which are harmful to good deeds, or the intuitive awareness or cognition of the Dharma-Nature, the realization of ultimate reality. According to Buddhism, enlightenment is the great avenue that leads practitioners to Nirvana. The concept of “Bodhi” in Sanskrit has no equivalent in Vietnamese nor in English, only the word “Lóe sáng,” “Bừng sáng,” “Enlightenment is the most appropriate term for the term Bodhi in Sanskrit. A person awakens the true nature of the all things means he awakens to a oneness of emptiness. The emptiness experienced here is no nihilistic emptiness; rather it is something unperceivable, unthinkable, unfeeling for it is endless and beyond existence and nonexistence. Emptiness is no object that could be experienced by a subject, a subject itself must dissolve in it (the emptiness) to attain a true enlightenment. In real Buddhism, without this experience, there would be no Buddhism. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail. In Zen, the term “enlightenment” is used for direct apprehension of truth. It literally means “seeing nature,” and is said to be awareness of one’s true nature in an insight that transcends words and conceptual thought. It is equated with “Satori” in

some Zen contexts, but in others “kensho” is described as an initial awakening that must be developed through further training, while “satori” is associated with the awakening of Buddhas and the patriarchs of Zen. Enlightenment also means to see the nature, or awakening, or seeing into your True-nature and at the same time seeing into the ultimate nature of the universe and all things (This is another way of speaking of the experience of enlightenment or self-realization. Awakening to one’s true nature and hence of the nature of all existence). It is the sudden realization that “I have been complete and perfect from the very beginning. How wonderful, how miraculous!” If it is true awakening, its substance will always be the same for whoever experiences it, whether he be the Sakyamuni Buddha, the Amitabha Buddha, or any one of you. But this does not mean that we can all experience awakening to the same degree, for in the clarity, the depth, and the completeness of the experience there are great differences.

Enlightenment in Buddhism means we must strive to cultivate until we begin to get a glimmer that the problem in life is not outside ourselves, then we have really stepped on the path of cultivation. Only when that awakening starts, we can really see that life can be more open and joyful than we had ever thought possible. In Zen, enlightenment is not something we can achieve, but it is the absence of something. All our life, we have been running east and west to look for something, pursuing some goal. True enlightenment is dropping all that. However, it is easy to say and difficult to do. The practice has to be done by each individual, and no-one can do it for us, no exception! Even though we read thousands of sutras in thousands of years, it will not do anything for us. We all have to practice, and we have to practice with all our efforts for the rest of our life. The term ‘Enlightenment’ is very important in the Zen sects because the ultimate goal of Zen discipline is to attain what is known as ‘enlightenment.’ Enlightenment is the state of consciousness in which Noble Wisdom realizes its own inner nature. And this self-realization constitutes the truth of Zen, which is emancipation (moksha) and freedom (vasavartin). Enlightenment is the whole of Zen. Zen starts with it and ends with it. When there is no enlightenment, there is no Zen. Enlightenment is the measure of Zen, as is announced by a master. Enlightenment is not a state of mere quietude, it is not tranquilization, it is an inner experience

which has no trace of knowledge of discrimination; there must be a certain awakening from the relative field of consciousness, a certain turning-away from the ordinary form of experience which characterizes our everyday life. In other words, true enlightenment means the nature of one's own self-being is fully realized. The technical Mahayana term for it is 'Paravritti,' turning back, or turning over at the basis of consciousness. By this entirety of one's mental construction goes through a complete change. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail.

Going back to the time of the Buddha, Prince Siddhartha, beneath the Bodhi Tree, attained Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. What did he attain? Very simple, He attained the Truth, the Eternal Truth. The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path are what the Buddha found. Devout Buddhists who want to attain the same peace and happiness, have no other route but cultivating in accordance with these Truths. That is to say, we must learn about these Truths and walk the Path the Buddha showed. As the Buddha told his disciples: "All I did can be done by every one of you; you can find Nirvana and attain joy and happiness any time you give up the false self and destroy the ignorance in your minds."

According to the Samanaphalasuttanta, the Buddha taught the followings on the experience of enlightenment: "With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm, and imperturbable, he directs and bends down to the knowledge of the destruction of the defilements. He knows as it really is: 'this is pain', 'this is the origin of pain', this is the cessation of pain', and 'this is the Way that leads to the cessation of pain'. He also knows as it really is: 'this is affliction', 'this is the origin of affliction', this is the cessation of affliction', and 'this is the Way that leads to the cessation of affliction'. To him, thus knowing, thus seeing, the heart is set free from the defilement of lusts, of existence, of ignorance... In him, thus set free, there arises the knowledge of his emancipation, and

he knows: 'Rebirth has been destroyed. The higher life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After this present life there will be no more life beyond!'

Enlightenment is the perfect normal state of mind even the final aim of Zen is the experience of enlightenment, called "Satori." Satori is not an abnormal state of mind; it is not a trance in which reality disappears. It is not a narcissistic state of mind, as it can be seen in some religious manifestations. If anything, it is a perfect normal state of mind. As Joshu declared, "Zen is your everyday thought," it all depends on the adjustment of the hinge, whether the door opens in or opens out. Satori has a peculiar effect on the person who experiences it. All your mental activities will now be working in a different key, which will be more satisfying, more peaceful, fuller of joy than anything you ever experienced before. The tone of life will be altered. There is something rejuvenating in the possession of Zen. The spring flowers will look prettier, and the mountain stream runs cooler and more transparent. Enlightenment is the full awakening to reality. It is very important to understand that the state of enlightenment is not a state of dissociation or of a trance in which one believes oneself to be awakened, when one is actually deeply asleep. The Western psychologist, of course, will be prone to believe that "satori" is just a subjective state, an auto-induced sort of trance. A satori is the acquisition of a new viewpoint. The full awakening to reality means to have attained fully "productive orientation." That means not to relate oneself to the world receptively, exploitatively, hoardingly, or in a marketing fashion, but creatively and actively. In the state of full productiveness, there are no veils which separate me from "not me." The object is not an object anymore; it does not stand against me, but is with me. The rose I see is not an object for my thought, in the manner that when I say "I see a rose" I only state that the object, a rose, falls under the category "rose," but in the manner that "a rose is a rose." The state of productiveness is at the same time the state of highest activity; I see the object without distortions by my greed and fear. I see it as it or he is, not as I wish it or him to be or not to be. In this mode of perception there are no parataxic distortions. There is complete aliveness, and the synthesis is of subjectivity-objectivity. I experience intensely yet the object is left to be what it is. I bring it to life, and it

brings me to life. Satori appears mysterious only to the person who is not aware to what degree his perception of the world is purely mental, or parataxical. If one is aware of this, one is also aware of a different awareness, that which one can also call a fully realistic one. One may have only experienced glimpses of it, yet one can imagine what it is.

## ***II. The Quintessence of Enlightenment In the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

Truly speaking, the dharma that the Buddha realized or enlightened almost twenty-six centuries ago is indeed profound, difficult to perceive, difficult to comprehend, tranquil, exalted, not within the sphere of logic, subtle, and is to be understood by the wise. Sentient beings are attached to material pleasures. This causally connected 'Dependent Arising' is a subject which is difficult to comprehend. And Nirvana, the cessation of the conditioned, the abandoning of all passions, the destruction of craving, the non-attachment, and the cessation is also a matter not easily comprehensible." It is quite clear that "Satori" is the true fulfillment of the state of a perfect normal state of mind in which you will be more satisfied, more peaceful, fuller of joy than anything you ever experienced before. So, "Satori" is a state in which the person is completely tuned to the reality outside and inside of him, a state in which he is fully aware of it and fully grasped it. He is aware of it that is, not in his brain nor any part of his organism, but as the whole man. He is aware of it; not as of an object over there which he grasps with his thought, but it, the flower, the dog, or the man in its or his full reality. He who awakes is open and responsive to the world, and he can be open and responsive because he has given up holding on to himself as a thing, and thus has become empty and ready to receive. To be enlightened means "the full awakening of the total personality to reality."

Vimalakirti is usually called Pure Name, name of a layman of Buddha's time who was excellent in Buddhist philosophy. Many questions and answers between Vimalakirti and the Buddha are recorded in the Vimalakirti-nirdeśa. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Expedient Method (Upaya) of Teaching, in the great town of Vaisai, there was an elder called Vimalakirti, who had made offerings to countless Buddhas and had deeply planted all good roots, thereby,

achieving the patient endurance of the uncreate. His unhindered power of speech enabled him to roam everywhere using his supernatural powers to teach others. He had achieved absolute control over good and evil influences (dharani) thereby, realizing fearlessness. So he overcame all passions and demons, entered all profound Dharma-doors to enlightenment, excelled in Wisdom perfection (prajna-paramita) and was well versed in all expedient methods (upaya) of teaching, thereby, fulfilling all great Bodhisatva vows. He knew very well the mental propensities of living beings and could distinguish their various (spiritual) roots. For along time, he had trodden the Buddha-path and his mind was spotless. Since he understood Mahayana, all his actions were based on right thinking. While dwelling in the Buddha's awe-inspiring majesty, his mind was extensive like the great ocean. He was praised by all Buddhas and revered by Indra, Brahma and worldly kings. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Expedient Method (Upaya) of Teaching, as he was set on saving men, he expediently stayed at Vaisali for this purpose. He used his unlimited wealth to aid the poor; he kept all the rules of morality and discipline to correct those breaking the precepts; he used his great patience to teach those giving rise to anger and hate; he taught zeal and devotion to those who were remiss; he used serenity to check stirring thoughts; and employed decisive wisdom to defeat ignorance. Although wearing white clothes (of the laity) he observed all the rules of the Sangha. Although a layman, he was free from all attachments to the three worlds (of desire, form and beyond form). Although he was married and had children, he was diligent in his practice of pure living. Although a householder, he delighted in keeping from domestic establishments. Although he ate and drank (like others), he delighted in tasting the flavour of moderation. When entering a gambling house, he always tried to teach and deliver people there. He received heretics but never strayed from the right faith. Though he knew worldly classics, he always took joy in the Buddha Dharma. He was revered by all who met him. He upheld the right Dharma and taught it to old and young people. Although occasionally he realized some profit in his worldly activities, he was not happy about these earnings. While walking in the street, he never failed to convert others (to the Dharma). When he entered a government office, he always protected others (from injustice). When

joining a symposium, he led others to the Mahayana. When visiting a school he enlightened the students. When entering a house of prostitution, he revealed the sin of sexual intercourse. When going to a tavern, he stuck to his determination (to abstain from drinking). When amongst elders he was the most revered for he taught them the exalted Dharma. When amongst (among) upasakas, he was the most respected for he taught them how to wipe out all desires and attachments. When amongst those of the ruling class, he was the most revered, for he taught them forbearance. When amongst Brahmins, he was the most revered, for he taught them how to conquer pride and prejudice. When amongst government officials he was the most revered, for he taught them correct law. When amongst princes, he was the most revered, for he taught them loyalty and filial piety. When in the inner palaces, he was the most revered, for he converted all maids of honour there. When amongst common people, he was the most revered, for he urged them to cultivate all meritorious virtues. When amongst Brahma-devas, he was the most revered, for he urged the gods to realize the Buddha wisdom. When amongst Sakras and Indras, he was the most revered, for he revealed to them the impermanence (of all things). When amongst lokapalas, he was the most revered, for he protected all living beings. Thus, Vimalakirti used countless expedient methods (upaya) to teach for the benefit of living beings. In other words, in the Vimalakirti Zen Garden, Flowers of Enlightenment always bloom in four seasons of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter.

The quintessence of enlightenment in the Vimalakirti Sutra is the spirit of freedom of Enlightenment in Zen, which is the power impelling Buddhism to break through its monastic shell and bringing forward the idea of Enlightenment ever vigorously before the masses, is the life-impulse of the universe; this hampered activity of spirit, and everything that interferes with it, is destined to be defated. The history of Buddhism is thus also a history of freedom in one's spiritual, intellectual, and moral life. The moral aristocracy and disciplinary formalism of primitive Buddhism could not bind our spirit for a very long period of time. As the doctrine of Enlightenment grew to be more and more inwardly interpreted, the spirit rose above the formalism of Buddhist discipline. It was of no absolute necessity for one to leave his home life and follow the footsteps of the wandering monks in order to

reach the supreme fruit of Enlightenment. Inward purity, and not external piety, was the thing needed for the Buddhist life. The Upasakas were in this respect as good as the Bhiksus. The fact is most eloquently illustrated in the Vimalakirti Sutra. The chief character here is Vimalakirti, a lay philosopher, outside the pale of the Brotherhood. None of the Buddha's disciples were his matches in the depth, breadth, and subtleties of thought, and when the Buddha told them to visit his sick-room they all excused themselves for some reason or other, except Manjusri, who is Prajna incarnate in Mahayana Buddhism. Not only Zen practitioners, but also everyone must agree that the lay-devotee, Vimalakirti, accomplished even at a greater level than that of an Arhat.



## ***Chapter Forty-Eight***

### ***The Quintessence of Liberation In the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. A Summary of Dharma of Liberation In Buddhist Teachings:***

According to Buddhism, dharma means Buddhist doctrine or teachings. The teaching of the Buddhas which carry or hold the truth. The way of understanding and love taught by the Buddha doctrine. The Buddha taught the Dharma to help us escape the sufferings and afflictions caused by daily life and to prevent us from degrading human dignity, and descending into evil paths such as hells, hungry ghosts, and animals, etc. The Dharma is like a raft that gives us something to hang onto as we eliminate our attachments, which cause us to suffer and be stuck on this shore of birth and death. The Buddha's dharma refers to the methods of inward illumination; it takes us across the sea of our afflictions to the other shore, nirvana. Once we get there, even the Buddha's dharma should be relinquished. The Dharma is not an extraordinary law created by or given by anyone. According to the Buddha, our body itself is Dharma; our mind itself is Dharma; the whole universe is Dharma. By understanding the nature of our physical body, the nature of our mind, and worldly conditions, we realize the Dharma. The Dharma that is the law of beginningless and endless becoming, to which all phenomena are subject according to causes and conditions. The Dharma, which comprises the spoken words and sermons of Sakyamuni Buddha wherein he elucidated the significance of the Unified Three Treasures and the way to its realization. The Dharma, the teaching imparted by the Buddha. All written sermons and discourses of Buddhas (that is, fully enlightened beings) as found in the sutras and other Buddhist texts still extant.

In Buddhism, "Moksha" means to release from the round of birth and death, the bondage of the passion and reincarnation, freedom from karma, from illusion, from suffering of the burning house in the three realms. The experiencing of the liberation which is the goal of all Buddhists is also used as a synonym for great enlightenment. Liberation or release from suffering through knowledge of the cause of

suffering and the cessation of suffering, through realization of the four noble truths to eliminate defilements. Vimukti is the extinction of all illusions and passions. It is liberation from the karmic cycle of life and death and the realization of nirvana. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that in Buddhism, it is not the Buddha who delivers men, but he teaches them to deliver themselves, even as he delivered himself. Generally speaking, all teachings of the Buddha are aimed at releasing human beings' sufferings and afflictions in this very life. They have a function of helping individual see the way to make arise the skilful thought, and to release the evil thought. For example, using compassion to release ill-will; using detachment or greedlessness to release greediness; using wisdom or non-illusion to release illusion; using perception to release selfishness; using impermanence and suffering to release "conceit." For lay people who still have duties to do in daily life for themselves and their families, work, religion, and country, the Buddha specifically introduced different means and methods, especially the Buddha's teachings in the Advices to Lay People (Sigalaka) Sutra. The Buddha also introduced other methods of cultivation: "To abandon four wrong deeds of not taking life, not taking what is not given, not committing sexual misconduct, not lying, not doing what is caused by attachment, ill-will, or fear, not to waste one's substance by the six ways of not drinking alcohol, not haunting the streets at unfitting time, not attending nonsense affairs, not gambling, not keeping bad company, and not staying idle. In addition, lay people should always live in the six good relationships of their families and society: between parents and children, between husband and wife, between teacher and student, among relatives and neighbors, between monks and lay people, between employer and employee, etc. These relationships should be based on human love, loyalty, sincerity, gratitude, mutual acceptance, mutual understanding and mutual respect because they relate closely to individuals' happiness in the present. Thus, the Buddha's Dharma is called the Dharma of liberation.

## ***II. Upeksha & Emancipation In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

***A Summary of Upeksha In Buddhist Teachings:*** According to Buddhist teachings, detachment is the attitude of those who give up,

forget, do not attach any importance for what they have done for the benefit of others. In general, we feel proud, self-aggrandized when we do something to help other people. Quarrels, conflicts, or clashes between men or groups of men are due to passions such as greed or anger whose source can be appraised as self-attachment or dharma-attachment. The Buddha taught that if there is someone who misjudges us, we must feel pity for him; we must forgive him in order to have peace in our mind. The Bodhisattvas have totally liberated themselves from both self-attachment and dharma-attachment. When people enjoy material or spiritual pleasures, the Bodhisattvas also rejoice, from their sense of compassion, pity, and inner joy. They always consider human beings as their benefactors who have created the opportunities for them to practice the Four Immeasurable Minds on their way to Enlightenment. In terms of the Immeasurable Detachment, the Bodhisattvas consider all men equal, the clever as the stupid, themselves as others, they do everything as they have done nothing, say everything as they have said nothing, attain all spiritual levels as they have attained nothing.

Abandonment is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we can turn away from the five desires. Equanimity is a basic teaching of the Buddha on how to calm and rein in the “monkey” mind. When we feel asleep, just lie down in a quiet place, put the lights out and let go our minds and bodies. Zen masters Ekido and Tanzan were on a journey to Kyoto. When they approached the river side, they heard a girl’s voice calling for help. When they arrived they saw a young pretty girl, stranded in the river. Ekido immediately jumped down the river and carried the girl safely to the other side where, together with Tanzan, he continued his journey. As the sun began to set, and they made arrangements to settle down for the night, Tanzan could no longer contain himself and blurted out: “How could you pick up that girl? Do you remember that we are not allowed to touch women?” Ekido replied immediately: “I only carried the girl to the river bank, but you are still carrying her.” Equanimity, one of the most important Buddhist virtues. Upeksa refers to a state that is neither joy nor suffering but rather independent of both, the mind that is in equilibrium and elevated above all distinctions. On the contrary, to give rein to one’s emotion means to surrender one’s

heedlessnesses. In Buddhism, we have always been hearing about letting go and not clinging to anything. What does the Buddha mean on letting go? He means in daily activities, no way we can let go everything. We have to hold on things; however, try not to cling to them. For example, we try to make money for our living expenses, but not try to cling on making a lot of money to accumulate regardless of the means of making the money. Practitioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: “Craving grows like a creeper which creeps from tree to tree just like the ignorant man wanders from life to life like a fruit-loving monkey in the forest (Dharmapada 334). Self-conquest is, indeed, better than the conquest of all other people. To conquer oneself, one must be always self-controlled and disciplined one’s action. By sustained effort, earnestness, temperance and self-control, the wise man may make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm (Dharmapada 25).”

A basic teaching of the Buddha on how to calm and rein in the “monkey” mind. When we feel asleep, just lie down in a quiet place, put the lights out and let go our minds and bodies. The state of mental equilibrium in which the mind has no bent or attachment, and neither meditates nor acts, a state of indifference. Equanimity, one of the most important Buddhist virtues. Upeksa refers to a state that is neither joy nor suffering but rather independent of both, the mind that is in equilibrium and elevated above all distinctions. In Buddhism, we have always been hearing about letting go and not clinging to anything. What does the Buddha mean on letting go? He means in daily activities, no way we can let go everything. We have to hold on things; however, try not to cling to them. For example, we try to make money for our living expenses, but not try to cling on making a lot of money to accumulate regardless of the means of making the money. Practitioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. *If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom.*

According to Buddhist tradition, there are seven abandonments or riddances: First, cherishing none and nothing. Second, no relations with others. Third, riddance of love and hate. Fourth, riddance of anxiety about the salvation of others. Fifth, riddance of the clinging of form. Sixth, giving to others. Seventh, benefitting others without hope of return. According to the Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 27, there are ten kinds of nonattachment of Great Enlightening Being. Great enlightening beings abide in the concentration of the differentiated bodies of all sentient beings can attain ten kinds of non-attachment: *First*, non-attachment in all lands. *Second*, non-attachment in all places. *Third*, non-attachment in all times. *Fourth*, non-attachment in respect to all beings. *Fifth*, non-attachment in respect to all phenomena. *Sixth*, non-attachment in respect in respect to all Enlightening Beings. *Seventh*, non-attachment in respect to all Enlightening Beings' vows. *Eighth*, non-attachment in respect to all concentrations. *Ninth*, non-attachment in respect to all Buddhas. *Tenth*, non-attachment in respect to all the stages of enlightenment. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can quickly overturn all concepts and attain supreme pure wisdom: Non-attachment to all worlds; non-attachment to all sentient beings; non-attachment to all phenomena; non-attachment to all actions; non-attachment to all roots of goodness; non-attachment to all place of birth; non-attachment to all vows; non-attachment to all practices; non-attachment to all Enlightening Beings; non-attachment to all Buddhas. Also according to the Flower Adornment Sutra, Chapter 38, there are ten kinds of equanimity of Great Enlightening Beings: *First*, Equanimity in accumulating all virtues. *Second*, Equanimity in undertaking all different vows. *Third*, Equanimity in regard to all living beings. *Fourth*, Equanimity in regard to the consequences of actions of all living beings. *Fifth*, Equanimity in regard to all phenomena. *Sixth*, Equanimity in regard to all pure and defiled lands. *Seventh*, Equanimity in regard to understandings of all sentient beings. *Eighth*, Equanimity in regard to nonconceptualization of all practices. *Ninth*, Equanimity in regard to the nondifference of all Buddhas' powers. *Tenth*, Equanimity in regard the wisdom of all Buddhas. Enlightening beings rest in these will attain the supreme great equanimity of Buddhas.

***A Summary of Emancipation In Buddhist Teachings:*** In Buddhism, "Emancipation" means to release from the round of birth

and death. The liberation the experiencing of which is the goal of all Buddhists and all meditative training in Buddhism. Liberation is also used as a synonym for enlightenment. To emancipate from the round of birth and death means to deliverance from all the trammels of life, the bondage of the passion and reincarnation. Final emancipation or liberation, eternal liberation, release from worldly existence or the cycle of birth and death. Emancipation means the escaping from bonds and the obtaining of freedom, freedom from transmigration, from karma, from illusion, from suffering of the burning house in the three realms (lokiya). In Buddhism, it is not the Buddha who delivers men, but he teaches them to deliver themselves, even as he delivered himself. Above all, for Buddhist practitioners, emancipation denotes nirvana. Liberation or release from suffering through knowledge of the cause of suffering and the cessation of suffering, through realization of the four noble truths to eliminate defilements. Vimukti is the extinction of all illusions and passions. It is liberation from the karmic cycle of life and death and the realization of nirvana.

Generally speaking, all teachings of the Buddha are aimed at releasing human beings' sufferings and afflictions in this very life. They have a function of helping individual see the way to make arise the skilful thought, and to release the evil thought. For example, using compassion to release ill-will; using detachment or greedlessness to release greediness; using wisdom or non-illusion to release illusion; using perception to release selfishness; using impermanence and suffering to release "conceit." For lay people who still have duties to do in daily life for themselves and their families, work, religion, and country, the Buddha specifically introduced different means and methods, especially the Buddha's teachings in the *Advices to Lay People (Sigalaka) Sutra*. The Buddha also introduced other methods of cultivation: "To abandon four wrong deeds of not taking life, not taking what is not given, not committing sexual misconduct, not lying, not doing what is caused by attachment, ill-will, or fear, not to waste one's substance by the six ways of not drinking alcohol, not haunting the streets at unfitting time, not attending nonsense affairs, not gambling, not keeping bad company, and not staying idle. In addition, lay people should always live in the six good relationships of their families and society: between parents and children, between husband and wife,

between teacher and student, among relatives and neighbors, between monks and lay people, between employer and employee, etc. These relationships should be based on human love, loyalty, sincerity, gratitude, mutual acceptance, mutual understanding and mutual respect because they relate closely to individuals' happiness in the present. Thus, the Buddha's Dharma is called the Dharma of liberation.

***Upeksha & Emancipation In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

*Upeksha:* Upeksha is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught: "If one wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, Buddhists must first be able to let go of all of the five desires of ordinary people." According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva called on to enquire after Upasaka Vimalakirti's health, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti about "Upeksha". Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "What should be relinquish (upeksa) of a Bodhisattva?" Vimalakirti replied: "In his work of salvation, a Bodhisattva should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return." In Buddhism, abandonment is one of the most important entrances to the great enlightenment; for with it, we can turn away from the five desires. Equanimity is one of the chief Buddhist virtues, that of renunciation, leading to a state of indifference without pleasure or pain, or independence of both. It is defined as the mind in equilibrium, i.e. above the distinction of things or persons, of self or others; indifferent, having abandoned the world and all things, and having no affections or desires. Once we have fully developed Upeksha, we will feel true compassion for all beings, and we will have the ability to eliminate any partiality from our daily attitudes toward other people. Usually, our view of others dominated by various kinds of discriminating emotions. We always feel closeness and sympathy toward loved ones. In contrast, toward strangers we always feel distant and indifferent, and for those we dislike we feel aversion or contempt. That is to say we always classify friends and enemies clearly. However, we should always remember that our sympathy, closeness and/or hatred have no effect on others, these feelings do not nurture or harm others. It is we who will suffer the ill-consequences of our actions. Upeksha is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught: "If one wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, Buddhists must first be able to let go of all of the

five desires of ordinary people.” Detachment is the attitude of those who give up, forget, do not attach any importance for what they have done for the benefit of others. In general, we feel proud, self-aggrandized when we do something to help other people. Quarrels, conflicts, or clashes between men or groups of men are due to passions such as greed or anger whose source can be appraised as self-attachment or dharma-attachment. The Buddha taught that if there is someone who misjudges us, we must feel pity for him; we must forgive him in order to have peace in our mind. The Bodhisattvas have totally liberated themselves from both self-attachment and dharma-attachment. When people enjoy material or spiritual pleasures, the Bodhisattvas also rejoice, from their sense of compassion, pity, and inner joy. They always consider human beings as their benefactors who have created the opportunities for them to practice the Four Immeasurable Minds on their way to Enlightenment. In terms of the Immeasurable Detachment, the Bodhisattvas consider all men equal, the clever as the stupid, themselves as others, they do everything as they have done nothing, say everything as they have said nothing, attain all spiritual levels as they have attained nothing. Immeasurable Equanimity, a mind of great detachment, or infinite equanimity. Limitless indifference, such as rising above all emotions, or giving up all things. Here a monk, with a heart filled with equanimity. Thus he stays, spreading the thought of equanimity above, below, across, everywhere, always with a heart filled with equanimity, abundant, magnified, unbounded, without hatred or ill-will. Equanimity is also considered as a divine abode. It is the state of mind that regards others with impartiality, free from attachment and aversion. An impartial attitude is its chief characteristic, and it is opposed to favouritism and resentment.

*Freedom From Bondage:* According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva obeyed the Buddha’s command to call on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health, Vimalakirti reminded that a Bodhisattva should not tie himself up (with wrong views). What is tying and what is untying? Clinging to serenity (dhyana) is a Bodhisattva’s bondage, but his expedient rebirth (for the salvation of others) is freedom from bondage. Further, he is held in bondage by wisdom which lacks expedient methods (upaya), but is liberated by wisdom



supported by expedient device; he is (also) held in bondage by expedient methods which are not upheld by wisdom but is liberated by expedient methods backed by wisdom. What is bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods? It is bondage caused by the Bodhisattva's desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection while practicing for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely,) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods (upaya). What is liberation by wisdom backed by expedient methods? It is liberation achieved in the absence of desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection, while practicing unremittingly for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called liberation by wisdom supported by expedient methods (upaya). What is bondage by expedient methods unsupported by wisdom? It is bondage caused by a Bodhisattva's lack of determination to keep from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all wisdom roots. This is called bondage by expedient methods which lack wisdom. What is liberation by expedient methods sustained by wisdom? It is liberation won by a Bodhisattva who keeps from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all virtuous roots which he dedicates to his realization of supreme enlightenment. This is called liberation by expedient methods sustained by wisdom.

### ***III. Inconceivable Liberation In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

Inconceivable liberation means an emancipation that cannot be explained by words. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Six, Vimalakirti said to Sariputra: "Sariputra, the liberation realized by all Buddhas and (great) Bodhisattvas is inconceivable. If a Bodhisattva wins this liberation, he can put the great and extensive (Mount) Sumeru in a mustard seed, which neither increases nor decreases (its size) while Sumeru remains the same, and the four deva kings (guardians of the world) and the devas of Trayastrimsas (the heavens of Indra) are not even aware of their being put into the seed, but only those who have won liberation see Sumeru in the mustard seed. This is the

inconceivable Dharma door to liberation. He can also put the four great oceans that surround Sumeru in a pore without causing inconvenience to fishes, water tortoises, sea-turtles, water-lizards and all other aquatic animals while the oceans remain the same and the nagas (dragons), ghosts, spirits and asuras (titans) are not even aware of being displaced and interposed. Further, Sariputra, a great Bodhisattva who has won this inconceivable liberation can (take and) put on his right palm the great chiliocosm like the potter holding his wheel, throw it beyond a number of worlds as countless as the sand grains in the Ganges and then take it back (to its original place) while all living beings therein do not know of their being thrown away and returned and while our world remains unchanged. Further, Sariputra, if there are living beings who are qualified for liberation but who want to stay longer in the world, this Bodhisattva will (use his supernatural power to) extend a week to an aeon so that they will consider their remaining in time to be one week. Further, Sariputra, a Bodhisattva who has won this inconceivable liberation can gather in one country all the majestic things of all Buddha lands so that they are all visible in that particular country. Further, he can place on his right palm all the living beings of a Buddha land and then fly in all the ten directions to show them all things everywhere without even shaking them. Further, Sariputra, this Bodhisattva can show through one of his pores all offerings to the Buddhas by living beings in the ten directions. He can show through one of his pores all suns, moons, planets and stars in all the worlds in the ten directions. Further, Sariputra, he can breathe in (and hold in his mouth) all the winds blowing in the worlds in the ten directions without injuring his own body or the trees of these worlds. Further, when the worlds in the ten directions come to an end through destruction by fires, this Bodhisattva can breathe in these fires into his own belly without being injured by them while they continue to burn without change. Further, this Bodhisattva can take from the nadir a Buddha land separated from him by worlds as countless as the sand grains in the Ganges and lift it up to the zenith, which is separated from him by worlds as countless as there are sand grains in the Ganges, with the same ease as he picks up a leaf of the date tree with the point of a needle. Further, Sariputra, a Bodhisattva who has won this inconceivable liberation can use his transcendental powers to appear as

a Buddha, or a Pratyeka-buddha, a Sravaka, a sovereign Sakra, Brahma, or a ruler of the world (cakravarti). He can also cause all sound and voices of high, medium and low pitches in the worlds in the ten directions to change into the Buddha's voice proclaiming (the doctrine of) impermanence, suffering, unreality and absence of ego as well as all Dharmas expounded by all Buddhas in the ten directions, making them heard everywhere. Sariputra, I have mentioned only some of the powers derived from this inconceivable liberation but if I were to enumerate them all, a whole aeon would be too short for the purpose. Mahakasyapa who had heard of this Dharma of inconceivable liberation, praised it and said it had never been expounded before. He then said to Sariputra: "Like the blind who do not see images in various colours shown to them, all sravakas hearing this Dharma door to inconceivable liberation will not understand it. Of the wise men hearing about it, who will not set his mind on the quest of supreme enlightenment? What should we do to uproot for ever the rotten sravaka root as compared with this Mahayana, so that all sravakas hearing this doctrine of inconceivable liberation, shed tears of repentance and scream so loudly as to shake the great chiliocosm? As to the Bodhisattvas, they are all happy to receive this Dharma reverently by placing it on the tops of their heads. If a Bodhisattva believes and practices this Dharma door to inconceivable liberation, all demons cannot oppose him." When Mahakasyapa spoke these words, thirty-two thousand sons of the devas set their minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment. At that time, Vimalakirti declared to Mahakasyapa: "Virtuous One, those who appear as kings of demons in countless worlds in the ten directions are mostly Bodhisattvas who have realized this inconceivable liberation and who use expedient devices (upaya) to appear as their rulers in order to convert living beings. Further, Mahakasyapa, countless Bodhisattvas in the ten directions appear as beggars asking for hands, feet, ears, noses, heads, brains, blood, flesh, skin and bones, towns and hamlets, wives and (female) slaves, elephants, horses, carts, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, agate, cornelian, coral, amber, pearl, jade shell, clothing, food and drink; most of these beggars are Bodhisattvas who have realized this inconceivable liberation and use expedient devices to test believers in order to cement their faith (in the Dharma). Because the Bodhisattvas who

have realized inconceivable liberation possess the awe-inspiring power to bring pressure to bear upon (believers) and ask for inalienable things (to test them), but worldly men whose spirituality is low have no such (transcendental) powers and cannot do all this. These Bodhisattvas are like dragons and elephants which can trample (with tremendous force), which donkeys cannot do. This is called the wisdom and expedient methods (upaya) of the Bodhisattvas who have won inconceivable liberation.”

## ***Chapter Forty-Nine***

### ***Renunciation In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. A Summary of Renunciation in Buddhism:***

Renunciation means to leave home and family or to get out of a family and to become a monk or a nun. To leave one's home and family in order to join the Buddhist community to become a monk or nun, in contrast with "staying home" which means the life of a layman. To enter monkhood (monastic life or the order). Ordination in Buddhism is initiation into the Buddhist Order (Sangha) in the presence of witnesses and self-dedication to monastic life. In ancient time people who truly cultivated the Way did live in cottages and till the land to support themselves. They certainly did not rely on external conditions. They lived in thatched cottages to cultivate because they wanted to eliminate greed. They even lived in seclusion to perfect their virtuous conduct. At the time of the Buddha, the sons of the elders at Vaisali came to Rahula's place and bowed to salute him, saying: "Rahula, you are the Buddha's son and left the throne to search for the truth; what advantage derives from leaving home?" Rahula then spoke of the advantage of earning merits that so derive. Vimalakirti came and said: "Rahula, you should not speak of the advantage of earning merits that derive from leaving home. Why? Because home-leaving bestows neither advantage nor good merits. Only when speaking of the worldly (way of life) can you talk about advantage and merits. For home-leaving is above the worldly, and the transcendental is beyond advantage and merits. Rahula, home-leaving is beyond thisness, thatness and in between; is above the sixty-two wrong views, and abides in (the state of) nirvana. It is praised by all wise men and practiced by all saints. It overcomes all demons, liberates from the five realms of existence, purifies the five kinds of eyes, helps realize the five spiritual powers and sets up the five spiritual faculties, releases from earthly grievances, keeps from varied evils (derived from a mixed mind), frees from the unreality of names and terms, gets out of the mud (of defilement), relieves from all bondages, wipes out the duality of

subject and object and all responsiveness and disturbances; it gives inner joy, protects all living beings, dwells in serenity and guards against all wrongs. If all this can be achieved, this is true home-leaving.” Vimalakirti then said to the sons of the elders: “During this period of correct Dharma you should leave home to join the Sangha. Why? Because it is very difficult to have the good fortune of living in the Buddha-age.” The sons of the elders replied: “Venerable Upasaka, we have heard the Buddha said that once cannot leave home without the consent of one’s parents.” Vimalakirti said: ‘Yes, it is so, but you will really leave home the moment you develop a mind set on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi) which completes your home-leaving.’ At that time, all the thirty-two sons of the elders developed the anuttara-samyak-sambodhi mind.

To shave one’s hair is the first step in renunciation. While most people want to have beautiful hair and spend lots of time and money on hairstyles, Buddhist monks and nuns shave their heads. They are no longer concerned with outward beauty, but with developing their inner beauty. Monks and Nuns are easy to recognize with their shaven heads. The time they would have spent on caring for their hair is spent on more important activities like meditating or chanting sutras. To shave the hair, following Sakyamuni, who cut off his locks with a sharp sword or knife to signify his cutting himself off from the world. So the reason why Monks and Nuns shave their heads because monastics need to renounce all the mundane desires and other longings in order to achieve purity, to be free from delusions, to remove hindrances, and to enter the way of practice. Once they shave their heads, they can easily be distinguished from those who have not joined the sangha. In the daily life of work and religious practice, the monks and nuns conduct themselves properly and with Buddhist discipline. Each day begins early for monks and nuns. Long before the sun rises, they attend morning ceremonies and recite parts of the Buddha’s teachings. Later on, there may be a period of meditation and study. Members of the Sangha have many responsibilities to fulfill, despite leading simple lives. They work very hard and are happy with the work they do. In addition, during the day, they go about the villages to teach the Dharma. When they go back to the monastery to write Buddhist books and to make Buddha images. They take care of the temple and garden.

They prepare for ceremonies in the monastery. Besides, they give advice to the laity and help with community projects for the elderly and the sick. There are more chanting and meditation sessions, and talks on the teachings of the Buddha in the evenings. Monks and nuns may give talks. They choose not to take evening meals, but use the time instead for study or meditation. For every body, especially the novices, at first it was hard to get up early and sit in meditation, but they will gradually adapt themselves to the daily activities in a monastery. In addition, monks and nuns still have daily schedule of cultivation such as practice of meditation, daily consultation, and late evening ceremonies, and so on. Daily consultation with the teacher is conducted during periods of intense meditation. Brief but to-the-point discussion with the spiritual master can not only trigger insight in the student, but also gives the teacher the opportunity to access and validate the student's experiences in meditation. Having a direct and profound personal relationship also provides for the mind-to-mind transmission of Dharma experience from teacher to student.

The Buddha always advised his disciples: "You renounce what is not yours. Name is not yours, so you should renounce it. Material is not yours, so you should renounce it. Body is not yours, it is composed by the five aggregates, so you should renounce it. Even the mind is not yours, it is one of the five aggregates, so you should renounce it." In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "Wearing a yellow saffron robe with an impure mind. What will the robe do if truthfulness is lacking and discipline or self-control is denied? (Dharmapada 9). He who drops all stain, stands on virtue, learns discipline and speaks the truth. Then the yellow robe will fit him (Dharmapada 10). A mendicant who delights in earnestness, who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, cannot fall away, advances like a fire, burning all his fetters both great and small (Dharmapada 32). A mendicant who delights in earnestness, who looks with fear on thoughtlessness, cannot fall away, he is in the presence of Nirvana (Dharmapada 33). As a bee, without harming the flower, its color or scent, flies away, collecting only the nectar, even so should the sage wander in the village (Dharmapada 49). He who strictly adorned, lived in peace, subdued all passions, controlled all senses, ceased to injure other beings, is indeed a holy Brahmin, an ascetic, a bhikshu (Dharmapada 142). The worst taint is ignorance, the

greatest taint. Oh! Bhikshu! Cast aside this taint and become taintless (Dharmapada 243). A man who only asks others for alms is not a mendicant! Not even if he has professed the whole Law (Dharmapada 266). A man who has transcended both good and evil; who follows the whole code of morality; who lives with understanding in this world, is indeed called a bhikshu (Dharmapada 267). Not only by mere morality and austerities, nor by much learning, nor even by serene meditation, nor by secluded lodging, thinking “I enjoy the bliss of renunciation, which no common people can know.” (Dharmapada 271). Do not be confident as such until all afflictions die out (Dharmapada 272). It is good to have control of the eye; it is good to have control of the ear; it is good to have control of the nose; it is good to have control of the tongue (Dharmapada 360). It is good to have control of the body; it is good to have control of speech; it is good to have control of everything. A monk who is able to control everything, is free from all suffering (Dharmapada 361). He who controls his hands and legs; he who controls his speech; and in the highest, he who delights in meditation; he who is alone, serene and contented with himself. He is truly called a Bhikhshu (Dharmapada 362). The Bhikhshu who controls his tongue, who speaks wisely of the Dharma, who is pure and humble, his speech is indeed sweet (Dharmapada 363). That Bhikhshu who dwells in the Dharma (makes the Dharma his own garden); who delights in the Dharma; who meditates on the Dharma, will never fall away from the pure path (Dharmapada 364). Let’s not despise what one has received; nor should one envy the gain of others. A monk who envies the gain of others, does not attain the tranquility of meditation (Dharmapada 365). Though receiving little, if a Bhikhshu does not disdain his own gains, even the gods praise such a monk who just keeps his life pure and industrious (Dharmapada 366). He who has no thought of “I” and “mine,” for whatever towards his mind and body he does not grieve for that which he has not. He is indeed called a Bhikhshu (Dharmapada 367). A Bhikhshu who abides in loving-kindness, who is pleased with with the Buddha’s Teaching, will attain to a state of peace and happiness, and emancipate from all conditioned things (Dharmapada 368). When you empty the water in this boat, it will move faster. In the same manner, if you cut off passion and hatred in yourself, you will reach Nirvana faster (Dharmapada 369). He who cuts off five: lust,



hatred, ignorance, egoism, doubt; renounces five: attachment to form, to formless, to conceit, to restlessness, and ignorance; cultivates five more: faith, effort, watchfulness, concentration, wisdom. A monk who escapes from the five fetters: lust, hate, delusion, pride, false views; is called one who has crossed the flood (Dharmapada 370). Meditate monk! Meditate! Be not heedless. Do not let your mind whirl on sensual pleasures. Don't wait until you swallow a red-hot iron ball, then cry, "This is sorrow!" (Dharmapada 371). There is no concentration in one who lacks wisdom, nor is there wisdom in him who lacks concentration. He who has both concentration and wisdom is near Nirvana (Dharmapada 372). A monk who has retired to a lonely place, who has calmed his mind, who perceives the doctrine clearly, experiences a joy transcending that of men (Dharmapada 373). He who always reflects on the rise and fall of the aggregates, he experiences joy and happiness. He is deathless (Dharmapada 374). A wise monk must first control the senses, practise equanimity, follow discipline as laid down in the sutra (Dharmapada 375). Let him be cordial in his ways and refined in behavior; he is filled with joy and make an end of suffering (Dharmapada 376). You should cast off lust and hatred just as the jasmine creeper sheds its withered flowers (Dharmapada 377). The monk whose body is calm, whose mind and speech are calm, who has single-mindedly, and who refuses the world's seductions (baits of the world), is truly called a peaceful one (Dharmapada 378). Censure or control yourself. Examine yourself. Be self-guarded and mindful. You will live happily (Dharmapada 379). You are your own protector. You are your own refuge. Try to control yourself as a merchant controls a noble steed (Dharmapada 380). He who is full of joy, full of faith in the Buddha's Teaching, will attain the peaceful state, the cessation of conditioned things, and supreme bliss (Dharmapada 381). The Bhihksu, though still young, ceaselessly devotes himself to the Buddha's Teaching, illumines this world like the moon escaped from a cloud (Dharmapada 382).

In the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, the Buddha said: "Sramanas who have left the home-life renounce love, cut (uproot) desire and recognize the source of their minds. They penetrate the Buddha's Wonderful Dharmas and awaken to unconditioned dharmas. They do not seek to obtain anything internal; nor do they seek anything

external. Their minds are not bound by the Way nor are they tied up in Karma. They are without thoughts and without actions; they neither cultivate nor achieve (certify); they do not need to pass through the various stages and yet are respected and revered. This is what is meant by the Way.” (Chapter 2). By shaving their heads and beards, they become Saramanas who accept the Dharmas of the Way. They renounce worldly wealth and riches; beg for food with moderation (moderate needs or not to acquire too many things); take only one meal at noon and eat only enough to satisfy their hunger and are careful not to return. Craving and desire are at the roots of what cause people to be stupid and confused (obscured).” (Chapter 3). A Sramana who practices the Way should not be like an ox turning a millstone because an ox is like one who practices the way with his body but his mind is not on the Way. If the mind is concentrated on the Way, one does not need the outer practices of the body.” (Chapter 40). One who practices the way is like an ox that carries a heavy load through deep mud, the work is so difficult that he dares not glance to the left or right. Only when he gets out of the mud he is able to rest. Likewise, the Sramana should look upon emotion and desire as deep mud and with an undeviating mind, he should recollect the Way, then he can avoid suffering.” (Chapter 41). I look upon royal and official positions as upon the dust that floats through a crack. I look upon the treasures of gold and jade as upon broken tiles. I look upon clothing of fine silk as upon coarse cotton. I look upon a great thousand world-system as upon a small nut. I look upon the door of expedient means as upon the transformations of a cluster of jewels. I look upon the unsurpassed vehicle as upon a dream of gold and riches. I look upon the Buddha-Way as upon flowers before my eyes. I look upon Zen Samadhi as upon the pillar of Mount Sumeru. I look upon Nirvana as upon being awake day and night. I look upon deviancy and orthodoxy as upon the one true ground. I look upon the prosperity of the teaching as upon a tree during four seasons. (Chapter 42).”

## ***II. Monastic Bodhisattvas In Buddhist Teachings:***

Great Compassion is the life calling of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Thus, those who have developed the Bodhi Mind, wishing to rescue and ferry other sentient beings across, should simply vow to be reborn

in the Triple Realm, among the five turbidities and the three evil paths. If we abandon sentient beings to lead a selfish life of tranquility, we lack compassion. A preoccupation with egoistic needs contrary to the path of enlightenment. According to Masters Chih-I and T'ien-Ju in The Pure Land Buddhism, there are two types of Bodhisattvas. First, those who have followed the Bodhisattva path for a long time and attained the Tolerance of Non-Birth or insight into the non-origination of phenomena. These Bodhisattvas can vow to be reborn in this evil realm to rescue sentient beings without fear of being drown in the sea of Birth and Death with sentient beings. The Perfection of Wisdom Treatise states: "Take the case of the person who watches a relative drowning in the river, a person, more intelligent and resourceful, hurries off to fetch a boat and sails to rescue his relative. Thus both persons escape drowning. This is similar to the case of a Bodhisattva who has attained Tolerance of Non-Birth, has adequate skills and means to save sentient beings."

Second, Bodhisattvas who have not attained the Tolerance of Non-Birth, as well as ordinary people who have just developed the Bodhi Mind. If these Bodhisattvas aspire to perfect that Tolerance and enter the evil life of the Triple Realm to save sentient beings, they should always remain close to the Buddhas and Good Advisors. The Perfection of Wisdom Treatise states: "It is unwise for human beings who are still bound by all kinds of afflictions, even if they possess a great compassionate Mind, to seek a premature rebirth in this evil realm to rescue sentient beings. Why is this so? It is because this evil, defiled world, afflictions are powerful and widespread. Those who lack the power of Tolerance of Non-Birth are bound to be swayed by external circumstances. They then become slaves to form and sound, fame and fortune, with the resulting karma of greed, anger and delusion. Once this occurs, they cannot even save themselves, how can they save others?" If, for example, they are born in the human realm, in this evil environment full of non-believers and externalists, it is difficult to encounter genuine sages. Therefore, it is not easy to hear the Buddha Dharma nor achieve the goals of the sages. Of those who planted the seeds of generosity, morality and blessings in previous lives and are thus now enjoying power and fame, how many are not infatuated with a life of wealth and honor, allowing in endless greed

and lust? Therefore, even when they are counselled by enlightened teachers, they do not believe them nor act accordingly. Moreover, to satisfy their passions, they take advantage of their existing power and influence, creating a great deal of bad karma. Thus, when their present life comes to an end, they descend upon the three evil paths for countless eons. After that, they are reborn as humans of low social and economic status. If they do not then meet good spiritual advisors, they will continue to be deluded, creating more bad karma and descending once again into the lower more realms. From time immemorial, sentient beings caught in the cycles of Birth and Death have been in this predicament. The Vimalakirti Sutra also states: “If you cannot even cure your own illness, how can you cure the illnesses of others?” The Perfection of Wisdom Treatise further states: “Take the case of two persons, each of whom watches a relative drowning in the river. The first person, acting on impulse, hastily jumps into the water. However, because he lacks capabilities and the necessary means, in the end, both of them drown.” Thus newly aspiring Bodhisattvas are like the first individual, who still lacks the power of Tolerance of Non-Birth and cannot save sentient beings. The Perfection of Wisdom Treatise further teaches: “This is not unlike a young child he should not leave his mother, lest he fall into a well, drown in the river or die of starvation; or a young bird whose wings are not fully developed. It must bide its time, hopping from branch to branch, until it can fly afar, leisurely and unimpeded. In the same manner, ordinary people who lack the Tolerance of Non-Birth should limit themselves to Buddha Recitation, to achieve one-pointedness of Mind. Once that goal is reached, at the time of death, they will certainly be reborn in the Pure Land. Having seen Amitabha Buddha and reached the Tolerance of Non-Birth, they can steer the boat of that Tolerance into the sea of Birth and Death, to ferry sentient beings across and accomplish countless Buddha deeds at will.”

All monastic Bodhisattva have four fearlessnesses. First, Bodhisattva-fearlessness arises from powers of memory and ability to preach without fear. Second, Bodhisattva-fearlessness arises from powers of moral diagnosis and application of the remedy. Third, Bodhisattva-fearlessness arises from powers of ratiocination. Fourth, Bodhisattva-fearlessness arises from powers of solving doubts.

Besides, there are five advantages for those who attain the Bodhisattvahood. “Bodhisattva” means an enlightened being (bodhi-being), or a Buddha-to-be, or a being who desires to attain enlightenment, or a being who seeks enlightenment, including Buddhas, Pratyeka-buddhas, or any disciples of the Buddhas. According to Sarvastivadis, there are five advantages for those who attain the Bodhisattvahood. First, they are not born in woeful states, but only among gods and men. Second, they are no more reborn in a poor or a low class family. Third, they are, by virtue, a man and not a woman. Fourth, they are born in perfection free from physical defects. Fifth, they can remember the previous lives of their own and never forget them.

### ***III. Renunciation In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Three, Chapter on Disciples, the Buddha said to Rahula: “You go to Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Rahula said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health. For once the sons of the elders at Vaisali came to my place and bowed to salute me, saying: ‘Rahula, you are the Buddha’s son and left the throne to search for the truth; what advantage derives from leaving home? I then spoke of the advantage of earning merits that so derive. Vimalakirti came and said: “Hey, Rahula, you should not speak of the advantage of earning merits that derive from leaving home. Why? Because home-leaving bestows neither advantage nor good merits. Only when speaking of the worldly (way of life) can you talk about advantage and merits. For home-leaving is above the worldly, and the transcendental is beyond advantage and merits. Rahula, home-leaving is beyond thisness, thatness and in between; is above the sixty-two wrong views, and abides in (the state of) nirvana. It is praised by all wise men and practiced by all saints. It overcomes all demons; liberates from the five realms of existence; purifies the five kinds of eyes; helps realize the five spiritual powers and sets up the five spiritual faculties; releases from earthly grievances; keeps from varied evils (derived from a mixed mind); frees from the unreality of names and terms; gets out of the mud (of defilement); relieves from all bondages, wipes out the duality of subject and object and all responsiveness and disturbances; it

gives inner joy; protects all living beings; dwells in serenity and guards against all wrongs. If all this can be achieved, this is true home-leaving.' Vimalakirti then said to the sons of the elders: 'During this period of correct Dharma, you should leave home to join the Sangha. Why? Because it is very difficult to have the good fortune of living in the Buddha-age.' The sons of the elders replied: 'Venerable Upasaka, we have heard the Buddha said that one cannot leave home without the consent of one's parents.' Vimalakirti said: 'Yes, it is so, but you will really leave home the moment you develop a mind set on the quest of supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi), which completes your home-leaving.' At that time, all the thirty-two sons of the elders developed the anuttara-samyak-sambodhi mind. This is why I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti and inquire after his health."

## *Chapter Fifty*

### *Bodhi Families Of Buddhist Practitioners In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra*

#### *I. An Overview of Bodhi Families Of Buddhist Practitioners In Buddhist Teachings:*

The goal or direction of Buddhist practitioners is to diligently cultivate to save others. This is one of the most outstanding ideas of Mahayana Buddhism. Bodhisattvas teach, save, and support of sentient beings, hoping that they and all other sentient beings will all realize the Buddha-path (I and all other sentient beings. Will all realize the Buddha-path). We can see all sentient beings and everything else are Bodhisattvas' Bodhi Family, especially in the gatha of parinama (gatha of devotion of all merits to the salvation).

I dedicate the merit and virtue of reciting sutras.

With all its superior, limitless blessing.

With all the universal vow that all beings in all realms.

Will quickly go to the Land of the Buddha of Limitless Light.

I vow to eradicate the three obstructions and all afflictions.

I vow to obtain wisdom and to obtain true understanding.

I make a universal vow that the obstacles of  
my offenses will be totally eliminated.

And that in life after life we shall constantly practice  
the path of the Bodhisattvas.

We vow that they will be born in the Western Pure Land.

With the nine grades of Lotus flowers as parents.

When the flowers open, they will see the Buddha  
and become enlightened to the unproduced.

And the irreversible Bodhisattvas will be their companions

I vow that merit and virtue from this.

Will go everywhere and reach everyone.

I and all other sentient beings.

Will all realize the Buddha-path.

According to Zen Master D.T. Suzuki in *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Book III, Bodhisattvas have twenty parents and relatives: *First*, prajna (wisdom) is his mother. *Second*, upaya (skilful means) is his father. *Third*, dana (charity) is his wet nurse. *Fourth*, sila (morality) is his supporter. *Fifth*, ksanti (patience) is his decoration. *Sixth*, virya (strenuousness or energy) is his nurse. *Seventh*, dhyana (meditation) is his cleaner. *Eighth*, good friends are his instructors. *Ninth*, all factors of enlightenment are his companions. *Tenth*, all Bodhisattvas are his brothers. *Eleventh*, the Bodhicitta is his home. *Twelfth*, to conduct himself in accordance with the truth is his family manners. *Thirteenth*, the Bhumis are his residence. *Fourteenth*, the Kshantis are his family members. *Fifteenth*, the vows are his family motto. *Sixteenth*, to promote deeds of devotion is his family legacy. *Seventeenth*, to make others accept Mahayana is his family business. *Eighteenth*, to be anointed after being bound for one more birth is his destiny as crown prince in the kingdom of Dharma. *Nineteenth*, paramitas are the Prajna Boat which conveys him to another shore of Enlightenment. *Twentieth*, to arrive at the full knowledge of Tathagatahood forms the foundation of his pure family relationship.

## ***II. Bodhi Families Of Buddhist Practitioners In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

Parents, wife and children, relatives and kinsmen, official and private friends, and where are your pages and maids, elephants and horse carts. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Eight, a Bodhisattva called Universal Manifestation, who was present asked Vimalakirti: “Who are your parents, wife and children, relatives and kinsmen, official and private friends, and where are your pages and maids, elephants and horse carts?” In reply Vimalakirti chanted the following: “Wisdom-perfection is a Bodhisattva’s Mother, his father is expedient method, For the teachers of all living beings come, Only from these two (upaya and prajna). His wife is joy in Dharma’s law; Kindness and pity are his daughters; His sons morality and truthfulness; Absolute voidness his quiet abode. Passions are his disciples Whom he transforms at will. Bodhipaksita dharma are his friends. Helping him to win supreme enlightenment. All other perfections are his companions. The four winning methods are his courtesans, hymns, chants and



intonations of Dharma are his melodies. Complete control over passions is his domain, passionlessness is his grove. The (seven) grades of bodhi are the flowers bearing the fruit of wisdom's liberation. The pool of eightfold liberation holds calm water, which is clear and full. The seven blossoms of purity are well arranged to bathe this undefiled (Bodhisattva) man. Whose five supernatural powers are walking elephants and horses while the Mahayana is his vehicle, which controlled by the one mind, rolls through the eight noble paths. Thirty-two distinctive marks dignify his body; while (eighty) excellences add to it their grace. Shamefulness is his raiment, and deep mind his coiffure. The seven riches that he owns are his assets which, used to teach others, earn more dividends. Dedicating all merits (to Buddhahood), his practice of the Dharma has received wins far greater profit. The four dhyanas are his meditation bed, which from pure living originates. Much learning increases wisdom announcing self-awakening. His broth is the flavour of release. The precepts are his perfumed. Salve and pure mind is his bath. By killing the culprit klesa is his boldness unsurpassed. By defeating the four demons, he plants his triumphant banner as a bodhimandala. Though he knows there is neither birth nor death, he is reborn to show himself to all, appearing in many countries. Like the sun seen by everyone. When making offerings to countless Buddhas in the ten directions, he does not discriminate between himself and them. Although He knows that Buddha lands are void like living beings. He goes on practicing the Pure Land (Dharma) to teach and convert men. In their kinds, features, voices and bearing, this fearless Bodhisattva can appear the same as they. He, knows the mischief demons, do but appears as one of them. Using wise expedient means to look like them at will. Or he appears old, ill and dying to make living beings realize that all things are but illusion, to free them from all handicaps. Or he shows the aeon's end with fire destroying heaven and earth, so that those clinging to permanence realize the impermanence of things. Then countless living beings call on this Bodhisattva, inviting Him to their homes to convert them to the Buddha path. In heterodox books, spells, skills, magic, arts and talents, he appears to be an expert to help and benefit (all) living beings. Appearing in their midst, he joins the Sangha in order to release them from defilement, to prevent their slipping into heresy.

Then, is he seen as the sun, moon or heaven as Brahma or the lord of (all) the world. At times, as earth or water or as the wind and fire. When they fall ill or epidemics rage, he prepares medicinal herbs for them to take to cure their illness or infection. When famine prevails, he makes food and drink to save them from thirst and hunger, before teaching them the Dharma. In times of war, he teaches kindness mercy to convert living beings, so that they can live in peace. When armies line up for battle, he gives equal strength to both. With his authority and power, he forces them to be reconciled and live in harmony. To all countries where there are hells, he comes unexpectedly to relieve their sufferings. Wherever animals devour one another, he appears among them urging them to do good. Seeming to have the five desires, he is always meditating to upset the demons and prevent their mischief. Like that thing most rare, a lotus blossoming in a scorching fire, he meditates amidst desires, which also is a thing most rare. Or, he appears as a prostitute to entice those, who to lust is a given. First, using temptation to hook them, he then leads them to the Buddha wisdom. He appears as a district magistrate, or as a chief of the caste of traders, a state preceptor or high official to protect living beings. To the poor and destitute, he appears with boundless purse to advise and guide them until they develop the bodhi mind. To the proud and arrogant, he appears as powerful to overcome their vanity until they tread the path supreme. Then he comes to comfort people who are cowards, first he makes them fearless, then urges them to seek the truth. Or he appears without desires and acts, like a seer with five spiritual powers to convert living beings by teaching them morality, patience and mercy. To those needing support and help, he may appear as a servant to please and induce them to grow the Tao mind. Providing them with all they need to enter on the Buddha path; thus using expedient methods to supply them with all their needs. Then as with boundless truth, his deeds are also endless; with his wisdom that has no limit, he frees countless living beings. If all the Buddhas were to spend countless aeons in praising his merits, they could never count them fully. Who, after hearing this Dharma, develops not the bodhi mind, can only be a worthless man without wisdom.”

## ***Chapter Fifty-One***

### ***Wonderful Flowers & Distinguished Plants In The Vimalakirti Zen Garden Are Forever Green***

#### ***I. The Vimalakirtinirdesa-Sutra: A Zen Garden Where All Wonderful Flowers and Distinguished Plants Are Forever Green:***

Vimalakirti Sutra, also called Vimalakirti-nirdesa. These are discourses of Vimalakirti, important work of Mahayana Buddhism, composed about the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Vimalakirti, a rich adherent of the Buddha, who lived in the midst of worldly life yet treads the path of the Bodhisattva. The popularity of this sutra is due to its stress on the equal value of the lay life and the monastic life. The Vimalakirti Sutra is a philosophic dramatic discourse written in India about the first century A.D. which contains conversations between famous Buddhist figures and the humble householder Vimalakirti. Some said this sutra is an apocryphal account of conversations between Sakyamuni and some residents of Vaisali. It was first translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva, and later by Hsuan-Tsang. This is one of the most popular Mahayana sutras, particularly in East Asia. Its core is a dharma discourse between the lay Bodhisattva Vimalakirti and Manjusri, which focuses on the “perfection of wisdom.” The sutra begins when the Buddha perceives that Vimalakirti is pretending to be sick, and so he asks a number of his disciples to go and inquire after his health. However, one by one the confession that they are intimidated by Vimalakirti’s great wisdom. Finally Manjusri agrees to pay a visit, and all of other disciples follow along in participation in a dharma dialogue between the two great Bodhisattvas. The climax of the sutra comes when thirty-one Bodhisattvas give their respective answers to the question of how a Bodhisattva enters “the dharma-door of non-duality.” Each successive answer is more sophisticated than the one preceeding it, but each exhibits some lingering attachment to duality. Finally Manjusri enunciates what appears to be the last word, but when he turns to Vimalakirti for his response, he answers by saying nothing. The sutra is

particular popular because its central character is a layman with a family who manages to surpass all of the other characters in his grasp of the perfection of wisdom. The Vimalakirti Sutra, a key Mahayana Sutra particularly with Zen and with some Pure Land followers. The main protagonist is a layman named Vimalakirti who is equal of many Bodhisattvas in wisdom and eloquence. He explained the teaching of “Emptiness” in terms of non-duality. When asked by Manjusri to define the non-dual truth, Vimalakirti simply remained silent. The sutra emphasized on real practice “The true nature of things is beyond the limiting concepts imposed by words.” The sutra was translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva.

The primary aim of meditation is to stop the flow of thoughts and to clear the mind and so is the purpose of the Vimalakirti Sutra. For this reason, all wonderful flowers and distinguished plants in the Vimalakirti Zen Garden are forever green. To sit in dhyana (abstract meditation, fixed abstraction, contemplation). Its introduction to China is attributed to Bodhidharma, though it came earlier, and its extension to T’ien-T’ai. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Vimalakirti reminded Sariputra about meditation, saying: “Sariputra, meditation is not necessarily sitting. For meditation means the non-appearance of body and mind in the three worlds (of desire, form and no form); giving no thought to inactivity when in nirvana while appearing (in the world) with respect-inspiring deportment; not straying from the Truth while attending to worldly affairs; the mind abiding neither within nor without; being imperturbable to wrong views during the practice of the thirty-seven contributory stages leading to enlightenment: and not wiping out troubles (klesa) while entering the state of nirvana. If you can thus sit in meditation, you will win the Buddha’s seal.” To practice meditation daily will help purify both the body and the mind at this very moment of life as the Buddha taught: “Pure Minds-Pure Lands.” To practice meditation daily will help tame the deluded mind at this very moment of life. According to the Buddhist Zen, to tame the deluded mind we must not have any thing in it (take the mind of non-existence or the empty mind). According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, the Buddha reminded Ratna-rasi Bodhisattva: “Ratna-rasi! Because of his straightforward mind, a Bodhisattva can act straightforwardly; because of his straightforward deeds he realizes the profound mind; because of

his profound mind his thoughts are kept under control; because of his controlled thoughts his acts accord with the Dharma (he has heard); because of his deeds in accord with the Dharma he can dedicate his merits to the benefit of others; because of this dedication he can make use of expedient methods (upaya); because of his expedient methods he can bring living beings to perfection; because he can bring them to perfection his Buddha land is pure; because of his pure Buddha land his preaching of the Dharma is pure; because of his pure preaching his wisdom is pure; because of his pure wisdom his mind is pure, and because of his pure mind all his merits are pure. Therefore, Ratna-rasi, if a Bodhisattva wants to win the pure land he should purify his mind, and because of his pure mind the Buddha land is pure.”

## ***II. Zen Flowers In The Vimalakirti Zen Garden:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Upasaka Vimalakirti was sick; obeying the Buddha’s command, Manjusri Bodhisattva called on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health. *Manjusri asked:* “How does a sick Bodhisattva control his mind?” *Vimalakirti replied:* “A sick Bodhisattva should think thus: ‘My illness comes from inverted thoughts and troubles (klesa) during my previous lives but it has no real nature of its own. Therefore, who is suffering from it? Why is it so? Because when the four elements unite to form a body, the former are ownerless and the latter is egoless. Moreover, my illness comes from my clinging to an ego; hence I should wipe out this clinging.’ *Vimalakirti added:* Now that he knows the source of his illness, he should forsake the concept of an ego and a living being. He should think of things (dharma) thus: ‘A body is created by the union of all sorts of dharmas (elements) which alone rise and all, without knowing one another and without announcing their rise and fall.’ In order to wipe out the concept of things (dharmas) a sick Bodhisattva should think thus: ‘This notion of dharma is also an inversion which is my great calamity. So I should keep from it.’ What is to be kept from? From both subject and object. What does this keeping from subject and object mean? It means keeping from dualities. What does this keeping from dualities mean? It means not thinking of inner and outer dharmas (i.e. contraries) by the practice of impartiality. What is impartiality? It means equality (of all contraries e.g.) ego and nirvana. Why is it so?

Because both ego and nirvana are void. Why are both void? Because they exist only by names which have no independent nature of their own. “When you achieve this equality you are free from all illnesses but there remains the conception of voidness which also is an illusion and should be wiped out as well.” A sick Bodhisattva should free himself from the conception of sensation (vedana) when experiencing any one of its three states (which are painful, pleasurable and neither painful nor pleasurable feeling). Before his full development into Buddhahood (that is before delivering all living beings in his own mind) he should not wipe out vedana for his own benefit with a view to attaining nirvana for himself only. Knowing that the body is subject to suffering he should think of living beings in the lower realms of existence and give rise to compassion (for them). Since he has succeeded in controlling his false views,, he should guide all living beings to bring theirs under control as well. He should uproot theirs (inherent) illnesses without (trying to) wipe out non-existence dharmas (externals for sense data). For he should teach them how to cut off the origin of illness. What is the origin of illness? It is their clinging which causes their illness. What are the objects of their clinging? They are the three realms (of desire, form and beyond form). By what means should they cut off their clinging? By means (of the doctrine that) nothing whatsoever can be found, and (that) if nothing can be found there will be no clinging. What is meant by ‘nothing can be found? It means (that) apart from dual views (There is nothing else that can be had). What are dual views? They are inner and outer views beyond which there is nothing. *Vimalakirti added:* Manjusri, this is how a sick Bodhisattva should control his mind. To wipe out suffering from old age, illness and death is the Bodhisattva’s bodhi (enlightened practice). If he fails to do so his practice lacks wisdom and is unprofitable. For instance, a Bodhisattva is (called) courageous if he overcomes hatred; if in addition he wipes out (the concept of) old age, illness and death he is a true Bodhisattva. A sick Bodhisattva should again reflect: Since my illness is neither real nor existing, the illnesses of all living beings are also unreal and non-existent. But while so thinking if he develops a great compassion derived from his love for living beings and from his attachment to this false view, he should (immediately) keep from these feelings. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva should wipe out all

external causes of troubles (klesa) while developing great compassion. For (this) love and (these) wrong views result from hate of birth and death. If he can keep from this love and these wrong views he will be free from hatred, and wherever he may be reborn he will not be hindered by love and wrong views. His next life will be free from obstructions and he will be able to expound the Dharma to all living beings and free them from bondage. As the Buddha has said, there is no such thing as untying others when one is still held in bondage for it is possible to untie others only after one is free from bonds. *Vimalakirti concluded*: Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should thus control his mind while dwelling in neither the (state of) controlled mind nor its opposite, that of uncontrolled mind. For if he dwells in (the state of) uncontrolled mind, this is stupidity and if he dwells in (that of) controlled mind, this is the sravaka stage. Hence a Bodhisattva should not dwell in either and so keep from both; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. When staying in the realm of birth and death he keeps from its impurity, and when dwelling in nirvana he keeps from (its condition of) extinction of reincarnation and escape from suffering; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. That which is neither worldly nor saintly is Bodhisattva development (into Buddhahood). That which is neither impure nor pure is Bodhisattva practice. Although he is beyond the demonic state he appears (in the world) to overcome demons; this is Bodhisattva conduct. In his quest of all knowledge (sarvajna) he does not seek it at an inappropriate moment; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into the uncreated he does not achieve Buddhahood; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into nidana (or the twelve links in the chain of existence) he enters all states of perverse views (to save living beings); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he helps all living beings he does not give rise to clinging; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps from the phenomenal he does not lean on the voidness of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he passes through the three worlds (of desire, form and beyond form) he does not injure the Dharmata; this is the Bodhisattva conduct. Although he realizes the voidness (of thing) he sows the seeds of all merits; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he dwells in formlessness he continues delivering living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he refrains from (creative) activities he

appears in his physical body; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps (all thoughts) from rising he performs all good deeds; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the six perfections (paramitas) he knows all the mental states of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he possesses the six supernatural powers he refrains from putting an end to all worldly streams; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four infinite states of mind, he does not wish to be reborn in the Brahma heavens, this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices meditation, serenity (dhyana), liberation and samadhi, he does not avail himself of these to be reborn in dhyana heavens; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four states of mindfulness he does not keep for ever from the karma of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four right efforts he persists in physical and mental zeal and devotion; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four Hinayana steps to supernatural powers he will continue doing so until he achieves all Mahayana supernatural powers; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five spiritual faculties of the sravaka stage he discerns the sharp and dull potentialities of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five powers of the sravaka stage he strives to achieve the ten powers of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the seven Hinayana degrees of enlightenment he discerns the Buddha's all-wisdom (sarvajna); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the eightfold noble truth (of Hinayana) he delights in treading the Buddha's boundless path; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices samathavipasyana which contributes to the realization of bodhi (enlightenment) he keeps from slipping into nirvana; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the doctrine of not creating and not annihilating things (dharma) he still embellishes his body with the excellent physical marks of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he appears as a sravaka or a pratyeka-buddha, he does not stray from the Buddha Dharma; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has realized ultimate purity he appears in bodily form to do his work of salvation; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he sees into all Buddha lands which are permanently still like space, he causes them to appear in their purity and cleanness; this is Bodhisattva



conduct. Although he has reached the Buddha stage which enables him to turn the wheel of the Law (to preach the Dharma) and to enter the state of nirvana, he does not forsake the Bodhisattva path; this is bodhisattva conduct.”

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Vimalakirti reminded Sariputra about meditation, saying: “Sariputra, meditation is not necessarily sitting. Sitting Meditation is when a man is instantly awakened, he comes back to his original mind. For meditation means the non-appearance of body and mind in the three worlds (of desire, form and no form); giving no thought to inactivity when in nirvana while appearing (in the world) with respect-inspiring deportment; not straying from the Truth while attending to worldly affairs; the mind abiding neither within nor without; being imperturbable to wrong views during the practice of the thirty-seven contributory stages leading to enlightenment: and not wiping out troubles (klesa) while entering the state of nirvana. If you can thus sit in meditation, you will win the Buddha’s seal.”

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Buddha Land, those practitioners who had overcome all demons and defeated heresies; and their six faculties, karmas of deeds, words and thoughts were pure and clean; being free from the (five) hindrances and the (ten) bonds. Those practitioners who had realized serenity of mind and had achieved unimpeded liberation. They had achieved right concentration and mental stability, thereby, acquiring the uninterrupted power of speech. Those practitioners who had achieved all the (six) paramitas: charity (dana), discipline (sila), patience (ksanti), devotion (virya), serenity (dhyana) and wisdom (prajna), as well as the expedient method (upaya) of teaching which completely benefit self and others. However, to them, these realizations did not mean any gain whatsoever for themselves, so, that they were in line with the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti). Those practitioners who were able to turn the wheel of the Law that never turns back. Being able to interpret the (underlying nature of) phenomena, they knew very well the roots (propensities) of all living beings; they surpassed them all and realized fearlessness. Zen practitioners should always cultivate their minds by means of merits and wisdom, with which they embellished their physical features which

were unsurpassable, thus, giving up all earthly adornments. Their towering reputation exceeded the height of Mount Sumeru. Their profound faith in the uncreated was unbreakable like a diamond. Their treasures of the Dharma illuminated all lands and rained down nectar. Their speeches were profound and unsurpassed. They entered deep into all (worldly) causes but cut off all heretical views, for they were already free from all dualities and had rooted out all (previous) habits. They were fearless and gave the lion's roar to proclaim the Dharma, their voices being like thunder. They could not be gauged, for they were beyond all measures. They had amassed all treasures of the Dharma and acted like (skillful) seafaring pilots. They were well versed in the profound meanings of all Dharmas. They knew very well the mental states of all living beings and their comings and goings (within the realms of existence). They had reached the state near the unsurpassed sovereign wisdom of all Buddhas, having acquired the ten fearless powers (dasabala) giving complete knowledge and the eighteen different characteristics (of a Buddha as compared with Bodhisattvas (avenikadharma). Although they were free from rebirth in evil existences, they appeared in five mortal realms as royal physicians to cure all ailments, prescribing the right medicine in each individual case, thereby, winning countless merits to embellish countless Buddha lands. Each living being derived great benefit from seeing and hearing them, for their deeds were not in vain. Thus, they had achieved all excellent merits.

The spirit of freedom of Enlightenment in Zen, which is the power impelling Buddhism to break through its monastic shell and bringing forward the idea of Enlightenment ever vigorously before the masses, is the life-impulse of the universe; this hampered activity of spirit, and everything that interferes with it, is destined to be defated. The history of Buddhism is thus also a history of freedom in one's spiritual, intellectual, and moral life. The moral aristocracy and disciplinary formalism of primitive Buddhism could not bind our spirit for a very long period of time. As the doctrine of Enlightenment grew to be more and more inwardly interpreted, the spirit rose above the formalism of Buddhist discipline. It was of no absolute necessity for one to leave his home life and follow the footsteps of the wandering monks in order to reach the supreme fruit of Enlightenment. Inward purity, and not

external piety, was the thing needed for the Buddhist life. The Upasakas were in this respect as good as the Bhiksus. The fact is most eloquently illustrated in the Vimalakirti Sutra. The chief character here is Vimalakirti, a lay philosopher, outside the pale of the Brotherhood. None of the Buddha's disciples were his matches in the depth, breadth, and subtleties of thought, and when the Buddha told them to visit his sick-room they all excused themselves for some reason or other, except Manjusri, who is Prajna incarnate in Mahayana Buddhism. Not only Zen practitioners, but also everyone must agree that the lay-devotee, Vimalakirti, accomplished even at a greater level than that of an Arhat.

Through Vimalakirti Sutra, practitioners can see Vimalakirti's Gate of Nonduality. According to example 84 of the Pi-Yen-Lu, Vimalakirti asked Manjusri, "What is a Bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?" Manjusri said, "According to what I think, in all things, no words, no speech, no demonstration and no recognition, to leave behind all questions and answers; this is entering the Dharma gate of nonduality." Then Manjusri asked Vimalakirti, "We have each already spoken. Now you should tell us, good man, what is a Bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?" Hsueh Tou said, "What did Vimalakirti say?" He also said, "Completely exposed." According to Yuan-Wu in the Pi-Yen-Lu, Vimalakirti had the various great Bodhisattvas each speak on the Dharma gate of nonduality. At the time, the thirty-two Bodhisattvas all took dualistic views of doing and nondoing, of the two truths, real and conventional, and merged them into a monistic view which they considered to be the Dharma gate of nonduality. Finally he asked Manjusri. Manjusri said, "According to what I think, in all things, no words, no speech, no demonstration and no recognition, to leave behind all questions and answers; this is entering the Dharma gate of nonduality." Since the other thirty-two had used words to dispense with words. At once he swept everything away, not wanting anything, and considered this to be the Dharma gate of nonduality. He certainly didn't realize that this was the sacred tortoise dragging its tail, that in wiping away the tracks he was making traces. It's just like a broom sweeping away dust; though the dust is removed, the tracks of the broom still remain. Since in the end, as before, some traces were left, Manjusri then asked Vimalakirti, "We have each

already spoken. Now you should tell us, good man, what is a Bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?" Vimalakirti was silent. If you're alive, you'll never go sink into the dead water. If you make up such dead views, you're like a mad dog chasing a clod of earth. Hsueh Tou didn't say that Vimalakirti kept silent, nor did he say that he sat silently on his seat. Hsueh Tou just went to the critical point and said, "What did Vimalakirti say?" Just when Hsueh Tou spoke this way, did he see Vimalakirti? He hadn't seen him even in a dream. Vimalakirti was an ancient Buddha of the past, who also had a family and household. He helped the Buddha Sakyamuni teach and transform. He had inconceivable intelligence, inconceivable perspective, inconceivable supernatural powers and the wondrous use of them. Inside his own room he accommodated thirty-two thousand jeweled lion thrones and a great multitude of eighty thousand, without it being too spacious or too crowded. But tell me, what principle is this? Can it be called the wondrous function of supernatural powers? Don't misunderstand; if it is the Dharma gate of nonduality, only by attaining together and witnessing together can there be common mutual realization and knowledge. Only Manjusri was able to give a reply. Even so, was he able to avoid Hsueh Tou's censure? Hsueh Tou, talking as he did, also had to meet with these two men Vimalakirti and Manjusri. Hsueh Tou said, "What did Vimalakirti say?" and "Completely exposed." You tell me, where was the exposure? This little bit has nothing to do with gain and loss, nor does it fall into right or wrong. It's like being up on a ten thousand fathom cliff; if you can give up your life and leap off, you may see Vimalakirti in person. If you cannot give it up, you're like a ram caught in a fence. Hsueh Tou was a man who had abandoned his life, so he can see Vimalakirti in person. Most of us, Zen practitioners, are still attached to duality and have not reconciled essence and marks, existence and non-existence, noumenon and phenomena. We embrace essence and reject marks, we embrace non-existence (emptiness) and reject existence and so on. This kind of wrong view creates a lot of disputes, doubts and perplexity. In fact, there is mutual identity between noumenon and phenomena, phenomena are noumenon, noumenon is phenomena. Buddhist cultivators should reconcile all things and eliminate this unnecessary attachment. Sincere cultivators should try to reconcile

essence and marks, existence and non-existence, noumenon and phenomena. We embrace essence and reject marks, we embrace non-existence (emptiness) and reject existence and so on. This kind of wrong view creates a lot of disputes, doubts and perplexity. In fact, there is mutual identity between noumenon and phenomena, phenomena are noumenon, noumenon is phenomena. Buddhist cultivators should reconcile all things and eliminate this attachment.

What can practitioners learn through Vimalakirti Sutra, chapter “Looking at Living Beings”? When Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “How should a Bodhisattva look at living beings?” Vimalakirti replied: “A Bodhisattva should look at living beings like an illusionist does at the illusory men (he has created); and like a wise man looking at the moon’s reflection in water; at his own face in a mirror; at the flame of a burning fire; at the echo of a calling voice; at flying clouds in the sky; at foam in a liquid; at bubbles on water; at the (empty) core of a banana tree; at a flash of lightning; at the (non-existent) fifth element (beside the four that make the human body); at the sixth aggregate (beside the five that make a sentient being); at the seventh sense datum (beside the six objects of sense); at the thirteenth entrance (ayatana-beside the twelve involving the six organs and six sense data); at the nineteenth realm of sense (beside the eighteen dhatus or fields of sense); at form in the formless world; at the (non-existent) sprout of a charred grain of rice; at a body seen by a srota-apanna (who has wiped out the illusory body to enter the holy stream); at the entry of an anagamin (or a non-returning sravaka) into the womb of a woman (for rebirth); at an arhat still preserving the three poisons (of desire, anger and stupidity which he has eliminated forever); at a Bodhisattva realizing the patient endurance of the uncreate who is still greedy, resentful and breaking the prohibitions; at a Buddha still suffering from klesa (troubles); at a blind man seeing things; at an adept who still breathes air in and out while in the state of nirvanic imperturbability; at the tracks of birds flying in the air; at the progeny of a barren woman; at the suffering of an illusory man; at a sleeping man seeing he is awake in a dream; at a devout man realizing nirvana who takes a bodily form for (another) reincarnation; and at a smokeless fire. This is how a Bodhisattva should look at living beings.”

Through Vimalakirti Sutra, practitioners can also see true loving-kindness toward living beings. According to chapter “Looking at Living Beings”, when Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “When a Bodhisattva so meditates how should he practice kindness (maitri)? Vimalakirti replied: “When a Bodhisattva has made this meditation, he should think that he ought to teach living beings to meditate in the same manner; this is true kindness; he should practise causeless (nirvanic) kindness which prevents creativeness; he should practice unheated kindness which puts an end to klesa (troubles and causes of troubles); he should practice impartial kindness which coves all the three periods of time (which means that it is eternal involving past, future and present); he should practice passionless kindness which wipes out disputes; he should practice non-dual kindness which is beyond sense organs within and sense data without; he should practice indestructible kindness which eradicates all corruption; he should practice stable kindness which is a characteristic of the undying self-mind; he should practice pure and clean kindness which is spotless like Dharmata; he should practice boundless kindness which is all-pervasive like space; he should practice the kindness of the arhat stage which destroys all bondage; he should practice the Bodhisattva kindness which gives comfort to living beings; he should practice the Tathagata kindness which leads to the state of thatness; he should practice the Buddha kindness which enlightens all living beings; he should practice spontaneous kindness which is causeless; he should practice Bodhi kindness which is one flavour (i.e. uniform and unmixed wisdom); he should practice unsurpassed kindness which cuts off all desires; he should practice merciful kindness which leads to the Mahayana (path); he should practice untiring kindness because of deep insight into the void and non-existent ego; he should practice Dharma-bestowing (dana) kindness which is free from regret and repentance; he should practice precepts (sila) upholding kindness to convert those who have broken the commandments; he should practice patient (ksanti) kindness which protects both the self and others; he should practice Zealous (virya) kindness to liberate all living beings; he should practice serene (dhyana) kindness which is unaffected by the five senses; he should practice wise (prajna) kindness which is always timely; he should practice expedient (upaya) kindness to appear at all times for

converting living beings; he should practice unhidden kindness because of the purity and cleanliness of the straightforward mind; he should practice profound minded kindness which is free from discrimination; he should practice undeceptive kindness which is without fault; he should practice joyful kindness which bestows the Buddha joy (in nirvana). “Such are the specialities of Bodhisattva kindness.” Manjusri also asked Vimalakirti: “What should be his compassion (karuna)?” Vimalakirti replied: “His compassion should include sharing with all living beings all the merits he has won.” Manjusri also asked: “What should be his joy (mudita)?” Vimalakirti replied: He should be filled with joy on seeing others win the benefit of the Dharma with no regret whatsoever.” Manjusri continued to ask “What should he relinquish (upeksa)?” Vimalakirti replied: “In his work of salvation, he should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return.”

Through this sutra, practitioners can also see the way a sick Bodhisattva control his mind. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, chapter Manjusri’s Call On Vimalakirti. Manjusri asked: “How does a sick Bodhisattva control his mind?” Vimalakirti replied: “A sick Bodhisattva should think thus: ‘My illness comes from inverted thoughts and troubles (klesa) during my previous lives but it has no real nature of its own. Therefore, who is suffering from it? Why is it so? Because when the four elements unite to form a body, the former are without owner and the latter is without ego. Moreover, my illness comes from my clinging to an ego; hence, I should wipe out this clinging.’ Now that he knows the source of his illness, he should forsake the concept of an ego and a living being. He should think of things (dharma) thus: ‘A body is created by the union of all sorts of dharmas (elements) which alone rise and fall, without knowing one another and without announcing their rise and fall.’ In order to wipe out the concept of things (dharmas), a sick Bodhisattva should think thus: ‘This notion of dharma is also an inversion, which is my great calamity. So I should keep from it.’ What is to be kept from? From both subject and object. What does this keeping from subject and object mean? It means keeping from dualities. What does this keeping from dualities mean? It means not thinking of inner and outer dharmas (i.e. contraries) by the practice of impartiality. What is impartiality? It means equality (of all contraries e.g.) ego and nirvana. Why is it so? Because both ego

and nirvana are void. Why are both void? Because they exist only by names which have no independent nature of their own. “When you achieve this equality you are free from all illnesses but there remains the conception of voidness which also is an illusion and should be wiped out as well.’ A sick Bodhisattva should free himself from the conception of sensation (vedana) when experiencing any one of its three states (which are painful, pleasurable and neither painful nor pleasurable feeling). Before his full development into Buddhahood (that is before delivering all living beings in his own mind), he should not wipe out vedana for his own benefit with a view to attaining nirvana for himself only. Knowing that the body is subject to suffering he should think of living beings in the lower realms of existence and give rise to compassion (for them). Since he has succeeded in controlling his false views he should guide all living beings to bring theirs under control as well. He should uproot theirs (inherent) illnesses without (trying to) wipe out non-existence dharmas (externals for sense data). For he should teach them how to cut off the origin of illness. What is the origin of illness? It is their clinging which causes their illness. What are the objects of their clinging? They are the three realms (of desire, form and beyond form). By what means should they cut off their clinging? By means (of the doctrine that) nothing whatsoever can be found, and (that) if nothing can be found there will be no clinging. What is meant by ‘nothing can be found’? It means (that) apart from dual views (there is nothing else that can be had). What are dual views? They are inner and outer views beyond which there is nothing. Manjusri, this is how a sick Bodhisattva should control his mind. To wipe out suffering from old age, illness and death is the Bodhisattva’s bodhi (enlightened practice). If he fails to do so, his practice lacks wisdom and is ineffective. For instance, a Bodhisattva is (called) courageous if he overcomes hatred; if in addition he wipes out (the concept of) old age, illness and death, he is a true Bodhisattva. A sick Bodhisattva should again reflect: since my illness is neither real nor existing, the illnesses of all living beings are also unreal and non-existent. But while so thinking if he develops a great compassion derived from his love for living beings and from his attachment to this false view, he should (immediately) keep from these feelings. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva should wipe out all external causes of



troubles (klesa) while developing great compassion. For (this) love and (these) wrong views result from hate of birth and death. If he can keep from this love and these wrong views, he will be free from hatred, and wherever he may be reborn he will not be hindered by love and wrong views. His next life will be free from obstructions and he will be able to expound the Dharma to all living beings and free them from bondage. As the Buddha has said, there is no such thing as untying others when one is still held in bondage for it is possible to untie others only after one is free from bonds. Therefore, a Bodhisattva should not tie himself up (with wrong views). What is tying and what is untying? Clinging to serenity (dhyana) is a Bodhisattva's bondage, but his expedient rebirth (for the salvation of others) is freedom from bondage. Further, he is held in bondage by wisdom which lacks expedient methods (upaya), but is liberated by wisdom supported by expedient device; he is (also) held in bondage by expedient methods which are not upheld by wisdom but is liberated by expedient methods backed by wisdom. What is bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods? It is bondage caused by the Bodhisattva's desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection while practicing for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely,) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods (upaya). What is liberation by wisdom backed by expedient methods? It is liberation achieved in the absence of desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection, while practicing unremittingly for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called liberation by wisdom supported by expedient methods (upaya). What is bondage by expedient methods unsupported by wisdom? It is bondage caused by a Bodhisattva's lack of determination to keep from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all wisdom roots. This is called bondage by expedient methods, which lack wisdom. What is liberation by expedient methods sustained by wisdom? It is liberation won by a Bodhisattva who keeps from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all virtuous roots which he dedicates to his realization of supreme enlightenment. This is called liberation by expedient methods

sustained by wisdom. Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should look into all things in this way. He should further meditate on his body, which is impermanent, is subject to suffering and is non-existent and egoless; this is called wisdom. Although his body is sick, he remains in (the realm of) birth and death for the benefit of all (living beings) without complaint; this is called expedient method (upaya). Manjusri! He should further meditate on the body, which is inseparable from illness and on illness, which is inherent in the body, because sickness and the body are neither new nor old; this is called wisdom. The body, though ill, is not to be annihilated; this is the expedient method (for remaining in the world to work for salvation). Manjusri, a sick Bodhisattva should thus control his mind while dwelling in neither the (state of) controlled mind nor its opposite, that of uncontrolled mind. For if he dwells in (the state of) uncontrolled mind, this is stupidity and if he dwells in (that of) controlled mind, this is the sravaka stage. Hence, a Bodhisattva should not dwell in either and so keep from both; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. When staying in the realm of birth and death he keeps from its impurity, and when dwelling in nirvana, he keeps from (its condition of) extinction of reincarnation and escape from suffering; this is the practice of the Bodhisattva stage. That which is neither worldly nor saintly is Bodhisattva development (into Buddhahood). That which is neither impure nor pure is Bodhisattva practice. Although he is beyond the demonic state, he appears (in the world) to overcome demons; this is Bodhisattva conduct. In his quest of all knowledge (sarvajna) he does not seek it at an inappropriate moment; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into the uncreated he does not achieve Buddhahood; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he looks into nidana (or the twelve links in the chain of existence), he enters all states of perverse views (to save living beings); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he helps all living beings he does not give rise to clinging; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps from the phenomenal he does not lean on the voidness of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he passes through the three worlds (of desire, form and beyond form), he does not injure the Dharmata; this is the Bodhisattva conduct. Although he realizes the voidness (of thing) he sows the seeds of all merits; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he dwells in formlessness, he continues delivering living beings; this is

Bodhisattva conduct. Although he refrains from (creative) activities he appears in his physical body; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he keeps (all thoughts) from rising he performs all good deeds; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the six perfections (paramitas), he knows all the mental states of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he possesses the six supernatural powers, he refrains from putting an end to all worldly streams; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four infinite states of mind, he does not wish to be reborn in the Brahma heavens, this is the Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices meditation, serenity (dhyana), liberation and samadhi, he does not avail himself of these to be reborn in dhyana heavens; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four states of mindfulness, he does not keep for ever from the karma of body and mind; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four right efforts, he persists in physical and mental zeal and devotion; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the four Hinayana steps to supernatural powers, he will continue doing so until he achieves all Mahayana supernatural powers; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five spiritual faculties of the sravaka stage, he discerns the sharp and dull potential of living beings; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the five powers of the sravaka stage, he strives to achieve the ten powers of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the seven Hinayana degrees of enlightenment, he discerns the Buddha's all-wisdom (sarvajna); this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the eightfold noble truth (of Hinayana), he delights in treading the Buddha's boundless path; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices samathavipasyana, which contributes to the realization of bodhi (enlightenment), he keeps from slipping into nirvana; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he practices the doctrine of not creating and not annihilating things (dharma), he still embellishes his body with the excellent physical marks of the Buddha; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he appears as a sravaka or a pratyeka-buddha, he does not stray from the Buddha Dharma; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has realized ultimate purity, he appears in bodily form to do his work of salvation; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he sees into all Buddha lands, which are permanently still like space, he causes

them to appear in their purity and cleanness; this is Bodhisattva conduct. Although he has reached the Buddha stage, which enables him to turn the wheel of the Law (to preach the Dharma) and to enter the state of nirvana, he does not forsake the Bodhisattva path; this is bodhisattva conduct.”

### ***III. In The Vimalakirti Zen Garden Flowers Of Enlightenment Are Still Blooming:***

As mentioned in the preface, Vimalakirti is usually called Pure Name, name of a layman of Buddha’s time who was excellent in Buddhist philosophy. Many questions and answers between Vimalakirti and the Buddha are recorded in the Vimalakirti-nirdesa. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Expedient Method (Upaya) of Teaching, in the great town of Vaisai, there was an elder called Vimalakirti, who had made offerings to countless Buddhas and had deeply planted all good roots, thereby, achieving the patient endurance of the uncreate. His unhindered power of speech enabled him to roam everywhere using his supernatural powers to teach others. He had achieved absolute control over good and evil influences (dharani) thereby, realizing fearlessness. So he overcame all passions and demons, entered all profound Dharma-doors to enlightenment, excelled in Wisdom perfection (prajna-paramita) and was well versed in all expedient methods (upaya) of teaching, thereby, fulfilling all great Bodhisattva vows. He knew very well the mental propensities of living beings and could distinguish their various (spiritual) roots. For along time, he had trodden the Buddha-path and his mind was spotless. Since he understood Mahayana, all his actions were based on right thinking. While dwelling in the Buddha’s awe-inspiring majesty, his mind was extensive like the great ocean. He was praised by all Buddhas and revered by Indra, Brahma and worldly kings. Although he was married and had children, he was diligent in his practice of pure living. Although a householder, he delighted in keeping from domestic establishments. Although he ate and drank (like others), he delighted in tasting the flavour of moderation. When entering a gambling house, he always tried to teach and deliver people there. He received heretics but never strayed from the right faith. Though he knew worldly classics, he always took joy in the Buddha Dharma. He was revered by

all who met him. He upheld the right Dharma and taught it to old and young people. Although occasionally he realized some profit in his worldly activities, he was not happy about these earnings. While walking in the street, he never failed to convert others (to the Dharma). When he entered a government office, he always protected others (from injustice). When joining a symposium, he led others to the Mahayana. When visiting a school he enlightened the students. When entering a house of prostitution, he revealed the sin of sexual intercourse. When going to a tavern, he stuck to his determination (to abstain from drinking). When amongst elders he was the most revered for he taught them the exalted Dharma. When amongst (among) upasakas, he was the most respected for he taught them how to wipe out all desires and attachments. When amongst those of the ruling class, he was the most revered, for he taught them forbearance. When amongst Brahmins, he was the most revered, for he taught them how to conquer pride and prejudice. When amongst government officials he was the most revered, for he taught them correct law. When amongst princes, he was the most revered, for he taught them loyalty and filial piety. When in the inner palaces, he was the most revered, for he converted all maids of honour there. When amongst common people, he was the most revered, for he urged them to cultivate all meritorious virtues. When amongst Brahma-devas, he was the most revered, for he urged the gods to realize the Buddha wisdom. When amongst Sakras and Indras, he was the most revered, for he revealed to them the impermanence (of all things). When amongst lokapalas, he was the most revered, for he protected all living beings. Thus, Vimalakirti used countless expedient methods (upaya) to teach for the benefit of living beings. In other words, it has been almost twenty-six centuries, but in the Vimalakirti Zen Garden, wonderful flowers and distinguished plants have been forever being green and other Flowers of Enlightenment always bloom in four seasons of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter.

***Distinctive Dharmas:*** Avenika-buddhadharma means the characteristics, achievements, and doctrine of Buddha which distinguish him from all others. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, all Buddhas as all kings in this world, with mercy they use their 'ten powers' to make this change. They proclaim the Dharma

with unchanging voice, all beings understand according to their natures saying the Buddhas speak their own languages; this one of their eighteen characteristics. They expound the Dharma in one voice, sentient beings understand according to their versions deriving great benefit from what they have gathered; this is one more of the Buddhas' eighteen characteristics. They expound the Dharma in one voice, some beings are filled with fear, others are joyful, some hate it while others are from doubts relieved; 'this is one of His eighteen characteristics. They are the Possessors of 'ten powers', who have achieved fearlessness acquiring all eighteen characteristics; and who guide others like a pilot. They have untied all bonds; who have reached the other shore; who can all worlds deliver; and who from birth and death are free. They know how living beings come and go and penetrates all things to win their freedom, who are skillful in nirvanic deeds, cannot be soiled like the lotus. They plumb the depths of everything without hindrance, who are like space and rely on nothing.

***Do Not Use the Mortal Mind to Preach Immortal Reality:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Three, the Buddha said to Mahakatyayana: "You go to Vimalakirti to enquire after his health on my behalf." Mahakatyayana said: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health. For once after the Buddha had expounded the essential aspects of the Dharma to a group of bhiksus, I followed Him to explain to them the meanings of impermanence, suffering, voidness, egolessness and nirvana. "Vimalakirti came and said: 'Hey, Mahakatyayana, do not use your mortal mind to preach immortal reality. Mahakatyayana, all things are fundamentally above creation and destruction; this is what impermanence means. The five aggregates are perceived as void and not arising; this is what suffering means. All things are basically non-existent; this is what voidness means. Ego and its absence are not a duality; this is what egolessness means. All things basically are not what they seem to be, they cannot be subject to extinction now; this is what nirvana means. After Vimalakirti had expounded the Dharma, the bhiksus present succeeded in liberating their minds. Hence, I am not qualified to call on him and inquire after his health."

***Not Coming Means Coming; Not Seeing Means Seeing:***

A transliteration of the Sanskrit "Anagamin." This is a Hinayana sage

who has fully severed the afflictions of the desire realm and will not again be reborn in this world. Anagamin is one who attains the third stage of Sainthood in Hinayana schools, who is no more reborn in this world. After death he is born in the Pure Lands (Abodes) or in the rupa or arupa heavens until he attains Arhatship or nirvana. According to Theravada Buddhism, anagamin is a person is free from the first five fetters of believing ego, doubt, clinging to rites and rules, sensual appetite, and resentment (who eliminated the first five fetters (samyojana): clinging to the idea of self, doubt, clinging to rituals and rules, sexual desire, and resentment). Neither coming into nor going out of existence. The original constituents of all things are eternal. Nothing comes, nothing goes, refuting the idea of 'disappearance' by the idea of 'come,' meaning neither coming-in nor going-out; refuting the idea of 'come' by the idea of 'go.' Cultivation without coming or going is one of Bodhisattvas' practices, because their physical, verbal, and mental doings have no actions. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Five, when entering the house, Manjusri saw only Vimalakirti lying on sick bed and was greeted by the upasaka who said: "Welcome, Manjusri, you come with no idea of coming and you see with no idea of seeing." Manjusri replied: "It is so, Venerable Upasaka, coming should not be further tied to (the idea of) coming, and going should not be further linked with (the concept of) going. Why? Because there is neither whence to come nor whither to go, and that which is visible cannot further be (an object of) seeing.

***Do Not Enclose the Great Sea In the Print of An Ox's Foot; Do Not Liken Sunlight to the Dim Glow of a Firefly:*** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter 3, Chapter on Disciples, the Buddha said to Purnamaitrayaniputra: "You call on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health on my behalf." Purnamaitrayaniputra said: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him and enquire after his health. This is because when I was once in a grove and was expounding the Dharma under a tree to a group of newly initiated bhiksus, Vimalakirti came and said: "Hey, Purnamaitrayanaiputra, you should first enter the state of samadhi to examine the minds of your listeners before expounding the Dharma to them. Do not put rotten food in precious bowls. You should know their minds and do not take their precious crystal for (ordinary) glass. If you do not know their propensities, do

not teach them Hinayana. They have no wounds, so do not hurt them. To those who want to tread the wide path, do not show narrow tracks. Do not enclose the great sea in the print of an ox's foot; do not liken sunlight to the dim glow of a firefly. Purnamaitryaniputra, these bhiksus have long ago developed the Mahayana mind but they now forget all about it; how can you teach them Hinayana? Wisdom as taught by Hinayana is shallow; it is like a blind man who cannot discern the sharp from the dull roots of living beings." At that time, Vimalakirti entered the state of samadhi and caused the bhiksus to remember their former lives when they had met five hundred Buddhas and had then planted seeds of excellent virtues, which they had dedicated to their quest of supreme enlightenment; they instantly awakened to their past and recovered their fundamental minds. They at once bowed with their heads at the feet of Vimalakirti, who then expounded the Dharma to them; they resumed their quest of supreme enlightenment without backsliding. I think that Sravakas, who do not know how to look into the roots of their listeners, should not expound the Dharma. Hence, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health.

***Spiritual Experience:*** The noted Buddhist declaration that life is pain or suffering, must not be understood as a message of pessimism. That life is pain is a plain statement of fact, and all our spiritual experience starts from this fact. In fact, the so-called "spiritual experience" is no more than the experience of pain raised above mere sensation. Those who cannot feel pain can never go beyond themselves. All religious-minded people are sufferers of life-pain. The Buddha says that Vimalakirti is sick because all sentient beings are sick. When we are surrounded by sickness on all sides, how can we, if spiritually disposed, be free from being sick? The heart of the Compassionate One always beats with those of his fellow-beings, sentient and non-sentient.

***Merits & Wisdom:*** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, Bodhisattvas always cultivate their minds by means of merits and wisdom, with which they embellished their physical features which were unsurpassable, thus, giving up all earthly adornments. Their towering reputation exceeded the height of Mount Sumeru. Their profound faith (in the uncreate) was unbreakable like a diamond. Their



treasures of the Dharma illuminated all lands and rained down nectar. Their speeches were profound and unsurpassed.

***The Country of All Fragrances:*** Sariputra was thinking of mealtime and of the food for the Bodhisattvas in the meeting when Vimalakirti, who read his thought, said to him: “The Buddha taught the eight forms of liberation which you have received for practice; do you know mix your desire to eat with His Dharma? If you want to eat, please wait for a moment and you will have a rare treat.” At that, Vimalakirti entered the state of samadhi and used his transcendental power to show to the assembly a country, which is above separated from this world by a distance represented by Buddha lands as countless as sand grains in forty-two Ganges rivers and which was called the country of All Fragrances, whose Buddha was called the Tathagata of the Fragrant Land, and was still there. The fragrance of that country surpassed all scents emitted by the devas in Buddha lands in the ten directions. In that Buddha land, there were neither sravakas nor pratyeka-buddhas but only pure and clean Bodhisattvas to whom that Buddha expounded the Dharma. All things there are formed by fragrances, such as palaces, the earth, gardens and parks which emit sweet scent, and the fragrance of its food spreads to countless worlds in the ten directions. Its Buddha and Bodhisattvas were sitting down for the meal offered to them by the sons of devas who were all called Glorious Fragrances and were setting their minds on the quest of supreme enlightenment. This was seen by all those present in the meeting. Vimalakirti said to his listeners: “Virtuous Ones, who of you can go there to beg for food from that Buddha?” As Manjusri was noted for his supernatural power, all the Bodhisattvas kept silent. At that time, Vimalakirti said: “Are not the Virtuous Ones ashamed (of their inability to do so)?” Manjusri retorted: “As the Buddha has said, those who have not yet study and practiced Mahayana should not be slighted.” Thereupon, Vimalakirti, without rising from his seat, used his transcendental power to create an illusory (bogus) Bodhisattva whose features were radiant and whose dignity was unsurpassable, overshadowing the whole assembly. He then said to this illusory Bodhisattva: “Ascend to the Fragrant Land to call on its Buddha, saying what I now tell you: ‘Upasaka Vimalakirti bows his head at your feet to pay his reverence and inquires respectfully about your happy tidings;

he hopes you are well and have no difficulties (in converting living beings) and that your vigor is full. He wishes to receive some leftovers from your meal to do the salvation work in the saha world for the purpose of converting to Mahayana those of the small vehicle and of spreading the renown of the Tathagata to make it known everywhere’.” After that, the illusory Bodhisattva ascended and was seen by the whole assembly to approach the Buddha of Fragrant Land and repeat what Vimalakirti had ordered him to say. When the Bodhisattvas there saw the messenger, they praised the rare visit, asking their Buddha: “Where does this Bodhisattva come from? Where is this world called saha? What does the small vehicle mean?” Their Buddha replied: “There is a world called saha, which is below and is separated from here by Buddha lands as countless as the sand grains in forty-two Ganges rivers, whose Buddha is called Sakyamuni and is now staying in the midst of five turbid conditions, where he teaches the supreme Dharma to those clinging to the small vehicle. Over there is a Bodhisattva called Vimalakirti who has achieved inconceivable liberation and is expounding the Dharma to other (young) Bodhisattvas. Hence, he has created an illusory messenger to extol my name and praise this land so that they can earn more merits.” The Bodhisattvas asked: “Who is that Bodhisattva who can create an illusory messenger and whose transcendental powers, fearlessness and ubiquity are so great?” That Buddha replied: “His (powers, fearlessness and ubiquity) are very great indeed. He used to send his illusory messengers to all places in the ten directions to perform the Bodhisattva work of salvation for the benefit of living beings.” That Buddha then filled a bowl of fragrant rice and handed it to the illusory messenger. All his nine million Bodhisattvas declared they all wished to go to saha to pay reverence to Sakyamuni Buddha and to see Vimalakirti and the other Bodhisattvas there. That Buddha warned them: “You may go there but hide your fragrance, if not, the people give rise to the wrong thought of clinging to it. You should also change your appearance in order not to provoke their self-abasement. To avoid wrong views do not slight them. Why? Because all worlds in the ten directions are (fundamentally immaterial) like space and because all Buddhas wishing to convert those of the small vehicle do not reveal completely to them their own pure and clean lands.” At that, the illusory

messenger received the bowl of fragrant rice and together with the nine million Bodhisattvas availed themselves of that Buddha's and Vimalakirti's transcendental powers, disappeared from the Fragrant Land and, a little later, arrived at Vimalakirti's abode. Vimalakirti then used his transcendental powers to make nine million lion thrones as majestic as those already there, for the visitors. The illusory messenger then handed him the bowl of rice the fragrance of which spread to the whole town of Vaisali and then to the whole great chiliocosm. Brahmin devotees at Vaisali perceived the fragrance and became elated; they praised the rare occurrence. Their chief, called "Lunar Canopy" took eighty-four thousand men to Vimalakirti's house where they saw many Bodhisattvas seated on majestic lion thrones; they were jubilant and paid reverence to the Bodhisattvas and the Buddha's chief disciples, and then stood at one side. Earthly and heavenly ghosts as well as the devas of the worlds of desire and of form who smelt the fragrance, came as well. At that time, Vimalakirti said to Sariputra and the sravakas: "Virtuous Ones, you may now take the Tathagata's immortal rice which has been infused with great compassion; do not give rise to the thought of limitation when taking it or you will not be able to digest it." When some sravakas thought that the small quantity of rice seemed insufficient for the whole assembly. The illusory Bodhisattva said: "Do not use the little virtue and intelligence of a sravaka to estimate the Tathagata's boundless blessing and wisdom; the four oceans are exhaustible but this rice is inexhaustible. If all men took and rolled it into a ball as large as (Mount) Sumeru, they would not have finished eating it by the end of the aeon. Why? Because food that has been left over by those who have practiced boundless morality and discipline (sila), serenity (dhyana) and wisdom (prajna), liberation and knowledge of liberation, and who have won all merits, is inexhaustible. Hence this bowl of rice will satisfy the whole meeting without being exhausted. The Bodhisattvas, Sravakas, devas and men who take it will experience comfort and joy, like the Bodhisattvas of all blessed pure lands. Their pores will give out profound fragrance which is like the scent of the trees in Fragrant Lands." Vimalakirti then asked the visiting Bodhisattvas: "How does the Tathagata of your land preach the Dharma?" They replied: "The Tathagata of our land does not use word

and speech to preach but uses the various fragrance to stimulate the devas in their observance of the commandments. They sit under fragrant trees and perceive how sweet the trees smell thereby realizing the samadhi derived from the store of all merits. When they realize this samadhi, they win all merits.” These Bodhisattvas then asked Vimalakirti: “How does the World Honoured One, Sakyamuni Buddha, preach the Dharma?” Vimalakirti replied: “Living beings of this world are pig-headed (stubborn) and difficult to convert; hence the Buddha uses strong language to tame them. He speaks of hells, animals and hungry ghosts in their planes (realms) of suffering; of the places of rebirth for stupid men as retribution for perverse deeds, words and thoughts, i.e. for killing, stealing, carnality, lying, double tongue, coarse language, affected speech, covetousness, anger, perverted views (which are the ten evils); for stinginess, breaking the precepts, anger, remissness, confused thoughts and stupidity (i.e. the six hindrances to the six paramitas); for accepting, observing and breaking the prohibitions; for things that should and should not be done; for obstructions and non-obstructions; for what is sinful and what is not; for purity and filthiness; for the worldly and holy states; for heterodoxy and orthodoxy; for activity and non-activity; and for samsara and nirvana. Since the minds of those who are difficult to convert are like monkeys, various methods of preaching are devised to check them so that they can be entirely tamed. Like elephants and horses which cannot be tamed without whipping them until they feel pain and become easily managed, the stubborn of this world can be disciplined only with bitter and eager words.” After hearing this, the visiting Bodhisattvas said: “We have never heard of the World Honoured One, Sakyamuni Buddha, who conceals his boundless sovereign power to appear as a beggar to mix with those who are poor in order to win their confidence (for the purpose of liberating them) and of the Bodhisattvas here who are indefatigable and so humble and whose boundless compassion caused their rebirth in this Buddha land.” Vimalakirti said: “As you have said, the Bodhisattvas of this world have strong compassion and their lifelong works of salvation for all living beings surpass those done in other pure lands during hundreds and thousands of aeons. Why? Because they achieved ten excellent deeds which are not required in other pure lands. What are these ten excellent deeds?

They are: 1, charity (dana) to succour the poor; 2, precept-keeping (sila) to help those who have broken the commandments; 3, patient endurance (ksanti) to subdue their anger; 4, zeal and devotion (virya) to cure their remissness; 5, serenity (dhyana) to stop their confused thoughts; 6, wisdom (prajna) to wipe out ignorance; 7, putting an end to the eight distressful conditions for those suffering from them; 8, teaching Mahayana to those who cling to Hinayana; 9, cultivation of good roots for those in want of merits; and 10, the four Bodhisattva winning devices for the purpose of leading all living beings to their goals (in Bodhisattva development). These are the ten excellent deeds.” The visiting Bodhisattvas asked: “How many Dharmas should a Bodhisattva achieve in this world to stop its morbid growth (defilements) in order to be reborn in the Buddha’s pure land?” Vimalakirti replied: “A Bodhisattva should bring to perfection eight Dharmas to stop morbid growth in this world in order to be reborn in the Pure Land. They are: 1, benevolence towards all living beings with no expectation of reward; 2, endurance of sufferings for all living beings dedicating all merits to them; 3, impartiality towards them with all humility free from pride and arrogance; 4, reverence to all Bodhisattvas with the same devotion as to all Buddhas (i.e. without discrimination between Bodhisattvas and Buddhas); 5, absence of doubt and suspicion when hearing (the expounding of) sutras which he has not heard before; 6, abstention from opposition to the sravaka Dharma, 7, abstention from discrimination in regard to donations and offerings received with no thought of self-profit in order to subdue his mind; and 8, self-examination without contending with others. Thus, he should achieve singleness of mind bent on achieving all merits; these are the eight Dharmas.” After Vimalakirti and Manjusri had thus expounded the Dharma, hundreds and thousands of devas developed the mind set on supreme enlightenment, and ten thousand Bodhisattvas realized the patient endurance of the uncreate.

***The Realm of Profound Joy Whose Buddha Is Aksobhya Buddha:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter 12, Chapter on Seeing Aksobhya-Buddha, Sariputra asked Vimalakirti: “Where did you die to be reborn here?” Vimalakirti asked back: “Is the (sravaka) Dharma which you have realized subject to death and rebirth?” Sariputra replied: “It is beyond death and birth.” Vimalakirti asked: “If there is

neither birth nor death, why did you ask me: ‘Where did you die to be reborn here?’ What do you think of illusory men and women created by an illusionist; are they subject to death and birth?” Sariputra replied: “They are not subject to death and birth. Have you not heard the Buddha say that all things are illusions?” Vimalakirti said: “Yes, if all things are illusions, why did you ask me where I died to be reborn here? Sariputra, death is unreal and deceptive, and means decay and destruction (to the worldly man), while life which is also unreal and deceptive means continuance to him. As to the Bodhisattva, although he disappears (in one place) he does not put an end to his good (deeds), and although he reappears (in another) he prevents evils from arising.” At that time, the Buddha said to Sariputra: “There is a (Buddha) land called the realm of Profound Joy whose Buddha is Aksobhya Buddha where Vimalakirti disappeared to come here.” Sariputra said: “It is a rare thing, World Honoured One, that this man could leave a pure land to come to this world full of hatred and harmfulness!” Vimalakirti asked Sariputra: Sariputra, what do you think of sunlight; when it appears does it unite with darkness?” Sariputra replied: “Where there is sunlight, there is no darkness.” Vimalakirti asked: “Why does the sun shine on Jambudvipa (this earth)?” Sariputra replied: “It shines to destroy darkness.” Vimalakirti said: “Likewise, a Bodhisattva, although born in an unclean Buddha land, does not join and unite with the darkness of ignorance but (teaches and) converts living beings to destroy the obscurity of klesa.” As the assembly admired and wished to see the Immutable Tathagata, the Bodhisattvas and sravakas of the pure land of Profound Joy. The Buddha who read their thoughts said to Vimalakirti: “Virtuous man, please show the Immutable Tathagata and the Bodhisattvas and sravakas of the land of Profound Joy to this assembly who want to see them.” Vimalakirti thought that he should, while remaining seated, take with his hand the world of Profound Joy with its iron enclosing mountains, hills, rivers, streams, ravines, springs, seas, Sumerus, sun, moon, stars, planets, palaces of heavenly dragons, ghosts, spirits and devas, Bodhisattvas, sravakas, towns, hamlets, men and women of all ages, the Immutable Tathagata, his bo-tree (bodhi-tree) and beautiful lotus blossoms, which were used to perform the Buddha work of salvation in the ten directions, as well as the tree flights of gemmed steps linking Jambudvipa (our earth) with

Trayastrimsas by which the devas descended to earth to pay reverence to the Immutable Tathagata and to listen to his Dharma, and by which men ascended to Trayastrimsas to see the devas. All this was the product of countless merits of the realm of Profound Joy, from the Akanistha heaven above to the seas below and was lifted by Vimalakirti with his right hand with the same ease with which a potter raises his wheel, taking everything to earth to show it to the assembly as if showing his own head-dress. Vimalakirti then entered the state of samadhi and used his supramundane power to take with his right hand the world of Profound Joy which he placed on earth. The Bodhisattvas, sravakas and some devas who had realized supramundane said to their Buddha: “World Honoured One, who is taking us away? Will you please protect us?” The Immutable Buddha said: “This is not done by me but by Vimalakirti who is using his supramundane power.” But those who had not won supramundane powers neither knew nor felt that they had changed place. The world of Profound Joy neither expanded nor shrank after landing on the earth which was neither compressed nor straitened, remaining unchanged as before. At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha said to the assembly: “Look at the Immutable Tathagata of the land of Profound Joy which is majestic, where the Bodhisattvas live purely and the (Buddha’s) disciples are spotless.” The assembly replied: “Yes, we have seen.” The Buddha said: “If a Bodhisattva wishes to live in such a pure and clean Buddha land, he should practise the path trodden by the Immutable Tathagata.” When the pure land of Profound Joy appeared fourteen nayutas of people in this saha world developed the mind set on supreme enlightenment, and vowed to be reborn in the realm of Profound Joy. Sakyamuni Buddha then prophesied their coming rebirth there. After the (visiting Bodhisattvas had done their) work of salvation for the benefit of living beings in this world, the pure land of Profound Joy returned to its original place. And this was seen by the whole assembly. The Buddha then said to Sariputra: “Have you seen the world of Profound Joy and its Immutable Tathagata?” Sariputra replied: “Yes, World Honoured One, I have. May all living beings win a pure land similar to that of the Immutable Buddha and achieve supramundane powers like those of Vimalakirti! World Honoured One, we shall soon realize a great benefit resulting from our meeting and paying obeisance to this man

now. And living beings, hearing this sutra now or after the Buddha's nirvana, will also realize a great benefit; how much more so, if after hearing it, they believe, understand, receive and uphold it or read, recite, explain and preach it, and practice its Dharma accordingly? He who receives this sutra with both hands, will in reality secure the treasure of the Dharma-gem; if, in addition, he reads, recites and understands its meaning and practices it accordingly, he will be blessed and protected by all Buddhas. Those making offerings to this man (Vimalakirti), will through him automatically make offerings to all Buddhas. He who copies this sutra to put it into practice, will be visited by the Tathagata who will come to his house. He who rejoices at hearing this sutra, is destined to win all knowledge (sarvajna). And he who can believe and understand this sutra, or even (any of) its four-line gathas and teaches it to others, will receive the (Buddha's) prophecy of his future realization of supreme enlightenment."

***The Abrupt Doctrine of the Great Vehicle:*** The abrupt doctrine means the training without word or order, directly appealing to one's own insight. This teaching emphasized on one's own insight by which one can attain enlightenment all at once. All words and speech will stop at once. Reason will present itself in its purity and action will always comply with wisdom and knowledge. The Mahayana immediate, abrupt, direct, sudden, or intuitive school, by right concentration of thought, or faith, apart from good works (deeds). This teaching expounds the abrupt realization of the ultimate truth without relying upon verbal explanations or progression through various stages of practice, found in Vimalakirti Sutra. This doctrine holds that if thought ceases to arise in one's mind, the man is a Buddha. Such an attainment may be gained through silence as shown by Vimalakirti, a saintly layman in Vaisali, or through meditation as in the case of Bodhidharma, the founder of Chinese Ch'an School.

***To Tread the Wrong Ways Means to Access to the Buddha Path:*** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Eight, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: "How does a Bodhisattva enter the Buddha path?" Vimalakirti replied: "If a Bodhisattva treads the wrong ways (without discrimination), he enters the Buddha path." Manjusri asked: "What do you mean by a Bodhisattva treading the wrong ways?" Vimalakirti replied: "(In his work of salvation) if a Bodhisattva is free from



irritation and anger while appearing in the fivefold uninterrupted hell; is free from the stain of sins while appearing in (other) hells; is free from ignorance, arrogance and pride while appearing in the world of animals; is adorned with full merits while appearing in the world of hungry ghosts; does not show his superiority while appearing in the (heavenly) worlds of form and beyond form; is immune from defilements while appearing in the world of desire; is free from anger while appearing as if he were resentful; uses wisdom to control his mind while appearing to be stupid; appears as if he were greedy but gives away all his outer (i.e. money and worldly) and inner (i.e. bodily) possessions without the least regret for his own life; appears as if he broke the prohibitions while delighting in pure living and being apprehensive of committing even a minor fault; appears as if he were filled with hatred while always abiding in compassionate patience; appears as if he were remiss while diligently practicing all meritorious virtues; appears as if he were disturbed while always remaining in the state of serenity; appears as if he were ignorant while possessing both mundane and supramundane wisdoms; appears as if he delighted in flattering and falsehood while he excels in expedient methods in conformity with straightforwardness as taught in the sutras; shows arrogance and pride while he is as humble as a bridge; appears as if he were tormented by troubles while his mind remains pure and clean; appears in the realm of demons while defeating heterodox doctrines to conform with the Buddha wisdom; appears in the realm of sravakas where he expounds the unheard of supreme Dharma; appears in the realm of pratyeka-buddhas where he converts living beings in fulfillment of great compassion; appears amongst the poor but extends to them his precious hand whose merits are inexhaustible; appears amongst the crippled and disabled with his own body adorned with the excellent physical marks (of the Buddha); appears amongst the lower classes but grows the seed of the Buddha nature with all relevant merits; appears amongst the emaciated and ugly showing his strong body to the admiration of them all; appears as an old and ill man but is actually free from all ailments with no fear of death; appears as having all the necessities of life but always sees into impermanence and is free from greed; appears to have wives, concubines and maids but always keeps away from the morass of the five desires; appears

amongst the dull-witted and stammerers to help them win the power of speech derived from the perfect control of mind; appears amongst heretics to teach orthodoxy and deliver all living beings; enters all worlds of existence to help them uproot the causes leading thereto; and appears as if entering nirvana but without cutting off birth and death; Manjusri, this Bodhisattva can tread heterodox ways because he has access to the Buddha path.”

***Silent Non-Two:*** "Silent non-two" (Moku-funi) is a Zen expression indicating that the nondualistic nature of reality, the true nature, or the Buddha-nature, inherent in all phenomena, is best expressed through silence. The expression comes from the Vimalakirti Sutra, in which the Bodhisattva Manjusri praises the layman Vimalakirti, whom Zen holds in particularly high esteem, saying that his silence is a better expression of nonduality than any exposition of the teaching. In Zen one also speaks in this context of the "thundering silence" of Vimalakirti. However, almost all Buddhist scholars consider Vimalakirti a legendary figure.

***Parents-Husbands and Wives-Children-Friends-Relatives:*** Parents, wife and children, relatives and kinsmen, official and private friends, and where are your pages and maids, elephants and horse carts. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Eight, a Bodhisattva called Universal Manifestation, who was present asked Vimalakirti: “Who are your parents, wife and children, relatives and kinsmen, official and private friends, and where are your pages and maids, elephants and horse carts?” In reply Vimalakirti chanted the following: “Wisdom-perfection is a Bodhisattva’s Mother, his father is expedient method, For the teachers of all living beings come, Only from these two (upaya and prajna). His wife is joy in Dharma’s law; Kindness and pity are his daughters; His sons morality and truthfulness; Absolute voidness his quiet abode. Passions are his disciples Whom he transforms at will. Bodhipaksita dharma are his friends. Helping him to win supreme enlightenment. All other perfections are his companions. The four winning methods are his courtesans, hymns, chants and intonations of Dharma are his melodies. Complete control over passions is his domain, passionlessness is his grove. The (seven) grades of bodhi are the flowers bearing the fruit of wisdom’s liberation. The pool of eightfold liberation holds calm water, which is clear and full.

The seven blossoms of purity are well arranged to bathe this undefiled (Bodhisattva) man. Whose five supernatural powers are walking elephants and horses while the Mahayana is his vehicle, which controlled by the one mind, rolls through the eight noble paths. Thirty-two distinctive marks dignify his body; while (eighty) excellences add to it their grace. Shamefulness is his raiment, and deep mind his coiffure. The seven riches that he owns are his assets which, used to teach others, earn more dividends. Dedicating all merits (to Buddhahood), his practice of the Dharma has received wins far greater profit. The four dhyanas are his meditation bed, which from pure living originates. Much learning increases wisdom announcing self-awakening. His broth is the flavour of release. The precepts are his perfumed. Salve and pure mind is his bath. By killing the culprit klesa is his boldness unsurpassed. By defeating the four demons, he plants his triumphant banner as a bodhimandala. Though he knows there is neither birth nor death, he is reborn to show himself to all, appearing in many countries. Like the sun seen by everyone. When making offerings to countless Buddhas in the ten directions, he does not discriminate between himself and them. Although He knows that Buddha lands are void like living beings. He goes on practicing the Pure Land (Dharma) to teach and convert men. In their kinds, features, voices and bearing, this fearless Bodhisattva can appear the same as they. He, knows the mischief demons, do but appears as one of them. Using wise expedient means to look like them at will. Or he appears old, ill and dying to make living beings realize that all things are but illusion, to free them from all handicaps. Or he shows the aeon's end with fire destroying heaven and earth, so that those clinging to permanence realize the impermanence of things. Then countless living beings call on this Bodhisattva, inviting Him to their homes to convert them to the Buddha path. In heterodox books, spells, skills, magic, arts and talents, he appears to be an expert to help and benefit (all) living beings. Appearing in their midst, he joins the Sangha in order to release them from defilement, to prevent their slipping into heresy. Then, is he seen as the sun, moon or heaven as Brahma or the lord of (all) the world. At times, as earth or water or as the wind and fire. When they fall ill or epidemics rage, he prepares medicinal herbs for them to take to cure their illness or infection. When famine prevails, he

makes food and drink to save them from thirst and hunger, before teaching them the Dharma. In times of war, he teaches kindness mercy to convert living beings, so that they can live in peace. When armies line up for battle, he gives equal strength to both. With his authority and power, he forces them to be reconciled and live in harmony. To all countries where there are hells, he comes unexpectedly to relieve their sufferings. Wherever animals devour one another, he appears among them urging them to do good. Seeming to have the five desires, he is always meditating to upset the demons and prevent their mischief. Like that thing most rare, a lotus blossoming in a scorching fire, he meditates amidst desires, which also is a thing most rare. Or, he appears as a prostitute to entice those, who to lust is a given. First, using temptation to hook them, he then leads them to the Buddha wisdom. He appears as a district magistrate, or as a chief of the caste of traders, a state preceptor or high official to protect living beings. To the poor and destitute, he appears with boundless purse to advise and guide them until they develop the bodhi mind. To the proud and arrogant, he appears as powerful to overcome their vanity until they tread the path supreme. Then he comes to comfort people who are cowards, first he makes them fearless, then urges them to seek the truth. Or he appears without desires and acts, like a seer with five spiritual powers to convert living beings by teaching them morality, patience and mercy. To those needing support and help, he may appear as a servant to please and induce them to grow the Tao mind. Providing them with all they need to enter on the Buddha path; thus using expedient methods to supply them with all their needs. Then as with boundless truth, his deeds are also endless; with his wisdom that has no limit, he frees countless living beings. If all the Buddhas were to spend countless aeons in praising his merits, they could never count them fully. Who, after hearing this Dharma, develops not the bodhi mind, can only be a worthless man without wisdom.”

***Bondage and Freedom from Bondage:*** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva obeyed the Buddha’s command to call on Vimalakirti to enquire after his health, Vimalakirti reminded that a Bodhisattva should not tie himself up (with wrong views). What is tying and what is untying? Clinging to serenity (dhyana) is a Bodhisattva’s bondage, but his expedient rebirth (for the

salvation of others) is freedom from bondage. Further, he is held in bondage by wisdom which lacks expedient methods (upaya), but is liberated by wisdom supported by expedient device; he is (also) held in bondage by expedient methods which are not upheld by wisdom but is liberated by expedient methods backed by wisdom. What is bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods? It is bondage caused by the Bodhisattva's desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection while practicing for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely,) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called bondage by wisdom unsupported by expedient methods (upaya). What is liberation by wisdom backed by expedient methods? It is liberation achieved in the absence of desire to embellish the Buddha land (with merits) in order to bring living beings to perfection, while practicing unremittingly for his self-control (the three gates to nirvana, namely) voidness, formlessness and inactivity. This is called liberation by wisdom supported by expedient methods (upaya). What is bondage by expedient methods unsupported by wisdom? It is bondage caused by a Bodhisattva's lack of determination to keep from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all wisdom roots. This is called bondage by expedient methods which lack wisdom. What is liberation by expedient methods sustained by wisdom? It is liberation won by a Bodhisattva who keeps from desire, anger, perverse views and other troubles (klesa) while planting all virtuous roots which he dedicates to his realization of supreme enlightenment. This is called liberation by expedient methods sustained by wisdom.

***Deep Entering Into the Theory of Causation:*** To infiltrate the theory of causation. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, Bodhisattvas always enter deep into all (worldly) causes but cut off all heretical views, for they were already free from all dualities and had rooted out all (previous) habits. They were fearless and gave the lion's roar to proclaim the Dharma, their voices being like thunder. They could not be gauged, for they were beyond all measures.

***Ten-Foot-Square Room:*** One day, Zen master Ke-Ch'in-Fo-Kuo (1063-1135) said, "Vimalakirti, who in the ancient path was a Buddha, possessed a family and helped Sakyamuni in his teaching. He had wondrous eloquence, wondrous perception, wondrous functioning and

wondrous power. Inside his ten-foot-square room he placed thirty-two thousand jeweled-lion thrones and hosted an assembly of eighty thousand in perfect comfort. Tell me, what does this mean? Can one attribute it to the wondrous functioning of his supernatural powers? Don't get the wrong idea!"

***Lecturing Should Agree With the Absolute Dharma:*** According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, the Buddha said to Maudgalaputra: "Go to Vimalakirti and enquire after his health on my behalf." Maudgalyayana said: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to enquire after his health. The reason is that one day when I came to Vaisali to expound the Dharma to lay Buddhists (upasakas) in the street there, Vimalakirti came and said: "Hey Maudgalyayana, when expounding the Dharma to these upasakas, you should not preach like that for what you teach should agree with the absolute Dharma, which is free from the (illusion of) living beings; is free from the self for it is beyond an ego; from life for it is beyond birth and death and from the concept of a man which lacks continuity (thought seemingly continuous, like a torch whirled around); is always still for it is beyond (stirring) phenomena; is above form for it is causeless; is inexpressible for it is beyond word and speech; is unexplainable for it is beyond intellect; is formless like empty space; is beyond sophistry for it is immaterial; is egoless for it is beyond (the duality of) subject and object; is free from discrimination for it is beyond consciousness; is without compare for it is beyond all relativities; is beyond cause for it is causeless; is identical with Dharmata (or Dharma-nature), the underlying nature (of all things); is in line with the absolute for it is independent; dwells in the region of absolute reality, being above and beyond all dualities; is unmovable for it does not rely on the six objects of sense; neither comes nor goes for it does not stay anywhere; is in line with voidness, formlessness and inactivity; is beyond beauty and ugliness; neither increases nor decreases; is beyond creation and destruction; does not return to anywhere; is above the six sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind; is neither up nor down; is eternal and immutable; and is beyond contemplation and practice. "Maudgalyayana, such being the characteristics of the Dharma, how can it be expounded?" For expounding, it is beyond speech and indication, and listening to it is above hearing and grasping. This is like

a conjurer expounding the Dharma to illusory men, and you should always bear all this in mind, when expounding the Dharma. You should be clear about the sharp or dull roots of your audience and have a good knowledge of this to avoid all sorts of hindrance. Before expounding the Dharma, you should use your great compassion (for all living beings) to extol Mahayana to them and think of repaying your own debt of gratitude to the Buddha by striving to preserve the three treasures (of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) for ever. “When Vimalakirti spoke, eight hundred upasakas set their minds on seeking supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi). I do not have the eloquence and I am, therefore, not fit to call on him to inquire after his health.”

***The Nature of Sin Is Neither Within nor Without, Nor in Between:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Three, the Buddha said to Upali: “You call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health on my behalf.” Upali said: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti to inquire after his health. For once, two bhiksus broke the prohibitions, and being shameful of their sins, they dared not call on the Buddha. They came to ask me: ‘Upali, we have broken the commandments and are ashamed of our sins, so we dare not ask the Buddha about this and come to you. Please teach us the rules of repentance so as to wipe out our sins.’ I then taught them the rules of repentance. At that time, Vimalakirti came and said: ‘Hey, Upali, do not aggravate their sins which you should wipe out at once without further disturbing their minds. Why? Because the nature of sin is neither within nor without, nor in between. As the Buddha has said, living beings are impure because their mind are impure; if their minds are pure, they are all pure. And, mind also is neither within nor without nor in between. Their minds being such, so, are their sins. Likewise all things do not go beyond (their) suchness. Upali, when your mind is liberated, is there any remaining impurity?’ I replied: ‘There will be no more.’ He said: ‘Likewise, the minds of all living beings are free from impurities. Upali, false thoughts are impure and the absence of false thoughts is purity. Inverted (ideas) are impure and the absence of inverted (ideas) is purity. Clinging to ego is impure and non-clinging to ego is purity. Upali, all phenomena rise and fall without staying (for an instant) like an illusion and lightning. All phenomena do not wait for

one another and do not stay for the time of a thought. They all derive from false views and are like a dream and a flame, the moon in water, and an image in a mirror for they are born from wrong thinking. He who understands this is called a keeper of the rules of discipline and he who knows it is called a skillful interpreter (of the precepts).’ At that time, the two bhiksus declared: ‘What a supreme wisdom which is beyond the reach of Upali who cannot expound the highest principle of discipline and morality?’ I said: ‘Since I left the Buddha I have not met a sravaka or a Bodhisattva who can surpass his rhetoric, for his great wisdom and perfect enlightenment have reached such a high degree.’ Thereupon, the two bhiksus got rid of their doubts and repentance, set their mind on the quest of supreme enlightenment and took the vow to make all living beings acquire the same power of speech. Hence, I am not qualified to call on Vimalakirti and inquire after his health.”

***Equanimity:*** Equanimity is defined as the mind in equilibrium, i.e. above the distinction of things or persons, of self or others; indifferent, having abandoned the world and all things, and having no affections or desires. Once we have fully developed Upeksa, we will feel true compassion for all beings, and we will have the ability to eliminate any partiality from our daily attitudes toward other people. Indifference, the state of mental equilibrium in which the mind has no bent or attachment, and neither meditates nor acts, a state of indifference. Equanimity, one of the most important Buddhist virtues. Upeksa refers to a state that is neither joy nor suffering but rather independent of both, the mind that is in equilibrium and elevated above all distinctions. Neutral feeling. One of the chief Buddhist virtues, that of renunciation, leading to a state of indifference without pleasure or pain, or independence of both. It is defined as the mind in equilibrium, i.e. above the distinction of things or persons, of self or others; indifferent, having abandoned the world and all things, and having no affections or desires. Upeksa is one of the seven Bodhyangas. The Buddha taught: “If any Buddhist wishes to penetrate into the profound realm of liberation of the Maha-Bodhisattvas, must first be able to let go of all of the five desires of ordinary people.” According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, when Manjusri Bodhisattva called on to enquire after Upasaka Vimalakirti’s health, Manjusri asked Vimalakirti about “Upeksa” as follows: Manjusri asked Vimalakirti: “What should be relinquish



(upeksa) of a Bodhisattva?” Vimalakirti replied: “In his work of salvation, a Bodhisattva should expect nothing (i.e. no gratitude or reward) in return.”

***Body Illustrated in Ten Comparisons:*** According to The Vimalakirti Sutra, the unreality of dependent or conditioned things, e.g. the body or self, illustrated in ten comparisons: As sea water foam, as water bubble, as twinkling flame, as plantain, as illusion, as dream, as shadow, as echo, as cloud, and as lightning.



## ***Chapter Fifty-Two***

### ***The Path to the Buddha Land According to the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. A Summary of Buddhism & the Path to the Buddha Land In Buddhist Teachings:***

Someone says that the word religion is not appropriate to call Buddhism because Buddhism is not a religion, but a moral philosophy. For me, Buddhism is a Religion of the Truth and a Living Philosophy. Buddhism is both a religion and philosophy of life based on the teachings set forth by Shakyamuni Buddha over 2500 years ago in India. Before going further we should briefly analyze the two words “Buddha” and “Philosophy”. First, the name Buddhism comes from the word “budhi” which means ‘to wake up’ and thus Buddhism is the philosophy of awakening. This philosophy has its origins in the experience of the man named Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, who was himself awakened at the age of 36. Buddhism is now older than 2,500 years old and has almost one third of the population of the world are its followers. Until a hundred years ago, Buddhism was mainly an Asian philosophy but increasingly it is gaining adherents in Europe and America. Secondly, the word philosophy comes from two words ‘philo’ which means ‘love’ and ‘sophia’ which means ‘wisdom’. So philosophy is the love of wisdom or love and wisdom, both meanings describing Buddhism perfectly. Buddhism teaches that we should try to develop our intellectual capacity to the fullest so that we can understand clearly. It also teaches us to develop loving kindness and compassion so that we can become (be like) a true friend to all beings. So Buddhism is a philosophy but not just a philosophy. It is the supreme philosophy. In the year 563 B.C. a baby was born into a royal family in northern India. He grew up in wealth and luxury but soon found that worldly comfort and security do not guarantee real happiness. He was deeply moved by the suffering he saw all around, so He resolved to find the key to human happiness. It couldn’t have been an easy thing for the Buddha to leave his family. He must have worried

and hesitated for a long time before he finally left. There were two choices, dedicating himself to his family or dedicating himself to the whole world. In the end, his great compassion made him give himself to the whole world. And the whole world still benefits from his sacrifice. This was perhaps the most significant sacrifice ever made. After careful considerations, when he was 29 he left his wife and child and his Royal Palace and set off to sit at the feet of the great religious teachers of the day to learn from them. They taught him much but none really knew the cause of human sufferings and afflictions and how it could be overcome. Eventually, after six years study and meditation he had an experience in which all ignorance fell away and he suddenly understood. From that day onwards, he was called the Buddha, the Awakened One. He lived for another 45 years in which time he travelled all over northern India teaching others what he had discovered. His compassion and patience were legendary and he made hundreds of thousands of followers. In his eightieth year, old and sick, but still happy and at peace, he finally passed away into nirvana. After the passing of Shakyamuni Buddha, his disciples recorded all of his teaching into scriptures called sutras. There is no one book that contains all the information the Buddha taught, but the total of more than 800 books that recorded a vast number of sutras, vinaya and abhidharma.

In Buddhism, there is no distinction between a divine, or a supreme being, and an ordinary person. The highest form of a human being is a Buddha. All people have the inherent ability and potential to become Buddhas if they follow and cultivate the teachings set forth by Shakyamuni Buddha. By following the Buddha's teachings and Buddhist practices, anyone can eventually become Buddhas. A Buddha is also a human being, but one who comes to a realization and thoroughly understands the workings and meaning of life and the universe. When one comes to that realization and truly knows and understands oneself and everything, he is called "Buddha" or he is said to have attained enlightenment. He is also called "the Enlightened One."

Even though the Buddha is dead but 2,500 years later his teachings still help and save a lot of people, his example still inspires people, his words still continue to change lives. Only a Buddha could have such

power centuries after his death. The Buddha did not claim that he was a god, the child of god or even the messenger from a god. He was simply a man who perfected himself and taught that if we followed his example, we could perfect ourselves also. He never asked his followers to worship him as a god. In fact, He prohibited his followers to praise him as a god. He told his followers that he could not give favours or blessings to those who worship him with personal expectations or calamities to those who don't worship him. He asked his followers to respect him as students respect their teacher. He also reminded his followers to worship a statue of the Buddha means to remind ourselves to try to develop peace and love within ourselves. The perfume of incense reminds us of the pervading influence of virtue, the lamp reminds us of the light of knowledge and the followers which soon fade and die, remind us of impermanence. When we bow, we express our gratitude to the Buddha for what his teachings have given us. This is the core nature of Buddhist worship. A lot of people have misunderstood the meaning of "worship" in Buddhism, even devout Buddhists. Buddhists do not believe that the Buddha is a god, so in no way they could possibly believe that a piece of wood or metal (statue) is a god. In Buddhism, the statue of the Buddha is used to symbolize human perfection. The statue of the Buddha also reminds us of the human dimension in Buddhist teaching, the fact that Buddhism is man-centered, not god-centered, that we must look inward (within) not outward (without) to find perfection and understanding. So in no way one can say that Buddhists worship god or idols. In fact, a long long time ago, when primitive man found himself in a dangerous and hostile situations, the fear of wild animals, of not being able to find enough food, of diseases, and of natural calamities or phenomena such as storms, hurricanes, volcanoes, thunder, and lightning, etc. He found no security in his surroundings and he had no ability to explain those phenomena, therefore, he created the idea of gods in order to give him comfort in good times, and courage him in times of danger and consolation when things went wrong. They believed that god arranged everything. Generations after generations, man continues to follow his ancestors in a so-called "faith in god" without any further thinkings. Some says they believe in god because god responds to their prayers when they feel fear or frustration. Some say they believe in god

because their parents and grandparents believed in god. Some others say that they prefer to go to church than to temple because those who go to churches seem richer and more honorable than those who go to temples, and so on, and so on.

The Four Noble Truths, A fundamental doctrine of Buddhism which clarifies the cause of suffering and the way to emancipation. Sakyamuni Buddha is said to have expounded the Four Noble Truths in the Deer Park in Sarnath during his first sermon after attaining Buddhahood. The Buddha organized these ideas into the Fourfold Truth as follows: "Life consists entirely of suffering; suffering has causes; the causes of suffering can be extinguished; and there exists a way to extinguish the cause." The noble Eightfold Path or the eight right (correct) ways. The path leading to release from suffering, the goal of the third in the four noble truths. These are eight in the 37 bodhi ways to enlightenment. Practicing the Noble Eight-fold Path can bring about real advantages such as improvement of personal conditions. It is due to the elimination of all evil thoughts, words, and actions that we may commit in our daily life, and to the continuing practice of charitable work; improvement of living conditions. If everyone practiced this noble path, the world we are living now would be devoid of all miseries and sufferings caused by hatred, struggle, and war between men and men, countries and countries, or peoples and peoples. Peace would reign forever on earth; attainment of enlightenment or Bodhi Awareness. The Noble Eight-fold Path is the first basic condition for attaining Bodhi Consciousness that is untarnished while Alaya Consciousness is still defiled. In Buddhism, the mind is immeasurable. It not only benefit immeasurable living beings, bringing immeasurable blessings to them, and producing immeasurable highly spiritual attainments in a world, in one life, but also spreads all over immeasurable worlds, in immeasurable future lives, shaping up immeasurable Buddha. The four immeasurables or infinite Buddha-states of mind. The four kinds of boundless mind, or four divine abodes. These states are called illimitables because they are to be radiated towards all living beings without limit or obstruction. They are also called brahmaviharas or divine abodes, or sublime states, because they are the mental dwellings of the brahma divinities in the Brahma-world.

In both forms of Buddhism, Theravada and Mahayana, the Buddha taught his disciples, especially lay-disciples to keep the Five Precepts. Although details are not given in the canonical texts, Buddhist teachers have offered many good interpretations about these five precepts. The five basic commandments of Buddhism. The five basic prohibitions binding on all Buddhists, monks and laymen alike; however, these are especially for lay disciples. The observance of these five ensures rebirth in the human realm. The truth law of causation is one of the most important teaching of the Buddha. Cause is a primary force that produces an effect; effect is a result of that primary force. The law of causation governs everything in the universe without exception. Law of cause and effect or the relation between cause and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of “Karma”. The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise every resultant action or effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases “happiness” is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one’s having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one. Causality is a natural law, mentioning the relationship between cause and effect. All things come into being not without cause, since if there is no cause, there is no effect and vice-versa. As so sow, so shall you reap. Cause and effect never conflict with each other. In other words, cause and effect are always consistent with each other. If we want to have beans, we must sow bean seeds. If we want to have oranges, we must sow orange seeds. If wild weeds are planted, then it’s unreasonable for one to hope to harvest edible fruits. One cause cannot have any effect. To produce an effect, it is necessary to have some specific conditions. For instance, a grain of rice cannot produce a rice plant without the presence of sunlight, soil, water, and care. In the cause there is the effect; in the effect there is the cause. From the

current cause, we can see the future effect and from the present effect we discerned the past cause. The development process from cause to effect is sometimes quick, sometimes slow. Sometimes cause and effect are simultaneous like that of beating a drum and hearing its sound. Sometimes cause and effect are three or four months away like that of the grain of rice. It takes about three to four, or five to six months from a rice seed to a young rice plant, then to a rice plant that can produce rice. Sometimes it takes about ten years for a cause to turn into an effect. For instance, from the time the schoolboy enters the elementary school to the time he graduates a four-year college, it takes him at least 14 years. Other causes may involve more time to produce effects, may be the whole life or two lives. By understanding and believing in the law of causality, Buddhists will not become superstitious, or alarmed, and rely passively on heaven authority. He knows that his life depends on his karmas. If he truly believes in such a causal mechanism, he strives to accomplish good deeds, which can reduce and alleviate the effect of his bad karmas. If he continues to live a good life, devoting his time and effort to practicing Buddhist teachings, he can eliminate all of his bad karmas. He knows that he is the only driving force of his success or failure, so he will be discouraged, put the blame on others, or rely on them. He will put more effort into performing his duties satisfactorily. Realizing the value of the law of causality, he always cares for what he thinks, tells or does in order to avoid bad karma.

The truth of karma is one of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. Everything that we encounter in this life, good or bad, sweet or bitter, is a result of what we did in the past or from what we have done recently in this life. Good karma produces happiness; bad karma produces pain and suffering. So, what is karma? Karma is a Sanskrit word, literally means a deed or an action and a reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect. Moral or any good or bad action (however, the word 'karma' is usually used in the sense of evil bent or mind resulting from past wrongful actions) taken while living which causes corresponding future retribution, either good or evil transmigration (action and reaction, the continuing process of cause and effect). Our present life is formed and created through our actions and thoughts in our previous lives. Our present life and circumstances are the product



of our past thoughts and actions, and in the same way our deeds in this life will fashion our future mode of existence. A karma can be created by body, speech, or mind. There are good karma, evil karma, and indifferent karma. All kinds of karma are gathered or accumulated by the Manas and stored in the Alayavijnana. Karma can be cultivated through religious practice (good), and uncultivated. For sentient being has lived through innumerable reincarnations, each has boundless karma. Whatever kind of karma is, a result would be followed accordingly, sooner or later. No one can escape the result of his own karma. As mentioned above, karma is a product of body, speech and mind; while recompense is a product or result of karma. Karma is like a seed sown, and recompense is like a tree grown with fruits. When the body does good things, the mouth speaks good words, the mind thinks of good ideas, then the karma is a good seed. In the contrary, the karma is an evil seed. Thus the Buddha taught: “To lead a good life, you Buddhists should make every effort to control the activities of your body, speech, and mind. Do not let these activities hurt you and others.” Recompense corresponds Karma without any exception. Naturally, good seed will produce a healthy tree and delicious fruits, while bad seed gives worse tree and fruits. Therefore, unless we clearly understand and diligently cultivate the laws of cause and effect, or karma and result, we cannot control our lives and experience a life the way we wish to. According to the Buddha-Dharma, no gods, nor heavenly deities, nor demons can assert their powers on us, we are totally free to build our lives the way we wish. If we accumulate good karma, the result will surely be happy and joyous. No demons can harm us. In the contrary, if we create evil karma, no matter how much and earnestly we pray for help, the result will surely be bitter and painful, no gods can save us.

When we act, either good or bad, we see our own actions, like an outsider who witnesses. The pictures of these actions will automatically imprint in our Alaya-vijnana (subconscious mind); the seed of these actions are sown there, and await for enough conditions to spring up its tree and fruits. Similarly, the effect in the alaya-vijnana (subconscious mind) of the one who has received our actions. The seed of either love or hate has been sown there, waiting for enough conditions to spring up its tree and fruits. The Buddha taught: “If someone give us something,

but we refuse to accept. Naturally, that person will have to keep what they plan to give. This means our pocket is still empty.” Similarly, if we clearly understand that karmas or our own actions will be stored in the alaya-vijnana (subconscious mind) for us to carry over to the next lives, we will surely refuse to store any more karma in the ‘subconscious mind’ pocket. When the ‘subconscious mind’ pocket is empty, there is nothing for us to carry over. That means we don’t have any result of either happiness or suffering. As a result, the cycle of birth and death comes to an end, the goal of liberation is reached.

The Buddha admitted the presence of sufferings and afflictions in human life because of the ignorant attachment to all things. It is truly wrong to believe that Buddhism is a religion of pessimism. This is not true even with a slight understanding of basic Buddhism. When the Buddha said that human life was full of sufferings and afflictions, he did not mean that life was pessimistic. In this manner, the Buddha admitted the presence of sufferings and afflictions in human life, and by a method of analysis he pointed out to his disciples that attachment to things without a correct view as to their nature is the cause of sufferings and afflictions. Impermanence and change are inherent in the nature of all things. This is their true nature and this is the correct view. He concluded: “As long as we are at variance with this truth, we are bound to run into conflicts. We cannot alter or control the nature of things. The result is ‘hope deferred made the heart sick’. The only solution lies in correcting our point of view.” In fact, the thirst for things begets sorrow. When we like someone or something, we wish that they belonged to us and were with us forever. We never think about their true nature, in other words, or we refuse to think about their true nature. We expect them to survive forever, but time devours everything. Eventually we must yield to old age and freshness of the morning dew disappears before the rising sun. In the Nirvana Sutra, when Ananda and other disciples were so sad and cried when the Buddha lay on his death-bed, the Buddha taught: “Ananda! Lament not. Have I not already told you that from all good things we love and cherish we would be separated, sooner or later... that they would change their nature and perish. How then can Tathagata survive? This is not possible!” This is the philosophy which underlies the doctrine of the “Three Marks” (impermanence, suffering and no-self) of existence

of the Buddhist view of life and the world. All Buddhist values are based on this. The Buddha expected of his disciples, both laity and clergy, good conduct and good behavior and decent standard of living in every way. With him, a simple living did not amount to degenerate human existence or to suffer oneself. The Buddha advised his disciples to follow the “Middle Path”. It is to say not to attach to things nor to abandon them. The Buddha does not deny the “beauty”, however, if one does not understand the true nature of the objects of beauty, one may end up with sufferings and afflictions or grief and disappointment. In the “Theragatha”, the Buddha brought up the story of the Venerable Pakka. One day, going to the village for alms, Venerable Pakka sat down beneath a tree. Then a hawk, seizing some flesh flew up into the sky. Other hawks saw that attacked it, making it drop the piece of meat. Another hawk grabbed the fallen flesh, and was flundered by other hawks. And Pakka thought: “Just like that meat are worldly desires, common to all, full of pain and woe.” And reflecting hereon, and how they were impermanent and so on, he continued to contemplate and eventually won Arahanship. The Buddha advised his disciples not to avoid or deny or attach to objects of beauty. Try not to make objects of beauty our objects of like or dislike. Whatever there is in the world, pleasant or unpleasant, we all have a tendency to attach to them, and we develop a like or dislike to them. Thus we continue to experience sufferings and afflictions. Buddhists recognize beauty where the sense can perceive it, but in beauty we should also see its own change and destruction. And Buddhist should always remember the Buddha’s teaching regarding to all component things: “Things that come into being, undergo change and are eventually destroyed.” Therefore, Buddhists admire beauty but have no greed for acquisition and possession. In order to terminate the suffering and affliction in life, The Buddha advises his fourfold disciple: “Do no evil, to do only good, to purify the mind.” In the Agama Sutra, the Buddha taught: “Do not commit wrongs, devoutly practice all kinds of good, and purify the mind, that’s Buddhism” or “To do no evil, to do only good, to purify the will, is the doctrine of all Buddhas.” These four sentences are said to include all the Buddha-teachings.

Truly speaking, the Truth in Buddhist Teachings is always in accord with Life and Science at all times. The main teachings of the

Buddha focus on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path. They are called “Noble” because they enoble one who understand them and they are called “Truths” because they correspond with reality. Buddhists neither believe in negative thoughts nor do they believe in pessimistic ideas. In the contrary, Buddhists believe in facts, irrefutable facts that all know, that all have aimed to experience and that all are striving to reach. Those who believe in god or gods usually claim that before an individual is created, he does not exist, then he comes into being through the will of a god. He lives his life and then according to what he believes during his life, he either goes to eternal heaven or eternal hell. Some believe that they come into being at conception due to natural causes, live and then die or cease to exist, that’s it! Buddhism does not accept either of these concepts. According to the first explanation, if there exists a so-called almighty god who creates all beings with all his loving kindness and compassion, it is difficult to explain why so many people are born with the most dreadful deformities, or why so many people are born in poverty and hunger. It is nonsense and unjust for those who must fall into eternal hells because they do not believe and submit themselves to such a so-called almighty god. The second explanation is more reasonable, but it still leaves several unanswered questions. Yes, conception due to natural causes, but how can a phenomenon so amazingly complex as consciousness develop from the simple meeting of two cells, the egg and the sperm? Buddhism agrees on natural causes; however, it offers more satisfactory explanation of where man came from and where he is going after his death. When we die, the mind, with all the tendencies, preferences, abilities and characteristics that have been developed and conditioned in this life, re-establishes itself in a fertilized egg. Thus the individual grows, is reborn and develops a personality conditioned by the mental characteristics that have been carried over by the new environment. The personality will change and be modified by conscious effort and conditioning factors like education, parental influence and society and once again at death, re-establish itself in a new fertilized egg. This process of dying and being reborn will continue until the conditions that cause it, craving and ignorance, cease. When they do, instead of being reborn, the mind attains a state called Nirvana and this is the ultimate goal of Buddhism.

In short, there is not a doubt that Buddhism was a religion of the truth and a living philosophy more than 26 centuries ago. It's still now a religion of the truth and a living philosophy in this very century (the twenty-first century). Buddhism is in accord with all the progresses of nowadays science and it will always be in accord with science at all times. Its basic teachings of loving-kindness, compassion, joy, equanimity, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration, as well as the basic five precepts of not killing, not stealing, not committing sexual misconduct, not lying and not drinking alcohol and not doing drugs... are always a torch that lights the darkness of the world. The message of peace and of love and happiness of Buddhism to living beings of all kinds is always the glorious truth for all human beings. Everyone can achieve the highest goal in Buddhism, no matter who is that person, clergy person or lay person. However, the most important thing we all must remember is making an honest effort to follow the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha and his great disciples did not achieve their ultimate goal by accident. The Buddha and his disciples were once ordinary sentient beings like us. They were once afflicted by the impurities of the mind, attachment, aversion, and ignorance. They all became either Buddhas or Saints now, but for us, we are still creating and creating more and more unwholesome deeds and continuing going up and down in the cycle of birth and death? Devout Buddhists should listen to the Buddha's teachings, should purify our actions, words and mind to achieve true wisdom, the wisdom that helps us understand the truth and to attain the ultimate goal of Buddhism. In other words, if we sincerely cultivate in accordance with the Buddha's teachings, one day not too far, everyone of us would be able to do good deeds, to avoid bad deeds; everyone of us would try our best to help others whenever possible and not to harm anyone, our mind would be mindful at all times. Thus there is no doubt that the Buddha's Dharma will benefit us with happiness and prosperity in this life and in the next. Eventually, it will lead us to the ultimate goal of liberation, the supreme bliss of Nirvana.

As mentioned above, the term is absent from Hinayana. In Mahayana it is spiritual realm acquired by one who reaches perfect enlightenment, where he instructs all beings born there, preparing them

for enlightenment. This is also the land or realm of Buddhas. Buddhist practitioners should always remember that on the path to the Buddha Land, there are numerous difficulties and obstacles awaiting. Generally speaking, if you want to reach any places, you have to go. If you want to reach the Buddha Land, you must try your best to cultivate. Cultivation on the path to the Buddhaland also means to live a pure living and to lead a religious life. Cultivation in Buddhism is to put the Buddha's teachings into practice on a continued and regular basis. Cultivation in Buddhism also means to nourish the seeds of Bodhi by practicing and developing precepts, dhyana, and wisdom. Thus, cultivation in Buddhism is not only practicing Buddha recitation or sitting meditation, it also includes cultivation of six paramitas, ten paramitas, thirty-seven aids to Enlightenment, etc. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that time is extremely precious. An inch of time is an inch of life, so do not let the time pass in vain. Someone is thinking, "I will not cultivate today. I will put it off until tomorrow." But when tomorrow comes, he will put it off to the next day. He keeps putting it off until his hair turns white, his teeth fall out, his eyes become blurry, and his ears go deaf. At that point in time, he wants to cultivate, but his body no longer obeys him. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that living in this world, we all are like fish in a pond that is evaporating. We do not have much time left. Thus ancient virtues taught: "One day has passed, our lives are that much less. We are like fish in a shrinking pond. What joy is there in this? We should be diligently and vigorously cultivating as if our own heads were at stake. Only be mindful of impermanence, and be careful not to be lax." From beginningless eons in the past until now, we have not had good opportunity to know Buddhism, so we have not known how to cultivate. Therefore, we undergo birth and death, and after death, birth again. Oh, how pitiful! Today we have good opportunity to know Buddhism, why do we still want to put off cultivating? Sincere Buddhists! Time does not wait anybody. In the twinkling of an eye, we will be old and our life will be over!

## ***II. The Path Leading to the Buddha Land According to the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter One, the Buddha said: “Ratna-rasi, all species of living beings are the Buddha land sought by all Bodhisattvas. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva wins the Buddha land, according to the living beings converted by him (to the Dharma); according to the living beings tamed by him; according to the country (where they will be reborn to) realize the Buddha-wisdom and in which they will grow the Bodhisattva root. Why is it so? Because a Bodhisattva wins the pure land solely for the benefit of all living beings. For instance, a man can build palaces and houses on vacant ground without difficulty, but he will fail if he attempts to build them in (empty) space. So, a Bodhisattva, in order to bring living beings to perfection seeks the Buddha land which cannot be sought in (empty) space. All Bodhisattvas in the Buddhaland were well known for having achieved all the perfections that lead to the great wisdom. They had received instructions from many Buddhas and formed a Dharma-protecting citadel. By upholding the right Dharma, they could fearlessly give the lion’s roar to teach sentient beings; so their names were heard in the ten directions. They were not invited but came to the assembly to spread the teaching on the Three Treasures to transmit it in perpetuity. Also according to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Buddha Land, those practitioners who had overcome all demons and defeated heresies; and their six faculties, karmas of deeds, words and thoughts were pure and clean; being free from the (five) hindrances and the (ten) bonds. Those practitioners who had realized serenity of mind and had achieved unimpeded liberation. They had achieved right concentration and mental stability, thereby, acquiring the uninterrupted power of speech. Those practitioners who had achieved all the (six) paramitas: charity (dana), discipline (sila), patience (ksanti), devotion (virya), serenity (dhyana) and wisdom (prajna), as well as the expedient method (upaya) of teaching which completely benefit self and others. However, to them, these realizations did not mean any gain whatsoever for themselves, so, that they were in line with the patient endurance of the uncreate (anutpattika-dharma-ksanti). Those practitioners who were able to turn the wheel of the Law that never turns back. Being able to interpret the (underlying nature of)

phenomena, they knew very well the roots (propensities) of all living beings; they surpassed them all and realized fearlessness. Zen practitioners should always cultivate their minds by means of merits and wisdom, with which they embellished their physical features which were unsurpassable, thus, giving up all earthly adornments. Their towering reputation exceeded the height of Mount Sumeru. Their profound faith (in the uncreate) was unbreakable like a diamond. Their treasures of the Dharma illuminated all lands and rained down nectar. Their speeches were profound and unsurpassed. They entered deep into all (worldly) causes but cut off all heretical views, for they were already free from all dualities and had rooted out all (previous) habits. They were fearless and gave the lion's roar to proclaim the Dharma, their voices being like thunder. They could not be gauged, for they were beyond all measures. They had amassed all treasures of the Dharma and acted like (skillful) seafaring pilots. They were well versed in the profound meanings of all Dharmas. They knew very well the mental states of all living beings and their comings and goings (within the realms of existence). They had reached the state near the unsurpassed sovereign wisdom of all Buddhas, having acquired the ten fearless powers (dasabala) giving complete knowledge and the eighteen different characteristics (of a Buddha as compared with Bodhisattvas (avenikadharma). Although they were free from (rebirth in ) evil existences, they appeared in five mortal realms as royal physicians to cure all ailments, prescribing the right medicine in each individual case, thereby, winning countless merits to embellish countless Buddha lands. Each living being derived great benefit from seeing and hearing them, for their deeds were not in vain. Thus, they had achieved all excellent merits.



## ***Chapter Fifty-Three***

### ***Being Reborn in the Buddha's Pure Land In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. A Summary of Gaining Rebirth to the Pureland In Buddhist Teachings:***

Pure Land is a paradise without any defilements. For the sake of saving sentient beings, through innumerable asankhya, all Buddhas cultivated immeasurable good deeds, and established a Pure Land to welcome all beings. Beings in this paradise strive to cultivate to attain Buddhahood. The Pure Land is described as a place in which there is no suffering, no gender, and in which conditions are optimal for attainment of Buddhahood. The central doctrine of the Pure Land sects is that all who evoke the name of Amitabha with sincerity and faith in the saving grace of his vow will be reborn in his Pure Land of peace and bliss. Thus, the most important practice of contemplation in the Pure Land sects is the constant voicing of the words “Namo Amitabha Buddha” or “I surrender myself to Amitabha Buddha.”

Great Master Hui-Yuan founded Chinese Pure Land School to teach an easy way to practice and salvation, based on the Sukhavati Sutra. For a long time the Chinese Pure Land based on Sakyamuni Buddha and some important Bodhisattvas like Maitreya, Avalokitesvara, and Ksitigarbha. According to Dr. Edward Conze in “Buddhism: Its Essence and Development (p.205),” although Maitreya Bodhisattva always remained popular, and the cult of Manjusri and Vairocana spread widely in the eighth century, the inscription and images suggest that Amitabha came to the fore about 650 A.D., and Avalokitesvara became then firmly associated with his cult. While in India so far scarcely any portrayals of Amitabha and none of his Paradise have been found, China offers an abundance of such images. We do not know the reasons why just Amitabha's Paradise should have stirred the imagination of the Chinese to such an extent. Whatever we say, nowadays Amitabha Buddha and His Paradise have been popular in most of the world Pure Land Schools. According to the doctrine of

the Pure Land, the Western Heaven is the residence of the Amitabha Buddha. This sect bases its belief on the formula that salvation is to be attained “through absolute faith in another’s power,” and lays emphasis on the recitation of the name of Amitabha Buddha, or *Namo Amitabha Buddha*, which is regarded as a meritorious act on the part of the believer. The recitation of the Buddha’s name is looked upon as the expression of a grateful heart. Nagarjuna’s *Dasabhumi Sutra* and Vasubandhu’s commentary on it are the Indian authorities recognized by the Pure Land School because the “easy way” and “power of another” are indicated and elucidated by them. Nagarjuna asserted that there were two ways for entering Buddhahood, one difficult (other sects) and one easy (the Pure Land sect). One was traveling on foot and the other was passage by boat. Amitabha-pietism will be the greatest of all vehicles to convey those who are in need of such means. The idea of being saved is generally considered new in Buddhism. But King Milinda (a Greek ruler in Sagara, about 115 B.C.) questioned a learned priest Nagasena, saying that it was unreasonable that a man of bad conduct could be saved if he believed in a Buddha on the eve of his death. Nagasena replied: “A stone, however small, will sink into the water, but even a stone weighing hundreds of tons if put on a ship will float.” While all other schools of Mahayana insist on self-enlightenment, Pure Land Sects teach sole reliance on the Buddha’s power. The Buddha of all other exoteric schools is Sakyamuni while the Buddha of the Pure Land Sects is Amita, or Infinite Light (Amitabha), or Infinite Life (Amitayus) whose Land is laid in the Western Quarter, often designated as the Western Pure Land. The Amitabha or Amitayus is a Buddha idealized from the historical Buddha Sakyamuni. According to Prof. Takakusu in *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, if the Buddha is purely idealized, he will be simply the Infinite in principle. The infinite will then be identical with Thusness. The Infinite, if depicted in reference to space, will be the Infinite Light; and if depicted in reference to time, will be the Infinite Life. This is Dharma-kaya or ideal. This dharma-kaya is the sambhoga-kaya or the Reward-body or body of enjoyment if the Buddha is viewed as a Buddha ‘coming down to the world.’ If he is viewed as a Bodhisattva going up to the Buddhahood, he is a would-be Buddha like the toiling Bodhisattva (Sakyamuni). It is Sakyamuni himself who

describes in the Shukavati-vyuha the activities of the would-be Buddha, Dharmakara, as if it had been his former existence. The vow, original to the would-be Buddha or even to Sakyamuni Buddha himself, is fully expressed in forty-eight vows in the text. The philosophy of the Pure Land is based on Amitabha's most important vows: Vows 12 and 13 refer to the Infinite Light and Infinite Life. "If he cannot get such aspects of Infinite Light and Life, he will not be a Buddha." If he becomes a Buddha he can constitute a Buddha Land as he likes. A Buddha, of course, lives in the "Nirvana of No Abode," and hence he can live anywhere and everywhere. His vow is to establish the Land of Bliss for the sake of all beings. An ideal land with adornments, ideal plants, ideal lakes or what not is all for receiving pious aspirants. The eighteenth vow which is regarded as most important, promises a birth in his Land of Bliss to those who have a perfect reliance on the Buddha, believing with serene heart and repeating the Buddha's name. The nineteenth vow promises a welcome by the Buddha himself on the eve of death to those who perform meritorious deeds. The twentieth vow further indicates that anyone who repeats his name with the object of winning a birth in his Land will also be received.

According to Buddhism, the main meaning here of "Rebirth in the Pure Land" is to go or to be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitabha, or to have a rebirth in the Western Paradise. According to the Pure Land tradition, if a person merely repeat the name of Amitabha, no matter how evil his life may have been in the past, will acquire the merits of Amitabha and be received into Western Paradise. According to the Pure Land Sect, there are two conditions of rebirth to the Pureland. *First, to Gain Rebirth to the Main Land:* This condition is reserved for those who regularly and diligently practice Buddha Recitation, those who have a sincere and faithful mind without regression. They will know beforehand the time and place of their death, having clear and proper thoughts, they will bathe themselves, changing clothes, or receive the great lights of the Buddha shine to their bodies. Or they may see the enlightened characteristics of the Buddhas and an assembly of enlightened beings appearing in the sky often walking in meditation before their eyes. All the various good and wholesome images will appear clearly, within a split moment, these people will

gain rebirth to the Pure land, be near the most supremely virtuous beings, and earn a place among the nine levels of the lotus throne. They will often be able to hear the dharma sounds of the Buddhas and ultimately they will attain the enlightenment fruit of Buddhahood. *Second, to Be rRborn to the Outer Border of the Pureland:* This condition is reserved for those who normally maintain precepts, who practice Buddha Recitation but are not diligent and lack faith. Thus, when death arrives, they do not have any good or evil thoughts, but close their eyes similar to a sleeping person. Because those people's doubts are not eliminated. They may practice Buddha Recitation, but do not have absolute faith. They do not gain rebirth directly to the main land. Instead, they are born to a domain on the outskirts of the Pureland. That domain is called "Doubtful Land." People who are born to that domain have a life expectancy of 500 years (a day in that land equals a 100 years in the human realm). After living out their existence, they must return to the six paths of the cycle of rebirths. However, Bodhisattvas come there everyday to expound sutras and to encourage them to diligently recite the Buddha's name. For those who diligently cultivate, when their lives come to an end, they will gain rebirth in the main land.

In the Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra, Chapter Three (Doubts and Questions). One day, Magistrate Vi asked the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-Neng: "Your disciple has often seen the Sangha and laity reciting 'Amitabha Buddha,' vowing to be reborn in the West. Will the High Master please tell me if they will obtain rebirth there and, so, dispel my doubts?" The Master said, "Magistrate, listen well. Hui Neng will explain it for you. When the World Honored One was in Shravasti City, he spoke of being led to rebirth in the West. The Sutra text clearly states, 'it is not far from here.' If we discuss its appearance, it is 108,000 miles away but in immediate terms, it is explained as far distant for those of inferior roots and as nearby for those of superior wisdom. There are two kinds of people, not two kinds of Dharma. Enlightenment and confusion differ, and seeing can be quick or slow. The deluded person recites the Buddha's name, seeking rebirth there, while the enlightened person purifies his own mind. Therefore, the Buddha said, 'As the mind is purified, the Budhaland is purified.' Magistrate, if the person of the East merely purifies his mind, he is

without offense. Even though one may be of the West, if his mind is impure, he is at fault. The person of the East commits offenses and recites the Buddha's name, seeking rebirth in the West. When the person of the West commits offenses and recites the Buddha's name, in what country does he seek rebirth? Common, deluded people do not understand their self-nature and do not know that the Pure Land is within themselves. Therefore, they make vows for the East and vows for the West. To enlightened people, all places are the same. As the Buddha said, 'In whatever place one dwells, there is constant peace and happiness.' Magistrate, if the mind-ground is only without unwholesomeness, the West is not far from here. If one harbors unwholesome thoughts, one may recite the Buddha's name but it will be difficult to attain that rebirth. Good Knowing Advisors, I now exhort you all to get rid of the ten evils first and you will have walked one hundred thousand miles. Next get rid of the eight deviations and you will have gone eight thousand miles. If in every thought you see your own nature, always practice impartiality and straightforwardness, you will arrive in a finger-snap and see Amitabha. Magistrate, merely practice the ten wholesome acts; then what need will there be for you to vow to be reborn there? But if you do not rid the mind of the ten evils, what Buddha will come to welcome you? If you become enlightened to the sudden dharma of the unproduced, you will see the West in an instant. Unenlightened, you may recite the Buddha's name seeking rebirth but since the road is so long, how can you traverse it? Hui-Neng will move to the West here in the space of an instant so that you may see it right before your eyes. Do you wish to see it? " At that time, the entire assembly bowed and said, "If we could see it here, what need would there be to vow to be reborn there? Please, High Master, be compassionate and make the West appear so that we might see it." The Master said, "Great assembly, the worldly person's own physical body is the city, and the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body are the gates. Outside there are five gates and inside there is a gate of the mind. The mind is the 'ground' and one's nature is the 'king.' The 'king' dwells on the mind 'ground.' When the nature is present, the king is present but when the nature is absent, there is no king. When the nature is present, the body and mind remain, but when the nature is absent, the body and mind are destroyed. The Buddha is made within

the self-nature. Do not seek outside the body. Confused, the self-nature is a living being: enlightened, it is a Buddha. 'Kindness and compassion' are Avalokitesvara and 'sympathetic joy and giving' are Mahasthamaprapta. 'Purification' is Sakyamuni, and 'equanimity and directness' are Amitabha. 'Others and self' are Mount Sumeru and 'deviant thoughts' are the ocean water. 'Afflictions' are the waves. 'Cruelty' is an evil dragon. 'Empty falseness' is ghosts and spirits. 'Defilement' is fish and turtles, 'greed and hatred' are hell, and 'delusion' is animals. Good Knowing Advisors, always practice the ten good practices and the heavens can easily be reached. Get rid of others and self, and Mount Sumeru topples. Do away with deviant thought, and the ocean waters dry up. Without defilements, the waves cease. End cruelty and there are no fish or dragons. The Tathagata of the enlightened nature is on your own mind-ground, emitting a great bright light which outwardly illuminates and purifies the six gates and breaks through the six desire-heavens. Inwardly, it illuminates the self-nature and casts out the three poisons. The hells and all such offenses are destroyed at once. Inwardly and outwardly, there is a bright penetration. This is no different from the West. But if you do not cultivate, how can you go there?" On hearing this speech, the members of the great assembly clearly saw their own natures. They bowed together and exclaimed, "This is indeed good! May all living beings of the Dharma Realm who have heard this awaken at once and understand."

## ***II. Pure Land Practitioners' Mind:***

"Mind" is another name for Alaya-vijnana. Unlike the material body, immaterial mind is invisible. We are aware of our thoughts and feelings and so forth by direct sensation, and we infer their existence in others by analogy. The mind is the root of all dharmas. In Contemplation of the Mind Sutra, the Buddha taught: "All my tenets are based on the mind that is the source of all dharmas." The mind has brought about the Buddhas, the Heaven, or the Hell. It is the main driving force that makes us happy or sorrowful, cheerful or sad, liberated or doomed. According to Great Master Ying-Kuang, the Thirteenth Patriarch of Chinese Pure Land Sect: "The mind encompasses all the ten directions of dharma realms, including Buddha

dharma realm, Bodhisatva dharma realm, Pratyeka-Buddha dharma realm, Sravaka dharma realm, Heaven dharma realm, Human dharma realm, Asura dharma realm, Animal dharma realm, Hungry Ghost dharma realm, and Hell dharma realm. One mind can give rise to everything. Buddhas arise from within the cultivator's mind, Hells also arise from the cultivator's mind." The mind is so closely linked with the body that mental states affect the body's health and well-being. Some doctors even confirm that there is no such thing as a purely physical disease. Unless these bad mental states are caused by previous evil acts, and they are unalterable, it is possible so to change them as to cause mental health and physical well-being to follow thereafter. Man's mind influences his body profoundly. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster, can even kill a being; but it can also cure a sick body. When mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and understanding, the effect it can produce is immense. A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts really does lead to a healthy and relaxed life. In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: Of all dharmas, mind is the forerunner, mind is chief. We are what we think, we have become what we thought (what we are today came from our thoughts of yesterday). If we speak or act with a deluded mind or evil thoughts, suffering or pain follows us, as the wheel follows the hoof of the draught-ox (Dharmapada 1). Of all dharmas, mind is the forerunner, mind is chief. We are what we think, we have become what we thought. If we speak or act with a pure mind or thought, happiness and joy follows us, as our own shadow that never leaves (Dharmapada 2). As rain penetrates and leaks into an ill-thatched hut, so does passion enter an untrained mind or uncultivated mind (Dharmapada 13). As rain does not penetrate a well-thatched hut, so does passion not enter a cultivated mind (Dharmapada 14). The wavering and restless, or unsteady mind, difficult to guard, difficult to hold back; a wise man steadies his trembling mind and thought, as a fletcher makes straight his arrow (Dharmapada 33). As a fish drawn from its watery abode and thrown upon the dry land, our thought quivers all over in its effort to escape the realm of Mara (Dharmapada 34). It is good to control the mind, which is difficult to hold in and flighty, rushing wherever it wishes; a controlled mind brings happiness (Dharmapada 35). The mind

is hard to perceive, extremely subtle, flits whenever it wishes. Let the wise person guard it; a guarded mind is conducive to happiness (Dharmapada 36). Traveling far, wandering alone, bodiless, lying in a cave, is the mind. Those who subdue it are freed from the bonds of Mara (Dharmapada 37). He whose mind is not steady, he who does not know the True Law, he whose confidence wavers, the wisdom of such a person will never be perfect (Dharmapada 38). He whose mind is free from lust of desires, he who is not affected by hatred, he who has renounced both good and evil, for such a vigilant one there is no fear (Dharmapada 39). Knowing that this body is as fragile as a jar, establishing this mind as firm as a fortress, he should be able to fight Mara with the weapon of wisdom. He should be able to guard his conquest and be without attachment (Dharmapada 40). In a short period of time, this body will lie on the ground, cast aside, without consciousness, even as a useless piece of dry log (Dharmapada 41). Whatever harm an enemy may do to an enemy, or a hater to a hater, an ill-directed mind can do one far greater harm (Dharmapada 42). What neither mother, nor father, nor any other relative can do, a well-directed mind can do one far greater good (Dharmapada 43). Like the earth, Arhats who are balanced and well-disciplined, resent not. He is like a pool without mud; no new births are in store for him (Dharmapada 95). Those Arhats whose mind is calm, whose speech and deed are calm. They have also obtained right knowing, they have thus become quiet men (Dharmapada 96). In the past times, this mind went wandering wherever it liked, as it wished and as it pleased. But now I shall completely hold it under control as a rider with his hook a rutting elephant (Dharmapada 326). Take delight in heedfulness, check your mind and be on your guard. Pull yourself out of the evil path, just like the elephant draws itself out of the mud (Dharmapada 327). In the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, a Sramana asked the Buddha: ‘What are the causes and conditions by which one come to know past lives and also by which one’s understanding enables one to attain the Way?’ The Buddha said: ‘By purifying the mind and guarding the will, your understanding can achieve (attain) the Way. Just as when you polish a mirror, the dust vanishes and brightness remains; so, too, if you cut off and do not seek desires, you can then know past lives.’ (Chapter 13). The Buddha said: “Be careful not to believe your own mind; your mind



cannot be believed. Be careful not to get involved with sex; involvement with sex leads to disasters. Once you have attained Arahantship, then you can believe your own mind.” (Chapter 28).

In short, this single mind encompasses the four kinds of lands in their totality. From the Six Common Dharma Realms to the Four Dharma Realms of the Sages are not beyond the present thought in the Mind. The mind can create the heavens as well as the hells. The mind can achieve Buddhahood, but it can also turn into a hungry ghost or an animal, or fall into the hells. It can be a Bodhisattva, a Pratyekabuddha, or a Sravaka. Since everything is made from the mind, nothing goes beyond the mind. If we want to create Buddhas in our minds, we become part of the retinue of the Dharma Realm of the Buddhas. The other Dharma Realms are the same way. Sincere Buddhists should always see this and pay attention to all daily activities from walking, standing, lying down, or sitting... We must regulate ourselves in accord with propriety of a true Buddhist. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that we create more and more karmas and commit more and more sins because we are not concentrated and determined. We get dragged into situations until we forget what we want to do. We forget our goal is to cultivate to become a Buddha, a Bodhisattva, or any of the four kinds of the sages. Instead, we only know how to create hells, hungry ghosts, and animals, etc. Thus, Buddhas and demons are only a single thought apart. Buddhas are kind and compassionate, while demons are always competitive with unwholesome thoughts. In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha taught: “The Bodhisattva-mahasattvas sees that the triple world is no more than the creation of the citta, manas, and mano-vijnana, that it is brought forth by falsely discriminating one’s own mind, that there are no signs of an external world where the principle of multiplicity rules, and finally that the triple world is just one’s own mind.”

Someone asked Great Master Yen-Shou that if the realm of “Pureland within the Mind” is ubiquitous throughout the ten directions, why not try to penetrate it instead of wanting the Pureland and abandoning the Impure Land praying to gain rebirth to the Ultimate Bliss World and sit on the lotus throne. Doing so not seem to be consistent with the theory of “No Birth.” If one has the mind of being tired of impurity but is fond of purity then that is not the mind of

equality and non-discrimination? The Great Master replied: “Pureland within the Mind is a state achieved only by those who have seen and penetrated the true nature and have attained the Non-Form Dharma Body. Despite this, according to the Buddha’s Inconceivable (Unimaginable) World Sutra, those Bodhisattvas who have attained the First Ground Maha-Bodhisattva or Rejoicing Ground to enter the world of “Everything within the Mind,” still vow to abandon their bodies to be born quickly to the Ultimate Bliss World. Thus, it is necessary to understand “No Dharma exists outside the Mind.” If this is the case, then the Ultimate Bliss World is not outside the realm of the Mind. As for the theory of no-birth and the mind of equality and non-discrimination, of course, in theory this is true. However, for those who still do not have enough spiritual power, have shallow wisdom, impure minds, are bound by heavy karma and afflictions; moreover when tempted with the five desires and the forces of life, how many actually will be able to attain and penetrate this theory. Therefore, these people, most sentient beings of this Dharma Ending Age, need to pray to gain rebirth to the Ultimate Bliss World so they can rely on the extraordinary and favorable conditions of that world in order to be able to enter quickly the realm of Pureland within the Mind and to practice the Bodhisattva’s Conducts. Moreover, the book of commentary “Ten Doubts of Pureland Buddhism” taught: “Those who have wisdom and have already attained the theory of “Everything is within the Mind,” yet are still motivated to pray for rebirth to the Pureland because they have penetrated completely the true nature of non-birth is illusory. Only then can it be called the “true nature of non-birth. As for the ignorant, those who lack wisdom and are incapable of comprehending such a theory; therefore, they are trapped by the meaning of the world “Birth.” Thus, when they hear of birth, they automatically think and conceptualize the form characteristics of birth actually exist, when in fact nothing exists because everything is an illusion. When they hear “Non-Birth,” they then mistakenly think of “Nothing being born anywhere!” Given this misconception, they begin to generate a mixture of gossip, criticism, and mockery; thus create various false views and then degrade the Dharma. Such people truly deserve much pity!”

### ***III. Being Reborn in the Buddha's Pure Land In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, chapter ten, the Buddha of the Fragrant Land, Upasaka Vimalakirti told Bodhisattvas from the Fragrant Land about "Being reborn in the Buddha's Pure Land" as follows: The Bodhisattvas from the Fragrant Land asked: "How many Dharmas should a Bodhisattva achieve in this world to stop its morbid growth (defilements) in order to be reborn in the Buddha's pure land?" Vimalakirti replied: "A Bodhisattva should bring to perfection eight Dharmas to stop morbid growth in this world in order to be reborn in the pure land. They are: First, benevolence towards all living beings with no expectation of reward. Second, endurance of sufferings for all living beings dedicating all merits to them. Third, impartiality towards them with all humility free from pride and arrogance. Fourth, reverence to all Bodhisattvas with the same devotion as to all Buddhas (i.e. without discrimination between Bodhisattvas and Buddhas). Fifth, absence of doubt and suspicion when hearing (the expounding of) sutras which he has not heard before. Sixth, abstention from opposition to the sravaka Dharma. Seventh, abstention from discrimination in regard to donations and offerings received with no thought of self-profit in order to subdue his mind. Eighth, self-examination without contending with others. Thus he should achieve singleness of mind bent on achieving all merits; these are the eight Dharmas. After Vimalakirti and Manjusri had thus expounded the Dharma, hundreds and thousands of devas developed the mind set on supreme enlightenment, and ten thousand Bodhisattvas realized the patient endurance of the uncreate.



## ***Chapter Fifty-Four***

### ***The Tathagata's Body In the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***(A) The Seed of Tathagata (Buddhahood) According to the Vimalakirti Sutra***

##### ***I. An Overview and Meanings of The Thus-Come One:***

Devout Buddhists should always remember that Tathagata is neither a god nor the prophet of a god. In Mahayana Buddhism, Tathagata is the Buddha in his nirmanakaya, the intermediary between the essential and the phenomenal world. Tathagata also means “Absolute,” “Prajna” or “Emptiness” or “Shunyata.” The Tathagata who has gone beyond all plurality and categories of thought can be said to be neither permanent nor impermanent. He is untraceable. Permanent and impermanent can be applied only where there is duality, not in the case of non-dual. And because Tathata is the same in all manifestation, therefore all beings are potential Tathagatas. It is the Tathagata within us who makes us long for Nibbana and ultimately sets us free. Tathagata is one of the ten titles of the Buddha, which he himself used when speaking of himself or other Buddhas. He was born, lived and passed away. He left no room in His teaching for any other superstition. This event of the life of the Tathagata is human beings’ greatest impression and hope for everyone of us can hope that some day we can reach the same stage as the Tathagata did if we resolve to do our best to cultivate.

Long before our Buddha was born, there were many other Buddhas who found the path and showed it to people. These other Buddhas lived so long ago that we have no written histories about them, but they taught the people in those far off days the very same Truth that our Sakyamuni Buddha taught us almost twenty-six hundred years ago, for the Truths never change. “Tathagata” literally means one “thus come,” the “thus” or “thusness,” indicating the enlightened state. Therefore, Tathagata can be rendered as “Thus enlightened I come,” and would

apply equally to all Buddhas other than Sakyamuni. The Thus-Come One also means one who has attained Supreme Enlightenment; one who has discovered (come to) Truth; one of the ten titles of the Buddha, which he himself used when speaking of himself or other Buddhas; those of the Tathagata order. “Tathagata” is a Sanskrit term for “Thus-gone-one.” An epithet of Buddhas, which signifies their attainment of awakening (Bodhi), a transcendental state that surpasses all mundane attainments. This term may be divided into either of the following formulas: *tatha+gata*, or *tatha+agata*. In the former case, it means “Như khứ,” and in the latter case “Như Lai.” A title of the Buddha, used by his followers and also by himself when speaking of himself. Tathagata also means the previous Buddhas have come and gone. According to the Middle Length Collections (*Majjhimanikaya*), Tathagata is a perfect being whose foot-prints or tracks are untraceable, who is above all the dichotomies of thought. According to the *Dhammapada* (254), the word Tathagata means ‘thus gone’ or ‘so gone,’ meaning ‘trackless,’ or whose track cannot be traced by any of the categories of thought. According to Nagarjuna in the *Madhyamaka* Philosophy, regardless the origin of the word ‘Tathagata,’ the function of it is clear. He descends on earth to impart the light of Truth to mankind and departs without any track. He is the embodiment of Tathata. When the Buddha is called Tathagata, his individual personality is ignored; he is treated as a type that appears from time to time in the world. He is the earthly manifestation of Dharma. Tathagata includes the Tathagata in bonds and tathagata unlimited and free from bonds. The Tathagata in bonds (limited and subject to the delusions and sufferings of life); or the fettered *bhutatathata*, the *bhutatathata* in limitations. Tathagata unlimited and free from bonds (not subject to the delusions and sufferings of life any more); or the unfettered or free *bhutatathata*, as contrast with fettered *bhutatathata* (Tại trần chân như).

Sunyata and Karuna are the essential characteristics of Tathagata. Sunyata here means Prajna or transcendental insight. Having Sunyata or Prajna, Tathagata is identical with Tathata or Sunya. Having Karuna, he is the saviour of all sentient beings. “Tathagata” means the true being of all. The true being of the Tathagata which is also the true being of all is not conceivable. In his ultimate nature, the Tathagata is

‘deep, immeasurable, unfathomable.’ The dharmas or elements of existence are indeterminable, because they are conditioned, because they are relative. The Tathagata is indeterminable, because, in his ultimate nature, he is not conditionally born. The indeterminability of the ultimate nature really means ‘the inapplicability of the ways of concepts.’ Thus, Nagarjuna in the Karika: “The Buddha is transcendental in regard to thoughts and words. He is not subject to birth and death. Those who describe the Buddha in the terms of conceptual categories are all victims of the worldly and verbalizing mind and are thus unable to see the Tathagata in his real nature.”

## ***II. The Seed of Tathagata (Buddhahood) According to the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

Bodhisattva seeds which sown in the heart of man, produce the Buddha fruit or enlightenment. According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Eight, Vimalakirti asked Manjusri: “What are the seeds of the Tathagata?” Manjusri replied: “Body is (a) seed of the Tathagata; ignorance and craving are its (two) seeds; desire, hate and stupidity its (three) seeds; the four inverted views its (four) seeds; the five covers (or screens) its (five) seeds; the six organs of sense its (six) seeds; the seven abodes of consciousness its (seven) seeds; the eight heterodox views its (eight) seeds; the nine causes of klesa (troubles and their causes) its (nine) seeds; the ten evils its (ten) seeds. To sum up, all the sixty-two heterodox views and all sorts of klesa are the seeds of Buddhahood.” Vimalakirti asked Manjusri: “Why is it so?” Manjusri replied: “Because he who perceives the inactive (wu wei) state and enters its right (nirvanic) position, is incapable of advancing further to achieve supreme enlightenment (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi). For instance, high ground does not produce the lotus, which grows only in marshy land. Likewise, those perceiving nirvana and entering its right position, will not develop into Buddhahood, whereas living beings in the mire of klesa can eventually develop the Buddha Dharma. This is also like seeds scattered in the void, which do not grow, but if they are planted in manured fields they will yield good harvests. Thus, those entering the right position (of nirvana) do not develop the Buddha Dharma, whereas those whose view of the ego is as great as (Mount) Sumeru may (because of the misery of life) eventually set their minds

on the quest of supreme enlightenment, thereby developing the Buddha Dharma. Therefore, we should know that all sorts of klesa are the seeds of the Tathagata. This is like one who does not plunge into the ocean will never find the priceless pearl. Likewise, a man who does not enter the ocean of klesa will never win the gem of all-knowledge (sarvajna).” At that time, Mahakasyapa exclaimed : “Excellent, Manjusri, excellent, your sayings are most gratifying. As you have said, those suffering from klesa are the seeds of the Tathagata. So we are no longer capable of developing a mind set on enlightenment. Even those committing the five deadly sins can eventually set their minds on the quest of the Buddha Dharma but we are unable to do so, like persons whose defective organs prevent them from enjoying the five objects of the senses. Likewise, the sravakas who have cut off all bonds (of transmigration) are no longer interested in the Buddha Dharma and will never want to realize it. Therefore, Manjusri, the worldly man still reacts (favourably) to the Buddha Dharma whereas the sravaka does not. Why? Because when the worldly man hears about the Buddha Dharma, he can set his mind on the quest of the supreme path, thereby preserving for ever the Three Treasures (of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), whereas the sravaka, even if he passes his lifetime listening to the Dharma and witnessing the fearlessness of the Buddha, etc., will never dream of the supreme way.”

### ***(B) The Tathagata's Body In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra***

#### ***I. An Overview of the Tathagata-Kaya In Buddhist Teachings:***

The early Mahaynists, whose doctrines are mostly to be found in the Astadasahasrika Prajnaparamita, along with the school of Madhyamika (Nagarjuna) conceived of two kayas: 1) Rupa-kaya or Nirmanakaya, denoting bodies, gross and subtle, meant for beings in general, and 2) Dharma-kaya, which was used in two senses, one being the body of Dharma, i.e, collection of practices, which makes a being a Buddha, and the other the metaphysical principle underlying the universe, the Reality Tathata. The Vajrachedika-prajna-paramita



Sutra says: “He who sees Tathagata by outward appearance, and seeks Tathagata in sound, treads the heterodox path, and cannot perceive the Tathagata.” According to the Astadasahasrika Prajna-paramita Sutra, the Tathagata cannot be seen as a physical body, the cosmic body in the Tathagata. Thus, the Mahayana finds the true body of the Buddha in the “unconditioned voidness,” i.e. the Cosmic Body which transcends even the Buddha’s physical body. It also believes that the Cosmic Body or the unconditioned voidness reveals itself as a temporary physical body with the merciful intention of view conveying the truth to beings. Such a view may have been derived from the idealistic view of the Mahasanghikas who consider the physical body of the Buddha as superhuman. However, the characteristic of the doctrine of Mahayana consists in the fact that the Mahayana finds the true body of the Buddha in voidness or absolute truth without being limited to the Idea of transcendental undefiled Cosmic Body as the true body of the Buddha advocated by the Mahasanghikas. According to the Saddharma-pundarika Sutra, Tathagat is the eternal imperishable Buddha who has immeasurable life, and displays extinction only as an expedience. This is shown the Mahayanistic view of the Buddha-body that the Buddha is identified with the absolute truth or Sunyata. According to Buddhism, there are ten bodies of a Thus Come One: the body of Bodhi, the body of Vows, the Transformation body, the body of Maintaining with powers, the body Adorned with Marks and Characteristics, the body of Awesome strength, the body produced by mind, the body of Blessing and Virtue, the Wisdom body, and the Dharma body. There are ten special characteristics of the body of a Buddha; equal, pure, limitless, obtained by good deeds, dharma-protective, imperceptible, inconceivable, quiet, as immense as space, and wise.

A lot of people think of the Buddha’s body as his physical body. Truly, the Buddha’s body means Enlightenment. It is formless and without substance. It always has been and always will be. It is not a physical body that must be nourished by ordinary food. It is an eternal body whose substance is Wisdom. Therefore, Buddha will never disappear as long as Enlightenment exists. Enlightenment appears as the light of Wisdom that awakens people into a newness of life and causes them to be born into the world of Buddhas. A Buddha has three bodies or planes of reality: the dharma-body or the body of reality

which is formless, unchanging, transcendental, and inconceivable (dharmakaya), the body of enjoyment or the celestial body of the Buddha or personification of eternal perfection in its ultimate sense (sambhogakaya), and the incarnated body of the Buddha (nirmanakaya). In the transformation of the trikaya: the dharma-body or the body of reality as the transformation of space kasina; body of enjoyment (sambhogakaya) as the transformation of universally radiant sunlight; and the incarnated body of the Buddha (nirmanakaya) as the transformation of sun shadow or sun reflection.

Dharmakaya (Body of dharma or Dharma-Body) is usually rendered “Law-body” or “Truth-body” where Dharma is understood in the sense of of “law,” “organization,” “systematization,” or “regulative principle.” But really in Buddhism, Dharma has a very much more comprehensive meaning. Especially when Dharma is coupled with Kaya. Dharmakaya implies the notion of personality. The highest reality is not a mere abstraction, it is very much alive with sense and awareness and intelligence, and, above all, with love purged of human infirmities and defilements. In Buddhism, the body of reality, being forever free from undergoing birth in conditioned states, for this is the absolute Buddha or essence of all life. In Buddhist teachings, Dharmakaya in its phenomenal character, conceived as becoming, as expressing itself in the stream of being. According to Zen Master D.T. Suzuki in the *Essence of Buddhism*, the Dharmakaya is not the owner of wisdom and compassion, he is the Wisdom or the Compassion, as either phase of his being is emphasized for some special reason. We shall miss the point entirely if we take him as somewhat resembling or reflecting the human conception of man. He has no body in the sense we have a human body. He is spirit, he is the field of action, if we can use this form of expression, where wisdom and compassion are fused together, are transformed into each other, and become the principle of vitality in the world of sense-intellect.

Sambhoga-kaya means the rupakaya or the Bliss Body of the Tathagatas (Enjoyment Body). "Sambhogakaya" is a Sanskrit term for “Enjoyment Body.” Sambhogakaya (Recompensed Body Sambhogakaya) is one of the three bodies of a Buddha, according to Mahayana Buddhology (Buddhist Literature). Body of Delight, the body of buddhas who in a “Buddha-Paradise” enjoy the truth that they

embody. This is also the result of previous good actions. The Sambhoga-kaya is said to reside in a “pure land” and is only perceivable by advanced practitioners. According to Tantric Buddhism, sambhogakaya is the level of emotional manifestation, which literally means “Body of Joy.” While the dharmakaya is completely open and completely free, at the level of sambhogakaya, we are looking at the emotions that are manufactured or manifested out of that. The emotions that manifest out of this state of openness transcend the samsaric emotions, including aggression, passion, and ignorance. Body of enjoyment (sambhogakaya) is also called body of wisdom (Prajnakaya or Jnanakaya), considered as the transformation of universally radiant sunlight. The wisdom whose nature embraces all wisdom which is the wisdom-body of the Tathagatas. In the sambhogakaya, emotions manifest as transcendent or completely enlightened. When they manifest, the emotions provide tremendous capability and enormous scope for relating with the universe. There is an accommodation for dualism, for relating with this and that if necessary, because from this point of view duality is not particularly regarded as a threat. This accommodation provides tremendous freedom. There is a sense of celebration in which emotions are no longer a hassle (struggle).

Nirmanakaya or Tathagata's metamorphosic body. Tathagata's metamorphosic body is one of the three bodies of a Tathagata, according to Mahayana buddhology, the other two are enjoyment body and truth body. Body of transformation, the earthly body in which Tathagatas appear to men in order to fulfill the Tathagatas' resolve to guide all beings to advance to Buddhahood (liberation). The nirmanakaya is embodied in the earthly Tathagatas and Bodhisattvas projected into the world through the meditation of the sambhogakaya as a result of their compassion. Also according to Mahayana Buddhism, Tathagatas are credited with a variety of supernatural powers, including the ability to create “emanation body,” or physical manifestations that are produced in order to benefit sentient beings. These may be human or animal forms, or may even be bridges or other physical objects that provide benefit. However, the most important type of emanation body is the physical form of a Tathagata as in the case of Sakyamuni Tathagata. According to Tibetan Buddhism, advanced

practitioners acquire the ability to choose their rebirth situations consciously, and other advanced master are able to identify them. Today there are hundreds of reincarnational lineages in Tibetan Buddhism, the most prominent of which are the Dalai Lamas. According to the Tantric Buddhism, the meaning of Nirmanakaya is the "body of emanation," the body of existence or manifestation of our mind and our body. It is also the manifestation of the bodies of those who have already experienced or gone through the other two kayas, and who then manifest on the third level, the nirmanakaya. In that sense the nirmanakaya refers specifically to the vajra master or teacher who is here on earth. Such a teacher has achieved the dharmakaya and the sambhogakaya, but in order to communicate with our body, our food, our clothes, and our earth, that is, with our sense perceptions, he needs a manifested body. It is necessary that the teacher manifest in the nirmanakaya in order to communicate with us and to teach the vajrayana and the entire Buddhadharma.

According to Lin-chi's Sayings, one day, Zen master Lin-chi entered the hall and addressed the monks, saying, "A Buddha has three bodies or planes of reality: the dharma-body or the body of reality which is formless, unchanging, transcendental, and inconceivable (dharmakaya), the body of enjoyment or the celestial body of the Buddha or personification of eternal perfection in its ultimate sense (sambhogakaya), and the incarnated body of the Buddha (nirmanakaya). According to scholars, this triple body is the ultimate reality of things. But as I see into the matter, this triple body is no more than mere words, and then each body has something else on which it depends. An ancient doctor says that the body is dependent on its meaning, and the ground is describable by its substance. Being so, we know that Dharma-body and the Dharma-ground are reflections of the original light. Reverend gentlemen, let us take hold of this person who handles these reflections. For he is the source of all the Buddhas and the house of truth-seekers everywhere. The body made up of the four elements does not understand how to discourse or how to listen to a discourse. Nor do the liver, the stomach, the kidneys, the bowels. Nor does vacuity of space. That which is most unmistakably perceived right before your eyes, though without form, yet absolutely identifiable, this is what understands the discourse and listens to it. When this is

thoroughly seen into, there is no difference between yourselves and the old masters. Only let not your insight be interrupted through all the periods of time, and you will be at peace with whatever situation you come into. When wrong imaginations are stirred, the insight is not more immediate; when thoughts are changeable, the essence is no more the same. For this reason, we transmigrate in the triple world and suffer varieties of pain. As I view the matter in my way, deep indeed is Reality, and there is none who is not destined for emancipation. Good night!"

## ***II. In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra, the Tathagata's Body Is As Strong As a Diamond:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter 3, Chapter on Disciples, the Buddha then said to Ananda: "You call on Vimalakirti and inquire after his health on my behalf." Ananda replied: "World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health. This is because once when the World Honoured One had a slight indisposition and needed some cow milk, I took a bowl and went to a Brahmin family where I stood at the door. Vimalakirti came and asked me: 'Why are you out so early holding a bowl in your hand?' I replied: 'Venerable Upasaka, the World Honoured One is slightly indisposed and wants some cow milk; this is why I have come here.' Vimalakirti said: 'Stop, Ananda, stop speaking these words. The Tathagata's body is as strong as a diamond for He has cut off all evils and has achieved all good. What kind of indisposition and trouble does He still have? Ananda, do not slander the Tathagata and do not let other people hear such coarse language. Do not let the god (devas) as well as the Bodhisattvas of other pure lands hear about it. Ananda, world ruler (cakravarti) who has accumulated only a few small merits is already free from all ailments; how much more so is the Tathagata who has earned countless merits and has achieved all moral excellences? Go away, Ananda, do not cover us all with shame. If the Brahmins heard you they would say: 'How can this man be a saviour if he cannot cure his own illness; how can he pretend to heal the sick?' Get away unnoticed and quickly and do not let others hear what you have said. Ananda, you should know that the body of the Tathagata is the Dharmakaya and does not come from (the illusion of) thought and

desire. The Buddha is the World Honoured One (Bhagavat); His body is above and beyond the three realms (of desire, form and beyond form) and is outside the stream of transmigratory suffering. The Buddha body is transcendental (we wei) and is beyond destiny. How then can such a body be ill?' World Honoured One, his word covered me with shame and I asked myself if I had not wrongly understood the Buddha's order. At that time, a voice was heard in the air above, saying: 'Ananda, the Upasaka is right, but since the Buddha appears in the five kasaya (or periods of turbidity on earth), He uses this (expedient) method (upaya) to liberate living beings. Ananda, go and beg for the cow milk without shame.' World Honoured One, Vimalakirti's wisdom and power of speech being such, I am really not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health." Thus each of the five hundred chief disciples related his encounter with Vimalakirti and declined to call on him to inquire after his health.

### ***III. The Absolute Truth or Light of the Buddha In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Twelve, the Buddha then asked Vimalakirti: "You spoke of coming here to see the Tathagata, but how do you see Him impartially?" Vimalakirti replied: "Seeing reality in one's body is how to see the Buddha. I see the Tathagata did not come in the past, will not go in the future, and does not stay in the present. The Tathagata is seen neither in form (rupa, the first aggregate) nor in the extinction of form nor in the underlying nature of form. Neither is He seen in responsiveness (vedana), conception (sanjna), discrimination (samskara) and consciousness (vijnana) (i.e. the four other aggregates), their extinction and their underlying natures. The Tathagata is not created by the four elements (earth, water, fire and air), for He is (immaterial) like space. He does not come from the union of the six entrances (i.e. the six sense organs) for He is beyond eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and intellect. He is beyond the three worlds (of desire, form and formlessness) for He is free from the three defilements (desire, hate and stupidity). He is in line with the three gates to nirvana and has achieved the three states of enlightenment (or three insights) which do not differ from (the underlying nature of) unenlightenment. He is neither unity nor

diversity, neither selfness nor otherness, neither form nor formlessness, neither on this shore (of enlightenment) nor in mid-stream when converting living beings. He looks into the nirvanic condition (of stillness and extinction of worldly existence) but does not dwell in its permanent extinction. He is neither this nor that and cannot be revealed by these two extremes. He cannot be known by intellect or perceived by consciousness. He is neither bright nor obscure. He is nameless and formless, being neither strong nor weak, neither clean nor unclean, neither in a given place nor outside of it, and neither mundane nor supramundane. He can neither be pointed out nor spoken of. He is neither charitable nor selfish; he neither keeps nor breaks the precepts; is beyond patience and anger, diligence and remissness, stillness and disturbance. He is neither intelligent nor stupid, and neither honest nor deceitful. He neither comes nor goes and neither enters nor leaves. He is beyond the paths of word and speech. He is neither the field of blessedness nor its opposite, neither worthy nor unworthy of worship and offerings. He can be neither seized nor released and is beyond 'is' and 'is not'. He is equal to reality and to the nature of Dharma (Dharmata) and cannot be designated and estimated, for he is beyond figuring and measuring. He is neither large nor small, is neither visible nor audible, can neither be felt nor known, is free from all ties and bondage, is equal to the All-knowledge and to the (underlying) nature of all living beings, and cannot be differentiated from all things. He is beyond gain and loss, free from defilement and troubles (klesa), beyond creating and giving rise (to anything), beyond birth and death, beyond fear and worry, beyond like and dislike, and beyond existence in the past, future and present. He cannot be revealed by word, speech, discerning and pointing. World Honoured One, the body of the Tathagata being such, seeing Him as above-mentioned is correct whereas seeing Him otherwise is wrong."

***(C) Tathagata's Dharmakaya Is Non-Leaking  
In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra,***

***I. A Summary of Dharmakaya In Buddhist Teachings:***

Dharmakaya or the law body is an important conception in Buddhist doctrine of reality, or things. Dharmakaya is usually rendered “Law-body” where Dharma is understood in the sense of “law,” “organization,” “systematization,” or “regulative principle.” The transformation Body of the Buddha, the Body-of-form of all Buddhas which is manifested for the sake of men who cannot yet approach the Dharmakaya, the formless true body of Buddhahood, the first of the Trikaya. But really in Buddhism, Dharma has a very much more comprehensive meaning. Especially when Dharma is coupled with Kaya. Dharmakaya implies the notion of personality. The highest reality is not a mere abstraction, it is very much alive with sense and awareness and intelligence, and, above all, with love purged of human infirmities and defilements. The Dharmakaya which manifests itself in all beings. The Dharmadhatu as the Buddhakaya, all things being Buddha. The Buddha nature is identical with transcendental reality. The unity of the Buddha with everything that exists (the other two are the Sambhogakaya and the Nirmanakaya). Immaterial body or Immortal body, or Spiritual body. As contrasted with the Rupakaya, the material, or physical body. According to Zen Master D.T. Suzuki in the *Essence of Buddhism*, the Dharmakaya is not the owner of wisdom and compassion, he is the Wisdom or the Compassion, as either phase of his being is emphasized for some special reason. We shall miss the point entirely if we take him as somewhat resembling or reflecting the human conception of man. He has no body in the sense we have a human body. He is spirit, he is the field of action, if we can use this form of expression, where wisdom and compassion are fused together, are transformed into each other, and become the principle of vitality in the world of sense-intellect.

According to the Madhyamaka philosophy, Dharma is the essence of being, the ultimate Reality, the Absolute. The Dharmakaya is the essential nature of the Buddha. As Dharmakaya, the Buddha experiences his identity with Dharma or the Absolute and his unity with all beings. The Dharmakaya is a knowing and loving, an inexhaustible fountain head of love and compassion. When the Buddha’s disciple, Vakkali, was on his death, he addressed his desire to see the Buddha in person. On that occasion, the Buddha remarked: “He who sees the Dharma sees Me. He who sees Me sees the Dharma.” According to



Mahayana theory, a Buddha has three bodies, dharmakaya means “the true nature of the Buddha,” which is identical with transcendental reality, the essence of the universe. The dharmakaya is the unity of the Buddha with every thing existing. It represents the law or dharma, the teaching expounded by the Buddha (Sakyamuni), because after completing the path to awakening, Buddhas embody the truth. According to the Tantric tradition, dharmakaya is the first kaya, corresponding to the samsaric level of mindlessness. Dharma means “law,” “norm,” or “truth,” among other definitions. The teachings of the Buddha are called the dharma, the truth. The first kaya is called dharmakaya, the “body of truth,” because the dharma speaks completely and totally in accordance with the language of ignorant people. The starting point for hearing the dharma is confusion. If we are not ignorant and confused, then there is no dharma. At the same time, dharma speaks the language of intelligence, which is the opposite of ignorance. The dharma is able to communicate the truth by relating to the confusion of sentient being. Dharmakaya is the original state of being, which transcend our basic state of mindlessness. It is a state of complete freedom. It is so free that the question of freedom does not even apply. It is complete and it is open, utterly open, magnificently open. Dharmakaya is so completely open that the question of openness does not apply anymore at all, and so completely spacious that reference points do not make any difference.

## ***II. Eight Natures of Tathagata's Dharmakaya:***

As mentioned in previous paragraphs, Dharmakaya is usually rendered “Law-body” or “Truth-body” where Dharma is understood in the sense of of “law,” “organization,” “systematization,” or “regulative principle.” But really in Buddhism, Dharma has a very much more comprehensive meaning. Especially when Dharma is coupled with Kaya. Dharmakaya implies the notion of personality. The highest reality is not a mere abstraction, it is very much alive with sense and awareness and intelligence, and, above all, with love purged of human infirmities and defilements. In Buddhism, the body of reality, being forever free from undergoing birth in conditioned states, for this is the absolute Buddha or essence of all life. According to Zen Master D.T. Suzuki in the *Essence of Buddhism*, the Dharmakaya is not the owner

of wisdom and compassion, he is the Wisdom or the Compassion, as either phase of his being is emphasized for some special reason. We shall miss the point entirely if we take him as somewhat resembling or reflecting the human conception of man. He has no body in the sense we have a human body. He is spirit, he is the field of action, if we can use this form of expression, where wisdom and compassion are fused together, are transformed into each other, and become the principle of vitality in the world of sense-intellect.

Also according to Zen Master D.T. Suzuki in the “Studies in The Lankavatara Sutra,” the idea of Dharmakaya is not wanting in the Lankavatara Sutra, and that it is used not in the same of the Dharmakaya of the Triple Body dogma. The Lankavatara Sutra speaks of the Tathagata’s Dharmakaya of the Inconceivable Dharmakaya, and of Dharmakaya as will-body. That Tathagata’s Dharmakaya has eight special natures as follows: *The first special nature* is that where the attainment of the Tathagatakaya in the heavens is spoken of as the result of the understanding of the highest spiritual truths belonging to Mahayana Buddhism, Dharmakaya is used in apposition with Tathagata as something that transcends the nature of the five Dharmas, being furnished with things issuing from the highest knowledge, and itself abiding in the realm of magical appearances. Here we may consider all these terms synonymous, Dharmakaya, Tathagatakaya, and Tathagata. *The second special nature* is that Tathagatakaya is referred to also when the Bodhisattva attains to a certain form of meditation whereby he finds himself in accord with the suchness of things and its transformations. The Tathagatakaya is realized when all his mental activities conditionally working are extinguished and there takes place a radical revolution in his consciousness. The kaya is no less than the Dharmakaya. *The third special nature* is that when the Bodhisattva is described as being anointed like a great sovereign by all the Buddhas as he goes beyond the final stage of Bodhisattvaship, mention is made of Dharmakaya which he will finally realize. This kaya is characterized as “vasavartin” and made synonymous with Tathagata. In Buddhism “vasavartin” is used in the sense of supreme sovereignty whose will is deed since there is nothing standing in the way of its ruleship. The Dharmakaya may here be identified with Sambhogakaya, the second member of the Trikaya. Here the

Bodhisattva is sitting in the Lotus Palace decorated with gems of all sorts, surrounded by Bodhisattvas of similar qualifications and also by all the Buddhas whose hands are extended to receive the Bodhisattva here. It goes without saying that the Bodhisattva here described has comprehended the Mahayana truth that there is no self-substance in objects external or internal, and that he is abiding in the full realization of the truth most inwardly revealed to his consciousness. *The fourth special nature* is that Dharmakaya is found again in connection with the moral provisions obtainable in a realm of pure spirituality. The term is now coupled with “acintya,” inconceivable, as well as with “vasavarita.” *The fifth special nature* is that where all the Buddhas are spoken of as the same character in four ways, the sameness of the body is regarded as one of them. All the Buddhas who are Tathagatas, the Enlightened Ones, and the Arhats, shared the nature of sameness as regards the Dharmakaya and their material body with the thirty-two marks and the eighty minor ones, except when they assume different forms in different worlds to keep all beings in good discipline. Besides the Dharmakaya expressly referred to, we have also Sambhogakaya solemnized with all the physical features of a superior man; and also the Nirmanakaya, the Body of Transformation, in response to the needs of sentient beings who are inhabiting each in his own realm of existence. *The sixth special nature* is that no-birth is said to be another name for the Tathagata’s Manomaya-dharmakaya. Manomaya is “will-made” and as is explained elsewhere a Bodhisattva is able to assume a variety of forms according to his wishes just as easily as one can in thought pass through or over all kinds of physical obstructions. Does then the “Dharmakaya will-made” mean, not the Dharmakaya in itself, but the Dharmakaya in its relation to a world of multitudinousness where it may take any forms it likes according to condition? In this case the Dharmakaya thus qualified is no other than the Nirmanakaya. So we read further that the Tathagata’s other names are a legion in this world only that sentient beings fail to recognize them even when they hear them. *The seventh special nature* is that the Tathagata’s Dharmakaya is compared to the indestructibility of the sands of the Ganges which remain ever the same when they are put in fire. Further down, the T’ang translation speaks of the Dharmakaya having no body whatever, and for that reason it is never subject to destruction. In the

Sanskrit text the corresponding term is “sarira” or “sariravat,” and not Dharmakaya, but from the context we can judge that “sarira” is here used synonymously with Dahrnakaya. In Buddhism “sarira” is something solid and indestructible that is left behind when the dead body is consumed in fire, and it was thought that only holy men leave such indestructible substance behind. This conception is probably after an analogy of Dharmakaya forever living and constituting the spiritual substance of Buddhahood. *The eighth special nature* is that the sands of the Ganges, the Buddha’s Buddhahood instead of Dharmakaya is made the subject of comparison to the sands which are free from all possible faults inherent in things relative. There is no doubt that the Buddhata too means the Dharmakaya of the Tathagata, only differently designated.

### ***III. Tathagata's Dharmakaya Is Non-Leaking In the Spirit of the Vimalakirti Sutra:***

According to the Vimalakirti Sutra, Chapter Three, the Buddha said to Ananda: “You call on Vimalakirti and inquire after his health on my behalf.” Ananda replied: “World Honoured One, I am not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health. This is because once when the World Honoured One had a slight indisposition and needed some cow milk, I took a bowl and went to a Brahmin family where I stood at the door. Vimalakirti came and asked me: ‘Why are you out so early holding a bowl in your hand?’ I replied: ‘Venerable Upasaka, the World Honoured One is slightly indisposed and wants some cow milk; this is why I have come here.’ Vimalakirti said: ‘Stop, Ananda, stop speaking these words. The Tathahata’s body is as strong as a diamond for He has cut off all evils and has achieved all good. What kind of indisposition and trouble does He still have? Ananda, do not slander the Tathagata and do not let other people hear such coarse language. Do not let the god (devas) as well as the Bodhisattvas of other pure lands hear about it. Ananda, world ruler (cakravarti) who has accumulated only a few small merits is already free from all ailments; how much more so is the Tathagata who has earned countless merits and has achieved all moral excellences? Go away, Ananda, do not cover us all with shame. If the Brahmins heard you they would say: ‘How can this man be a saviour if he cannot cure his own illness; how

can he pretend to heal the sick?" Get away unnoticed and quickly and do not let others hear what you have said. Ananda, you should know that the body of the Tathagata is the Dharmakaya and does not come from (the illusion of) thought and desire. The Buddha is the World Honoured One (Bhagavat); His body is above and beyond the three realms (of desire, form and beyond form) and is outside the stream of transmigratory suffering. The Buddha body is transcendental (we wei) and is beyond destiny. How then can such a body be ill?' World Honoured One, his word covered me with shame and I asked myself if I had not wrongly understood the Buddha's order. At that time, a voice was heard in the air above, saying: 'Ananda, the Upasaka is right, but since the Buddha appears in the five kasaya (or periods of turbidity on earth), He uses this (expedient) method (upaya) to liberate living beings. Ananda, go and beg for the cow milk without shame.' World Honoured One, Vimalakirti's wisdom and power of speech being such, I am really not qualified to call on him to inquire after his health. Thus each of the five hundred chief disciples related his encounter with Vimalakirti and declined to call on him to inquire after his health."



***Part Four***  
***Appendices***





## *Appendix A*

### *Buddha's Enlightenment: The Opening of the Garden of Flowers of Enlightenment & Emancipation*

After the visits to the scenes outside the royal palace, images of the old, the sick, and the dead always haunted the mind of the Prince. He thought that even his beautiful wife, his beloved son, and himself could not escape from the cycle of old age, sickness, and death. Human life was so short and illusionary. King Suddhodana, his father, guessed his thinking of renouncing the world; so, the king tried to build a summer palace for him and let him enjoy the material pleasure of singing, dancing, and other entertainment. However, no joys could arouse the interest of the Prince. The Prince always wanted to seek out ways and means of emancipation from the sufferings of life. One night, the Prince and Chandaka left the Royal Palace. The Prince walked out of the summer palace, went straight to the stables, mounted a horse, and started his unusual journey. So, Chandaka had no choice but going along with Him. The Prince rode his horse to the foot of a hill, he dismounted, gave all his precious dress, his crown and jewels, and told Chandaka to return to the royal palace.

In his search for enlightenment, the Prince Siddhartha Gautama joined five ascetics who were practicing the severest austerities in the hope of gaining ultimate insight. In their company Gautama learned to endure the most extreme self-mortification, becoming weak and frail through starvation and pain. Even the magnificent distinguishing marks that had adorned him since birth almost disappeared. Prince Siddhartha Gautama, who had known the greatest pleasure had now experienced its exact opposite. Eventually he came to realize that nothing would be gained from extreme deprivation. As the god Indra demonstrated to him, if the strings of a lute are too tight they will break, and if they are too slack they will not play: only if they are properly strung will music issue forth. Gautama understood that the same balance is necessary with humankind and resolved to end the useless life of extreme

asceticism by bathing and receiving food. Observing this change, his five companions deserted him, believing that he had admitted defeat and was therefore unworthy of them.

The Buddha came to understand that renunciation itself could not bring about the cessation of suffering. He acknowledged that much can be gained from leading the simple life of an ascetic, but also taught that extreme austerities are not conducive to the path of liberation. At the end of six years of varied experiences, Gautama decided to pave his own way: a middle path between the extreme of self-indulgence and self-mortification. On the banks of the river Nairajana, he accepted an offering of rice-milk from a young girl named Sujata. He knew that enlightenment was near because the previous night he had had five premonitory dreams. He therefore divided Sujata's offering into forty-nine mouthfuls, one for each of the days he knew he would spend in contemplation following the night of his enlightenment. "Roused like a lion," he proceeded to what would later become known as the Bodhi Tree, in Bodh-Gaya. After surveying the four cardinal directions, he sat in the lotus position underneath the tree and vowed not to move until he had attained complete and final enlightenment. Rarely does a Bodhisattva become a Buddha, and the onset of such an event sends ripples all throughout the world system.

After abandoning asceticism, the Prince decided to totally change his way of practicing. He walked to Nairanjana River, and let the clear flowing water cleanse the dirt that had accumulated on his body for a long time. He decided to engage in ways to purify his inner heart, exterminate delusions, and expand his wisdom to understand the truth. However, the Prince was physically exhausted from his continuous practice of asceticism. After bathing, he was so weak and feeble that he fainted on the river bank. Fortunately, at that time, a shepherd girl named Nanda, who carried a bucket of cow's milk on her head, passed by. She discovered the Prince and knew his condition was caused by extreme exhaustion. So she poured a bowl of milk for him to drink. Drinking the bowl of milk offered by the shepherd girl, the Prince found it tasted like sweet nectar. He felt more and more comfortable and he gradually recovered. After the Prince revived, he walked towards Kaudinya and other four people who had practiced asceticism with him in the past; however, all of them avoided him because they

thought the Prince had been seduced by a beautiful maid. So he left the forest alone, crossed over Nairanjana River and walked to Gaya Hill. The Prince sat down on a stone seat under the umbrella-like bodhi tree. He decided to stay there to continue to practice meditation until he was able to attain enlightenment and emancipation. At that moment, a boy walked by with a bundle of grass on his shoulder. The boy offered a straw seat made from the grass he cut to the Prince for comfort. The Prince accepted the boy's offering.

At the moment, mara, the demon of all demons, sensed that Gautama was about to escape from his power and gathered his troops to oust the Bodhisattva from his seat beneath the tree of enlightenment. The ensuing confrontation, in which Mara was soundly defeated. This is one of the great stories of the Buddhist tradition. Mara attacked the Bodhisattva with nine elemental weapons, but to no avail: whirlwinds faded away, flying rocks and flaming spears turned into lotus flowers, clouds of sand, ashes and mud were transformed into fragrant sandalwood and, finally, the darkest of darkness was outshone by the Bodhisattva. Enraged, Mara turned to the Buddha-to-be and demanded his seat. Gautama replied: "You have neither practiced the ten perfections, nor renounced the world, nor sought true knowledge and insight. This seat is not meant for you. I alone have the right to it." With a furious rage, Mara flung his razor-edged disc at the Buddha-to-be, but it turned into a garland of flowers above his head. Then Gautama challenged Mara: if the demon believed that he entitled to occupy the seat of enlightenment, let him bring witnesses to his meritorious deeds. Mara turned to his fiendish companions, who submissively gave their testimony. He then asked the Bodhisattva who would bear witness for him. Gautama drew out his right hand, pointed it downward and said: "Let this great solid earth be my witness." With this, a thunderous earthquake swept the universe and all the demons flew away. Even Mara's great elephant, Girimekhala, knelt down before the Buddha-to-be.

After Mara's defeat, the gods gathered around Gautama while he set his mind on enlightenment. In the first watch, the Bodhisattva experienced the four successive stages of meditation, or mental absorptions (dhyana). Freed from the shackles of conditioned thought, he could look upon his many previous existences, thereby gaining

complete knowledge of himself. In the second watch of the night, he turned his divine eye to the universe and saw the entire world as though it were reflected in a spotless mirror. He saw the endless lives of many beings of the universe unfold according to the moral value of their deeds (see Karma). Some were fortunate, others miserable; some were beautiful, others ugly; but none cease to turn in the endless cycle of birth and death (see Samsara). In the third watch of the night, Gautama turned his meditation to the real and essential nature of the world. He saw how everything rises and falls in tandem and how one thing always originates from another. Understanding this causal law of Dependent Origination, he finally beheld the key to breaking the endless cycle of samsara, and with this understanding he reached perfection. It is said that he became tranquil like a fire when its flames have died down. In the fourth and final watch of the night, as dawn broke, the Bodhisattva's great understanding enabled him to completely "blow out" (literal meaning of nirvana) the fires of greed, hatred and delusion that had previously tied him to rebirth and suffering. At the moment of becoming a Buddha, his entire knowledge crystallized into the Four Noble Truths. Although there are many accounts of the Buddha's night of enlightenment, at times varying in detail, there is complete unanimity about the Four Noble Truths. They can be said to contain the entire teaching of the Buddha, and consequently of Buddhism, and the extent to which they are understood is an indication of progress along the path: "to know" in Buddhism is to comprehend and realize the Four Noble Truths. Only a Buddha has complete and final understanding of their subtlest meaning, which is equal to enlightenment and nirvana.

The Prince sat straight under the tree and made a solemn oath: "If I do not succeed in attaining enlightenment and emancipation, I will not rise from this seat." The Prince sat like a rock with a mind unruffled like still water. He was unperturbed by any temptations. The Prince was even more and more steadfast in his resolve. His mind was more peaceful, and he entered into a state of utmost concentration (samadhi), having reached the realm of no-mind and no-thought. The Prince sat in a meditation pose under the Bodhi tree, warding off all worldly attachments. One night, there appeared a bright morning star. The Prince raised his head and discovered the star. He was instantly

awakened to his true nature and thus attained supreme enlightenment, with his mind filled with great compassion and wisdom. He had become awakened to the universal truth. He had become the Buddha. The Enlightened One knew that all sentient beings were transmigrating in the six states of existence, each receiving different kinds of retribution. He also knew that all sentient beings possessed the same nature and wisdom as a Buddha, that they could all attain enlightenment, but that they were drowned in the sea of suffering and could not redeem themselves because they were immersed in ignorance. After attaining the truth of life in the universe, and meditating for another 21 days under the Bodhi tree, the Buddha entered into the domain of unimpeded harmony and perfect homogeneity. So he rose from his seat and headed towards Kasi city to begin his preaching career to rescue the masses and benefit the living.



## ***Appendix B***

### ***Flowers of Enlightenment In Buddhism***

#### ***I. An Overview & Meanings of Enlightenment:***

The term Enlightenment is from the Sanskrit word of “Bodhi” from the root “Bodha” which means knowing, understanding, and illumination. Buddhiboddhavya also means knowing and knowable. To enlighten means to awaken in regard to the real in contrast to the seeming, as to awake from a deep sleep. To enlighten also means to realize, to perceive, or to apprehend illusions which are harmful to good deeds, or the intuitive awareness or cognition of the Dharma-Nature, the realization of ultimate reality. According to Buddhism, enlightenment is the great avenue that leads practitioners to Nirvana. The concept of “Bodhi” in Sanskrit has no equivalent in Vietnamese nor in English, only the word “Lóe sáng,” “Bừng sáng,” “Enlightenment is the most appropriate term for the term Bodhi in Sanskrit. A person awakens the true nature of the all things means he awakens to a oneness of emptiness. The emptiness experienced here is no nihilistic emptiness; rather it is something unperceivable, unthinkable, unfeeling for it is endless and beyond existence and nonexistence. Emptiness is no object that could be experienced by a subject, a subject itself must dissolve in it (the emptiness) to attain a true enlightenment. In real Buddhism, without this experience, there would be no Buddhism. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail. In Zen, the term “enlightenment” is used for direct apprehension of truth. It literally means “seeing nature,” and is said to be awareness of one’s true nature in an insight that transcends words and conceptual thought. It is equated with “Satori” in some Zen contexts, but in others “kensho” is described as an initial awakening that must be developed through further training, while

“satori” is associated with the awakening of Buddhas and the patriarchs of Zen. Enlightenment also means to see the nature, or awakening, or seeing into your True-nature and at the same time seeing into the ultimate nature of the universe and all things (This is another way of speaking of the experience of enlightenment or self-realization. Awakening to one’s true nature and hence of the nature of all existence). It is the sudden realization that “I have been complete and perfect from the very beginning. How wonderful, hoe miraculous!” If it is true awakening, its substance will always be the same for whoever experiences it, whether he be the Sakyamuni Buddha, the Amitabha Buddha, or any one of you. But this does not mean that we can all experience awakening to the same degree, for in the clarity, the depth, and the completeness of the experience there are great difference.

Enlightenment in Buddhism means we must strive to cultivate until we begin to get a glimmer that the problem in life is not outside ourselves, then we have really stepped on the path of cultivation. Only when that awakening starts, we can really see that life can be more open and joyful than we had ever thought possible. In Zen, enlightenment is not something we can achieve, but it is the absence of something. All our life, we have been running east and west to look for something, pursuing some goal. True enlightenment is dropping all that. However, it is easy to say and difficult to do. The practice has to be done by each individual, and no-one can do it for us, no exception! Even though we read thousands of sutras in thousands of years, it will not do anything for us. We all have to practice, and we have to practice with all our efforts for the rest of our life. The term ‘Enlightenment’ is very important in the Zen sects because the ultimate goal of Zen discipline is to attain what is known as ‘enlightenment.’ Enlightenment is the state of consciousness in which Noble Wisdom realizes its own inner nature. And this self-realization constitutes the truth of Zen, which is emancipation (moksha) and freedom (vasavartin). Enlightenment is the whole of Zen. Zen starts with it and ends with it. When there is no enlightenment, there is no Zen. Enlightenment is the measure of Zen, as is announced by a master. Enlightenment is not a state of mere quietude, it is not tranquilization, it is an inner experience which has no trace of knowledge of discrimination; there must be a certain awakening from the relative field of consciousness, a certain



turning-away from the ordinary form of experience which characterizes our everyday life. In other words, true enlightenment means the nature of one's own self-being is fully realized. The technical Mahayana term for it is 'Paravritti,' turning back, or turning over at the basis of consciousness. By this entirety of one's mental construction goes through a complete change. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail.

"Satori" is a Japanese term for "Awakening." In Japanese, it literally means "to know." In Zen, this refers to non-conceptual, direct apprehension of the nature of reality, because it is said to transcend words and concepts. It is often equated with another term "Chien-Hsing" in Chinese, both of which signify the experience of awakening to truth, but which are not considered to be the end of the path; rather, the experience must be deepened by further meditation training. In Zen, the state of satori means the state of the Buddha-mind or consciousness of pure consciousness itself. However, go back to the time of the Buddha, Prince Siddhartha, beneath the Bodhi Tree, attained Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. What did he attain? Very simple, He attained the Truth, the Eternal Truth. The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path are what the Buddha found. Devout Buddhists who want to attain the same peace and happiness, have no other route but cultivating in accordance with these Truths. That is to say, we must learn about these Truths and walk the Path the Buddha showed. As the Buddha told his disciples: "All I did can be done by every one of you; you can find Nirvana and attain joy and happiness any time you give up the false self and destroy the ignorance in your minds."

According to the Samanaphalasuttanta, the Buddha taught the followings on the experience of enlightenment: "With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm, and imperturbable, he directs and bends down to the knowledge of the destruction of the defilements. He knows as it really is: 'this is pain', 'this is the origin of pain', this is the cessation of pain',

and 'this is the Way that leads to the cessation of pain'. He also knows as it really is: 'this is affliction', 'this is the origin of affliction', this is the cessation of affliction', and 'this is the Way that leads to the cessation of affliction'. To him, thus knowing, thus seeing, the heart is set free from the defilement of lusts, of existence, of ignorance... In him, thus set free, there arises the knowledge of his emancipation, and he knows: 'Rebirth has been destroyed. The higher life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After this present life there will be no more life beyond!' However, the dharma which I have realized is indeed profound, difficult to perceive, difficult to comprehend, tranquil, exalted, not within the sphere of logic, subtle, and is to be understood by the wise. Sentient beings are attached to material pleasures. This causally connected 'Dependent Arising' is a subject which is difficult to comprehend. And Nirvana, the cessation of the conditioned, the abandoning of all passions, the destruction of craving, the non-attachment, and the cessation is also a matter not easily comprehensible." It is quite clear that "Satori" is the true fulfillment of the state of a perfect normal state of mind in which you will be more satisfied, more peaceful, fuller of joy than anything you ever experienced before. So, "Satori" is a state in which the person is completely tuned to the reality outside and inside of him, a state in which he is fully aware of it and fully grasped it. He is aware of it that is, not in his brain nor any part of his organism, but as the whole man. He is aware of it; not as of an object over there which he grasps with his thought, but it, the flower, the dog, or the man in its or his full reality. He who awakes is open and responsive to the world, and he can be open and responsive because he has given up holding on to himself as a thing, and thus has become empty and ready to receive. To be enlightened means "the full awakening of the total personality to reality."

Enlightenment is the perfect normal state of mind even the final aim of Zen is the experience of enlightenment, called "Satori." Satori is not an abnormal state of mind; it is not a trance in which reality disappears. It is not a narcissistic state of mind, as it can be seen in some religious manifestations. If anything, it is a perfect normal state of mind. As Joshu declared, "Zen is your everyday thought," it all depends on the adjustment of the hinge, whether the door opens in or

opens out. Satori has a peculiar effect on the person who experiences it. All your mental activities will now be working in a different key, which will be more satisfying, more peaceful, fuller of joy than anything you ever experienced before. The tone of life will be altered. There is something rejuvenating in the possession of Zen. The spring flowers will look prettier, and the mountain stream runs cooler and more transparent. Enlightenment is the full awakening to reality. It is very important to understand that the state of enlightenment is not a state of dissociation or of a trance in which one believes oneself to be awakened, when one is actually deeply asleep. The Western psychologist, of course, will be prone to believe that “satori” is just a subjective state, an auto-induced sort of trance. A satori is the acquisition of a new viewpoint. The full awakening to reality means to have attained fully “productive orientation.” That means not to relate oneself to the world receptively, exploitatively, hoardingly, or in a marketing fashion, but creatively and actively. In the state of full productiveness, there are no veils which separate me from “not me.” The object is not an object anymore; it does not stand against me, but is with me. The rose I see is not an object for my thought, in the manner that when I say “I see a rose” I only state that the object, a rose, falls under the category “rose,” but in the manner that “a rose is a rose.” The state of productiveness is at the same time the state of highest activity; I see the object without distortions by my greed and fear. I see it as it or he is, not as I wish it or him to be or not to be. In this mode of perception there are no parataxic distortions. There is complete aliveness, and the synthesis is of subjectivity-objectivity. I experience intensely yet the object is left to be what it is. I bring it to life, and it brings me to life. Satori appears mysterious only to the person who is not aware to what degree his perception of the world is purely mental, or parataxical. If one is aware of this, one is also aware of a different awareness, that which one can also call a fully realistic one. One may have only experienced glimpses of it, yet one can imagine what it is.

## ***II. Buddha's Enlightenment:***

After the visits to the scenes outside the royal palace, images of the old, the sick, and the dead always haunted the mind of the Prince. He thought that even his beautiful wife, his beloved son, and himself could

not escape from the cycle of old age, sickness, and death. Human life was so short and illusionary. King Suddhodana, his father, guessed his thinking of renouncing the world; so, the king tried to build a summer palace for him and let him enjoy the material pleasure of singing, dancing, and other entertainment. However, no joys could arouse the interest of the Prince. The Prince always wanted to seek out ways and means of emancipation from the sufferings of life. One night, the Prince and Chandaka left the Royal Palace. The Prince walked out of the summer palace, went straight to the stables, mounted a horse, and started his unusual journey. So, Chandaka had no choice but going along with Him. The Prince rode his horse to the foot of a hill, he dismounted, gave all his precious dress, his crown and jewels, and told Chandaka to return to the royal palace.

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The Buddha came to understand that renunciation itself could not bring about the cessation of suffering. He acknowledged that much can be gained from leading the simple life of an ascetic, but also taught that extreme austerities are not conducive to the path of liberation. At the end of six years of varied experiences, Gautama decided to pave his own way: a middle path between the extreme of self-indulgence and self-mortification. On the banks of the river Nairajana, he accepted an offering of rice-milk from a young girl named Sujata. He knew that

enlightenment was near because the previous night he had had five premonitory dreams. He therefore divided Sujata's offering into forty-nine mouthfuls, one for each of the days he knew he would spend in contemplation following the night of his enlightenment. "Roused like a lion," he proceeded to what would later become known as the Bodhi Tree, in Bodh-Gaya. After surveying the four cardinal directions, he sat in the lotus position underneath the tree and vowed not to move until he had attained complete and final enlightenment. Rarely does a Bodhisattva become a Buddha, and the onset of such an event sends ripples all throughout the world system.

After abandoning asceticism, the Prince decided to totally change his way of practicing. He walked to Nairanjana River, and let the clear flowing water cleanse the dirt that had accumulated on his body for a long time. He decided to engage in ways to purify his inner heart, exterminate delusions, and expand his wisdom to understand the truth. However, the Prince was physically exhausted from his continuous practice of asceticism. After bathing, he was so weak and feeble that he fainted on the river bank. Fortunately, at that time, a shepherd girl named Nanda, who carried a bucket of cow's milk on her head, passed by. She discovered the Prince and knew his condition was caused by extreme exhaustion. So she poured a bowl of milk for him to drink. Drinking the bowl of milk offered by the shepherd girl, the Prince found it tasted like sweet nectar. He felt more and more comfortable and he gradually recovered. After the Prince revived, he walked towards Kaudinya and other four people who had practiced asceticism with him in the past; however, all of them avoided him because they thought the Prince had been seduced by a beautiful maid. So he left the forest alone, crossed over Nairanjana River and walked to Gaya Hill. The Prince sat down on a stone seat under the umbrella-like bodhi tree. He decided to stay there to continue to practice meditation until he was able to attain enlightenment and emancipation. At that moment, a boy walked by with a bundle of grass on his shoulder. The boy offered a straw seat made from the grass he cut to the Prince for comfort. The Prince accepted the boy's offering.

At the moment, mara, the demon of all demons, sensed that Gautama was about to escape from his power and gathered his troops to oust the Bodhisattva from his seat beneath the tree of enlightenment.

The ensuing confrontation, in which Mara was soundly defeated. This is one of the great stories of the Buddhist tradition. Mara attacked the Bodhisattva with nine elemental weapons, but to no avail: whirlwinds faded away, flying rocks and flaming spears turned into lotus flowers, clouds of sand, ashes and mud were transformed into fragrant sandalwood and, finally, the darkest of darkness was outshone by the Bodhisattva. Enraged, Mara turned to the Buddha-to-be and demanded his seat. Gautama replied: "You have neither practiced the ten perfections, nor renounced the world, nor sought true knowledge and insight. This seat is not meant for you. I alone have the right to it." With a furious rage, Mara flung his razor-edged disc at the Buddha-to-be, but it turned into a garland of flowers above his head. Then Gautama challenged Mara: if the demon believed that he entitled to occupy the seat of enlightenment, let him bring witnesses to his meritorious deeds. Mara turned to his fiendish companions, who submissively gave their testimony. He then asked the Bodhisattva who would bear witness for him. Gautama drew out his right hand, pointed it downward and said: "Let this great solid earth be my witness." With this, a thunderous earthquake swept the universe and all the demons flew away. Even Mara's great elephant, Girimekhala, knelt down before the Buddha-to-be.

After Mara's defeat, the gods gathered around Gautama while he set his mind on enlightenment. In the first watch, the Bodhisattva experienced the four successive stages of meditation, or mental absorptions (*dhyana*). Freed from the shackles of conditioned thought, he could look upon his many previous existences, thereby gaining complete knowledge of himself. In the second watch of the night, he turned his divine eye to the universe and saw the entire world as though it were reflected in a spotless mirror. He saw the endless lives of many beings of the universe unfold according to the moral value of their deeds (see *Karma*). Some were fortunate, others miserable; some were beautiful, others ugly; but none cease to turn in the endless cycle of birth and death (see *Samsara*). In the third watch of the night, Gautama turned his meditation to the real and essential nature of the world. He saw how everything rises and falls in tandem and how one thing always originates from another. Understanding this causal law of Dependent Origination, he finally beheld the key to breaking the

endless of cycle of samsara, and with this understanding he reached perfection. It is said that he became tranquil like a fire when its flames have died down. In the fourth and final watch of the night, as dawn broke, the Bodhisattva's great understanding enabled him to completely "blow out" (literal meaning of nirvana) the fires of greed, hatred and delusion that had previously tied him to rebirth and suffering. At the moment of becoming a Buddha, his entire knowledge crystallized into the Four Noble Truths. Although there are many accounts of the Buddha's night of enlightenment, at times varying in detail, there is complete unanimity about the Four Noble Truths. They can be said to contain the entire teaching of the Buddha, and consequently of Buddhism, and the extent to which they are understood is an indication of progress along the path: "to know" in Buddhism is to comprehend and realize the Four Noble Truths. Only a Buddha has complete and final understanding of their subtlest meaning, which is equal to enlightenment and nirvana.

The Prince sat straight under the tree and made a solemn oath: "If I do not succeed in attaining enlightenment and emancipation, I will not rise from this seat." The Prince sat like a rock with a mind unruffled like still water. He was unperturbed by any temptations. The Prince was even more and more steadfast in his resolve. His mind was more peaceful, and he entered into a state of utmost concentration (samadhi), having reached the realm of no-mind and no-thought. The Prince sat in a meditation pose under the Bodhi tree, warding off all worldly attachments. One night, there appeared a bright morning star. The Prince raised his head and discovered the star. He was instantly awakened to his true nature and thus attained supreme enlightenment, with his mind filled with great compassion and wisdom. He had become awakened to the universal truth. He had become the Buddha. The Enlightened One knew that all sentient beings were transmigrating in the six states of existence, each receiving different kinds of retribution. He also knew that all sentient beings possessed the same nature and wisdom as a Buddha, that they could all attain enlightenment, but that they were drowned in the sea of suffering and could not redeem themselves because they were immersed in ignorance. After attaining the truth of life in the universe, and meditating for another 21 days under the Bodhi tree, the Buddha

entered into the domain of unimpeded harmony and perfect homogeneity. So he rose from his seat and headed towards Kasi city to begin his preaching career to rescue the masses and benefit the living.

### ***III. Overnight Guest:***

One day Hsuan-Chieh went to Cao-Xi to visit the Sixth Patriarch. Upon his first meeting with Hui Neng, Hsuan-Chieh struck his staff on the ground and circled the Sixth Patriarch three times, then stood there upright. The Sixth Patriarch said, “This monk possesses the three thousand noble characteristics and the eighty thousand fine attributes. Oh monk! Where have you come from? How have you attained such self-possession?” Hsuan-Chieh replied, “The great matter of birth and death does not tarry.” The Sixth Patriarch said, “Then why not embody what is not born and attain what is not hurried?” Hsuan-Chieh said, “What is embodied is not subject to birth. What is attained is fundamentally unmoving.” The Sixth Patriarch said, “Just so! Just so!” Upon hearing these words, everyone among the congregation of monks was astounded. Hsuan-Chieh then formally paid his respect to the Sixth Patriarch. He then advised that he was immediately departing. The Sixth Patriarch said, “Don’t go so quickly!” Hsuan-Chieh said, “Fundamentally there is nothing moving. So how can something be too quick?” The Sixth Patriarch said, “How can one know there’s no movement?” Hsuan-Chieh said, “The distinction is completely of the master’s own making.” The Sixth Patriarch said, “You have fully attained the meaning of what is unborn.” Hsuan-Chieh said, “So, does what is unborn have a meaning?” The Sixth Patriarch said, “Who makes a distinction about whether there is a meaning or not?” Hsuan-Chieh said, “Distinctions are meaningless.” The Sixth Patriarch shouted, “Excellent! Excellent! Now, just stay here a single night!” Thus people referred to Hsuan-Chieh as the “Overnight Guest.” The next day Hsuan-Chieh descended the mountain and returned to Wen-Chou, where Zen students gathered to study with him.

### ***IV. Buddhism: A Stream of Enlightenment:***

The term Enlightenment is from the Sanskrit word of “Bodhi” from the root “Bodha” which means knowing, understanding, and illumination. Buddhiboddhavya also means knowing and knowable. To



enlighten means to awaken in regard to the real in contrast to the seeming, as to awake from a deep sleep. To enlighten also means to realize, to perceive, or to apprehend illusions which are harmful to good deeds, or the intuitive awareness or cognition of the Dharma-Nature, the realization of ultimate reality. According to Buddhism, enlightenment is the great avenue that leads practitioners to Nirvana. The concept of “Bodhi” in Sanskrit has no equivalent in Vietnamese nor in English, only the word “Lóe sáng,” “Bừng sáng,” “Enlightenment is the most appropriate term for the term Bodhi in Sanskrit. A person awakens the true nature of the all things means he awakens to a oneness of emptiness. The emptiness experienced here is no nihilistic emptiness; rather it is something unperceivable, unthinkable, unfeelable for it is endless and beyond existence and nonexistence. Emptiness is no object that could be experienced by a subject, a subject itself must dissolve in it (the emptiness) to attain a true enlightenment. In real Buddhism, without this experience, there would be no Buddhism. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail. In Zen, the term “enlightenment” is used for direct apprehension of truth. It literally means “seeing nature,” and is said to be awareness of one’s true nature in an insight that transcends words and conceptual thought. It is equated with “Satori” in some Zen contexts, but in others “kensho” is described as an initial awakening that must be developed through further training, while “satori” is associated with the awakening of Buddhas and the patriarchs of Zen. Enlightenment also means to see the nature, or awakening, or seeing into your True-nature and at the same time seeing into the ultimate nature of the universe and all things (This is another way of speaking of the experience of enlightenment or self-realization. Awakening to one’s true nature and hence of the nature of all existence). It is the sudden realization that “I have been complete and perfect from the very beginning. How wonderful, how miraculous!” If it is true awakening, its substance will always be the same for whoever

experiences it, whether he be the Sakyamuni Buddha, the Amitabha Buddha, or any one of you. But this does not mean that we can all experience awakening to the same degree, for in the clarity, the depth, and the completeness of the experience there are great difference.

According to the Northern Buddhist School, there are eight awakenings of great people. The form of the Sutra “Eight Awakenings of Great People” is very simple. The text form is ancient, just like the Forty-Two Chapters and the Sutra on the Six Paramitas. However, its content is extremely profound and marvelous. Shramana An Shi Kao, a Partian monk, translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in about 150 A.D. (during the Later Han Dynasty). Most Venerable Thích Thanh Từ translated from Chinese into Vietnamese in the 1970s. The original text of this sutra in Sanskrit is still extant to this day. This sutra is entirely in accord with both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions. In fact, each of the eight items in this sutra can be considered as a subject of meditation which Buddhist disciples should at all times, by day and by night, with a sincere attitude, recite and keep in mind eight truths that all great people awaken to. These are eight Truths that all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and great people awaken to. After awakening, they then energetically cultivate the Way. By steeping themselves in kindness and compassion, they grow wisdom. They sail the Dharma-body ship all the way across to Nirvana’s other shore, only to re-enter the sea of death and rebirth to rescue all living beings. They use these Eight Truths to point out the right road to all beings and in this way, help them to recognize the anguish of death and rebirth. They inspire all to cast off and forsake the Five Desires, and instead to cultivate their minds in the way of all Sages. If Buddhist disciples recite this Sutra on the Eight Awakenings, and constantly ponder its meaning, they will certainly eradicate boundless offenses, advance toward Bodhi, quickly realize Proper Enlightenment, forever be free of death and rebirth, and eternally abide in joy. Everyone of us knows what we deeply aspire to gain is happiness and what we try to avoid is sufferings and afflictions; however, our actions and behaviors in daily life do not bring us any joy and happiness; on the contrary, they only lead us to more sufferings and afflictions. Why? Buddhism believes that we cause our own sufferings and afflictions because we are not awakening of the truth. Buddhism claims that experiences which are apparently pleasurable in

this world are ultimately states of suffering. Devout Buddhists should see clearly the point is that we perceive them as states of pleasure only because, in comparison to states of sufferings and afflictions, they appear as a form of relief. A disciple of the Buddha, day and night, should wholeheartedly recite and meditate on the eight awakenings discovered by the great beings. *The First Awakening* is the awareness that the world is impermanent. All regimes are subject to fall; all things composed of the four elements that are empty and contain the seeds of suffering. Human beings are composed of five aggregates, and are without a separate self. They are always in the process of change, constantly being born and constantly dying. They are empty of self, without sovereignty. The mind is the source of all unwholesome deeds and confusion, and the body is the forest of all impure actions. If we meditate on these facts, we can gradually be released from the cycle of birth and death. The world is impermanent, countries are perilous and fragile; the body's four elements are a source of pain; ultimately, they are empty; the Five Aggregates (Skandhas) are not me; death and rebirth are simply a series of transformations; misleading, unreal, and uncontrollable; the mind is the wellspring of evil; the body is the breeding ground of offenses; whoever can investigate and contemplate these truths, will gradually break free of death and rebirth. *The Second Awakening* is the awareness that more desire brings more suffering. The awareness that more desire brings more suffering. All hardships in daily life arise from greed and desire. Those with little desire and ambition are able to relax, their bodies and minds are free from entanglement. Too much desire brings pain. Death and rebirth are tiresome ordeals which stem from our thoughts of greed and desire. By reducing desires, we can realize absolute truth and enjoy independence and well-being in both body and mind. *The Third Awakening* is the awareness that the human mind is always searching for possessions and never feels fulfilled. This causes impure actions to ever increase. In our daily life we always want to have good food, nice clothes, attractive jewellery, but we only feel satisfied with them for a short time, after that, the very same object that once gave us pleasure might cause us frustration now. The same can also be applied to fame. At the beginning we might think ourselves that we are so happy when we are famous, but after some time, it could be that all we feel is frustration

and dissatisfaction. Bodhisattvas, however, always remember the principle of having few desires. They live a simple life in peace in order to practice the Way, and consider the realization of perfect understanding as their only career. Our minds are never satisfied or content with just enough. The more we obtain, the more we want; thus we create offenses and do evil deeds; Bodhisattvas do not make mistakes, instead, they are always content, nurture the way by living a quiet life in humble surroundings. Their sole occupation is cultivating wisdom. *The Fourth Awakening* is the awareness of the extent to which laziness is an obstacle to practice. For this reason, we must practice diligently to destroy the unwholesome mental factors which bind us, and to conquer the four kinds of Mara, in order to free ourselves from the prison of the five aggregates and the three worlds. Idleness and self-indulgence will be our downfall. With unflagging vigor, Great people break through their afflictions and baseness. They vanquish and humble the Four Kinds of Demons, and they escape from the prison of the Five Skandhas. *The Fifth Awakening* is the awareness that ignorance is the cause of the endless cycle of birth and death. Therefore, Bodhisattvas always listen and learn in order to develop their understanding and eloquence. This enables them to educate living beings and bring them to the realm of great joy. Stupidity and ignorance are the cause of death and rebirth, Bodhisattvas are always attentive to and appreciative of extensive study and erudition. They strive to expand their wisdom and refine their eloquence. Teaching and transforming living beings, nothing brings them greater joy than this. *The Sixth Awakening* is the awareness that poverty creates hatred and anger, which creates a vicious cycle of negative thoughts and activity. When practicing generosity, Bodhisattvas consider everyone, friends and enemies alike, as equal. They do not condemn anyone's past wrongdoings, nor do they hate those who are presently causing harm. The suffering of poverty breeds deep resentment; wealth unfairly distributed creates ill-will and conflict among people. So, Bodhisattvas practice giving and treat friend and foe alike. They neither harbor grudges nor despise evil-natured people. *The Seventh Awakening* is the awareness that the five categories of desire lead to difficulties. Although we are in the world, we should try not to be caught up in worldly matters. A monk, for example, has in his possession only three robes and one bowl. He lives

simply in order to practice the Way. His precepts keep him free of attachment to worldly things, and he treats everyone equally and with compassion. Great people, even as laity, are not blighted by worldly pleasures; instead, they constantly aspire to take up the three precepts-robles and blessing-bowl of the monastic life. Their ideal and ambition is to leave the household and family life to cultivate the way in immaculate purity. Their virtuous qualities are lofty and sublime; their attitudes toward all creatures are kind and compassionate. *The Eighth Awakening* is the awareness that the fire of birth and death is raging, causing endless suffering everywhere. Bodhisattvas should take the Great Vow to help everyone, to suffer with everyone, and to guide all beings to the realm of great joy. Rebirth and death are beset with measureless suffering and afflictions, like a blazing fire. Thus, great people make the resolve to cultivate the Great Vehicle to rescue all beings. They endure endless hardship while standing in for others. They lead everyone to ultimate happiness.

Enlightenment in Zen Buddhism means we must strive to cultivate until we begin to get a glimmer that the problem in life is not outside ourselves, then we have really stepped on the path of cultivation. Only when that awakening starts, we can really see that life can be more open and joyful than we had ever thought possible. In Zen, enlightenment is not something we can achieve, but it is the absence of something. All our life, we have been running east and west to look for something, pursuing some goal. True enlightenment is dropping all that. However, it is easy to say and difficult to do. The practice has to be done by each individual, and no-one can do it for us, no exception! Even though we read thousands of sutras in thousands of years, it will not do anything for us. We all have to practice, and we have to practice with all our efforts for the rest of our life. The term 'Enlightenment' is very important in the Zen sects because the ultimate goal of Zen discipline is to attain what is known as 'enlightenment.' Enlightenment is the state of consciousness in which Noble Wisdom realizes its own inner nature. And this self-realization constitutes the truth of Zen, which is emancipation (moksha) and freedom (vasavartin). Enlightenment is the whole of Zen. Zen starts with it and ends with it. When there is no enlightenment, there is no Zen. Enlightenment is the measure of Zen, as is announced by a master. Enlightenment is not a state of mere quietude, it is not tranquilization, it is an inner experience which has no trace of knowledge of discrimination; there must be a

certain awakening from the relative field of consciousness, a certain turning-away from the ordinary form of experience which characterizes our everyday life. In other words, true enlightenment means the nature of one's own self-being is fully realized. The technical Mahayana term for it is 'Paravritti,' turning back, or turning over at the basis of consciousness. By this entirety of one's mental construction goes through a complete change. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail.

"Satori" is a Japanese term for "Awakening." In Japanese, it literally means "to know." In Zen, this refers to non-conceptual, direct apprehension of the nature of reality, because it is said to transcend words and concepts. It is often equated with another term "Chien-Hsing" in Chinese, both of which signify the experience of awakening to truth, but which are not considered to be the end of the path; rather, the experience must be deepened by further meditation training. In Zen, the state of satori means the state of the Buddha-mind or consciousness of pure consciousness itself. However, go back to the time of the Buddha, Prince Siddhartha, beneath the Bodhi Tree, attained Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. What did he attain? Very simple, He attained the Truth, the Eternal Truth. The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path are what the Buddha found. Devout Buddhists who want to attain the same peace and happiness, have no other route but cultivating in accordance with these Truths. That is to say, we must learn about these Truths and walk the Path the Buddha showed. As the Buddha told his disciples: "All I did can be done by every one of you; you can find Nirvana and attain joy and happiness any time you give up the false self and destroy the ignorance in your minds."

According to the Samanaphalasuttanta, the Buddha taught the followings on the experience of enlightenment: "With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm, and imperturbable, he directs and bends down to the knowledge of the destruction of the defilements. He knows as it really

is: 'this is pain', 'this is the origin of pain', this is the cessation of pain', and 'this is the Way that leads to the cessation of pain'. He also knows as it really is: 'this is affliction', 'this is the origin of affliction', this is the cessation of affliction', and 'this is the Way that leads to the cessation of affliction'. To him, thus knowing, thus seeing, the heart is set free from the defilement of lusts, of existence, of ignorance... In him, thus set free, there arises the knowledge of his emancipation, and he knows: 'Rebirth has been destroyed. The higher life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After this present life there will be no more life beyond!' However, the dharma which I have realized is indeed profound, difficult to perceive, difficult to comprehend, tranquil, exalted, not within the sphere of logic, subtle, and is to be understood by the wise. Sentient beings are attached to material pleasures. This causally connected 'Dependent Arising' is a subject which is difficult to comprehend. And Nirvana, the cessation of the conditioned, the abandoning of all passions, the destruction of craving, the non-attachment, and the cessation is also a matter not easily comprehensible." It is quite clear that "Satori" is the true fulfillment of the state of a perfect normal state of mind in which you will be more satisfied, more peaceful, fuller of joy than anything you ever experienced before. So, "Satori" is a state in which the person is completely tuned to the reality outside and inside of him, a state in which he is fully aware of it and fully grasped it. He is aware of it that is, not in his brain nor any part of his organism, but as the whole man. He is aware of it; not as of an object over there which he grasps with his thought, but it, the flower, the dog, or the man in its or his full reality. He who awakes is open and responsive to the world, and he can be open and responsive because he has given up holding on to himself as a thing, and thus has become empty and ready to receive. To be enlightened means "the full awakening of the total personality to reality."

Enlightenment is the perfect normal state of mind even the final aim of Zen is the experience of enlightenment, called "Satori." Satori is not an abnormal state of mind; it is not a trance in which reality disappears. It is not a narcissistic state of mind, as it can be seen in some religious manifestations. If anything, it is a perfect normal state of mind. As Joshu declared, "Zen is your everyday thought," it all

depends on the adjustment of the hinge, whether the door opens in or opens out. Satori has a peculiar effect on the person who experiences it. All your mental activities will now be working in a different key, which will be more satisfying, more peaceful, fuller of joy than anything you ever experienced before. The tone of life will be altered. There is something rejuvenating in the possession of Zen. The spring flowers will look prettier, and the mountain stream runs cooler and more transparent. Enlightenment is the full awakening to reality. It is very important to understand that the state of enlightenment is not a state of dissociation or of a trance in which one believes oneself to be awakened, when one is actually deeply asleep. The Western psychologist, of course, will be prone to believe that "satori" is just a subjective state, an auto-induced sort of trance. A satori is the acquisition of a new viewpoint. The full awakening to reality means to have attained fully "productive orientation." That means not to relate oneself to the world receptively, exploitatively, hoardingly, or in a marketing fashion, but creatively and actively. In the state of full productiveness, there are no veils which separate me from "not me." The object is not an object anymore; it does not stand against me, but is with me. The rose I see is not an object for my thought, in the manner that when I say "I see a rose" I only state that the object, a rose, falls under the category "rose," but in the manner that "a rose is a rose." The state of productiveness is at the same time the state of highest activity; I see the object without distortions by my greed and fear. I see it as it or he is, not as I wish it or him to be or not to be. In this mode of perception there are no parataxic distortions. There is complete aliveness, and the synthesis is of subjectivity-objectivity. I experience intensely yet the object is left to be what it is. I bring it to life, and it brings me to life. Satori appears mysterious only to the person who is not aware to what degree his perception of the world is purely mental, or parataxical. If one is aware of this, one is also aware of a different awareness, that which one can also call a fully realistic one. One may have only experienced glimpses of it, yet one can imagine what it is.



## *Appendix C*

### *Flowers of Emancipation In Buddhism*

#### *I. An Overview & Meanings of Emancipation:*

In Buddhism, "Emancipation" means to release from the round of birth and death. The liberation the experiencing of which is the goal of all Buddhists and all meditative training in Buddhism. Liberation is also used as a synonym for enlightenment. To emancipate from the round of birth and death means to deliverance from all the trammels of life, the bondage of the passion and reincarnation. Final emancipation or liberation, eternal liberation, release from worldly existence or the cycle of birth and death. Emancipation means the escaping from bonds and the obtaining of freedom, freedom from transmigration, from karma, from illusion, from suffering of the burning house in the three realms (lokiya). In Buddhism, it is not the Buddha who delivers men, but he teaches them to deliver themselves, even as he delivered himself. Above all, for Buddhist practitioners, emancipation denotes nirvana. Liberation or release from suffering through knowledge of the cause of suffering and the cessation of suffering, through realization of the four noble truths to eliminate defilements. Vimukti is the extinction of all illusions and passions. It is liberation from the karmic cycle of life and death and the realization of nirvana.

Generally speaking, all teachings of the Buddha are aimed at releasing human beings' sufferings and afflictions in this very life. They have a function of helping individual see the way to make arise the skilful thought, and to release the evil thought. For example, using compassion to release ill-will; using detachment or greedlessness to release greediness; using wisdom or non-illusion to release illusion; using perception to release selfishness; using impermanence and suffering to release "conceit." For lay people who still have duties to do in daily life for themselves and their families, work, religion, and country, the Buddha specifically introduced different means and methods, especially the Buddha's teachings in the Advices to Lay People (Sigalaka) Sutra. The Buddha also introduced other methods of

cultivation: “To abandon four wrong deeds of not taking life, not taking what is not given, not committing sexual misconduct, not lying, not doing what is caused by attachment, ill-will, or fear, not to waste one’s substance by the six ways of not drinking alcohol, not haunting the streets at unfitting time, not attending nonsense affairs, not gambling, not keeping bad company, and not staying idle. In addition, lay people should always live in the six good relationships of their families and society: between parents and children, between husband and wife, between teacher and student, among relatives and neighbors, between monks and lay people, between employer and employee, etc. These relationships should be based on human love, loyalty, sincerity, gratitude, mutual acceptance, mutual understanding and mutual respect because they relate closely to individuals’ happiness in the present. Thus, the Buddha’s Dharma is called the Dharma of liberation.

## ***II. Buddhism: The Principle of Perfect Freedom:***

To understand Buddhism properly we must begin at the end of the Buddha’s career. The year 486 B.C. or thereabouts saw the conclusion of the Buddha’s activity as a teacher in India. The death of the Buddha is called, as is well known, ‘Nirvana,’ or ‘the state of the fire blown out.’ When a fire is blown out, nothing remain to be seen. So the Buddha was considered to have entered into an invisible state which can in no way be depicted in word or in form. Just prior to his attaining Nirvana, in the Sala grove of Kusinagara, the Buddha spoke to His disciples to the following effect: “Do not wail saying ‘Our Teacher has passed away, and we have no one to follow.’ What I have taught, the Dharma (ideal) with the disciplinary (Vinaya) rules, will be your teacher after my departure. If you adhere to them and practice them uninterruptedly, is it not the same as if my Dharma-body (Dharmakaya) remained here forever?” In spite of these thoughtful instructions some of his disciples were expressing a dissenting idea even before his funeral. It was natural, therefore, for the mindful elders to think of calling a council of elders in order to preserve the orthodox teaching of the Buddha. They consulted King Ajatasatru who at once ordered the eighteen monasteries around his capital to be repaired for housing the members of the coming Council of Rajagriha. When the time arrived five hundred selected elders met together. Ananda rehearsed the

Dharmas (sutras) while Upali explained the origin of each of the Vinaya rules. There was no necessity of rehearsing the Vinaya rules themselves since they had been compiled during the Buddha's lifetime for weekly convocation for confessions. At the council a fine collection of the Dharma and the Vinaya was made, the number of Sutras was decided, and the history of the disciplinary rules was compiled. The result of the elders' activity was acknowledged as an authority by those who had a formalistic and realistic tendency. There were, however, some who differed from them in their opinion. Purana, for instance, was skilled in preaching. Purana was in a bamboo grove near Rajagriha during the council, and, being asked by some layman, is said to have answered: "The council may produce a fine collection. But I will keep to what I heard from my teacher myself. So we may presume that there were some who had idealistic and free-thinking tendencies.

Moksha means the escaping from bonds and the obtaining of freedom, freedom from transmigration, from karma, from illusion, from suffering of the burning house in the three realms (lokiya). According to Buddhism, deliverance means deliverance from all the trammels of life, the bondage of the passion and reincarnation. Thus, moksha also denotes nirvana. Moksha can be achieved in dhyana-meditation. Zen practitioners should always remember that in Buddhism, it is not the Buddha who delivers men, but he teaches them to deliver themselves, even as he delivered himself. According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five bases of deliverance. ***The first base of deliverance:*** Here, the teacher or a respected fellow-disciple teaches a monk Dhamma. When he receives the teaching, he gains a grasp of both the spirit and the letter of the teaching. At this, joy arises in him, and from this joy, delight; and by this delight his senses are calmed, he feels happiness as a result, and with this happiness his mind is established. ***The second base of deliverance:*** Here a monk who has not heard the teaching, but in the course of teaching Dhamma to others he has learnt it by heart as he has heard it. At this, joy arises in him, and from this joy, delight; and by this delight his senses are calmed, he feels happiness as a result, and with this happiness his mind is established. ***The third base of deliverance:*** Here a monk who has not heard the teaching, but as he is chanting the Dhamma, joy arises in him, and from this joy, delight; and by this delight his senses are

calmed, he feels happiness as a result, and with this happiness his mind is established. ***The fourth base of deliverance:*** Here a monk who has not heard the teaching from a teacher or a respected fellow-disciple; nor has he taught the Dhamma; nor has he chanted the Dhamma; but when he applies his mind to the Dhamma, thinks and ponders over it and concentrates his attention on it, joy arises in him, and from this joy, delight; and by this delight his senses are calmed, he feels happiness as a result, and with this happiness his mind is established. ***The fifth base of deliverance:*** Here a monk who has not heard the teaching from a teacher or a respected fellow-disciple; nor has he taught the Dhamma; nor has he chanted the Dhamma; nor has he thought or pondered over the Dhamma; but when he has properly grasped some concentration-sign (samadhi-nimittam), has well considered it, applied his mind to it (supadharitam), and has well penetrated it with wisdom (suppatividdham-pannaya). At this, joy arises in him, and from this joy, delight; and by this delight his senses are calmed, he feels happiness as a result, and with this happiness his mind is established.

### ***III. Buddhism: Emancipation In This Very Life:***

All the Buddha's teachings recorded in the Pali Canon are aimed at liberating human beings' sufferings and afflictions in this life. They have a function of helping human beings see the way to make arise the skilful thought, to release the opposite evil thought controlling their mind. For example, the five meditative mental factors releasing the five hindrances; compassion releasing ill-will; detachment or greedlessness releasing greediness; wisdom releasing illusion; perception of selflessness, impermanence and suffering releasing perception of selfishness, permanence and pleasure, and so on. The Pure Land Sect believes that during this Dharma-Ending Age, it is difficult to attain enlightenment and emancipation in this very life if one practices other methods without following Pure Land at the same time. If emancipation is not achieved in this lifetime, one's crucial vows will become empty thoughts as one continues to be deluded on the path of Birth and Death. Devoted Buddhists should always be very cautious, not to praise one's school and downplay other schools. Devoted Buddhists should always remember that we all are Buddhists and we all practice the teachings of the Buddha, though with different

means, we have the same teachings, the Buddha's Teachings; and the same goal, emancipation and becoming Buddha. To understand Buddhism properly we must begin at the end of the Buddha's career. The year 486 B.C. or thereabouts saw the conclusion of the Buddha's activity as a teacher in India. The death of the Buddha is called, as is well known, 'Nirvana,' or 'the state of the fire blown out.' When a fire is blown out, nothing remain to be seen. So the Buddha was considered to have entered into an invisible state which can in no way be depicted in word or in form. Just prior to his attaining Nirvana, in the Sala grove of Kusinagara, the Buddha spoke to His disciples to the following effect: "Do not wail saying 'Our Teacher has passed away, and we have no one to follow.' What I have taught, the Dharma (ideal) with the disciplinary (Vinaya) rules, will be your teacher after my departure. If you adhere to them and practice them uninterruptedly, is it not the same as if my Dharma-body (Dharmakaya) remained here forever?" In spite of these thoughtful instructions some of his disciples were expressing a dissenting idea even before his funeral. It was natural, therefore, for the mindful elders to think of calling a council of elders in order to preserve the orthodox teaching of the Buddha. They consulted King Ajatasatru who at once ordered the eighteen monasteries around his capital to be repaired for housing the members of the coming Council of Rajagriha. When the time arrived five hundred selected elders met together. Ananda rehearsed the Dharmas (sutras) while Upali explained the origin of each of the Vinaya rules. There was no necessity of rehearsing the Vinaya rules themselves since they had been compiled during the Buddha's lifetime for weekly convocation for confessions. At the council a fine collection of the Dharma and the Vinaya was made, the number of Sutras was decided, and the history of the disciplinary rules was compiled. The result of the elders' activity was acknowledged as an authority by those who had a formalistic and realistic tendency. There were, however, some who differed from them in their opinion. Purana, for instance, was skilled in preaching. Purana was in a bamboo grove near Rajagriha during the council, and, being asked by some layman, is said to have answered: "The council may produce a fine collection. But I will keep to what I heard from my teacher myself. So we may presume that there were some who had idealistic and free-thinking tendencies.

In the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, the Buddha said: “Those who follow the Way are like floating pieces of woods in the water flowing above the current, not touching either shore and that are not picked up by people, not intercepted by ghosts or spirits, not caught in whirlpools, and that which do not rot. I guarantee that these pieces of wood will certainly reach the sea. I guarantee that students of the Way who are not deluded by emotional desire nor bothered by myriad of devious things but who are vigorous in their cultivation or development of the unconditioned will certainly attain the way.” For left-home people, basically speaking, all teachings of the Buddha are aimed at releasing human beings’ troubles in this very life. They have a function of helping an individual see the way to make arise the wholesome thoughts to release the opposite evil thoughts. For example, meditation helps releasing hindrances; fixed mind releasing scattered minds that have controlled human minds since the beginninglessness; compassion releasing ill-will; detachment or greedlessness releasing greediness; the perceptions of selflessness and impermanence releasing the concepts of “self” and “permanence”; wisdom or non-illusion releasing illusion, and so on. However, the cultivation must be done by the individual himself and by his effort itself in the present. As for laypeople, the Buddha expounded very clearly in the Sigalaka Sutta: not to waste his materials, not to wander on the street at unfitting times, not to keep bad company, and not to have habitual idleness, not to act what is caused by attachment, ill-will, folly or fear. In the Five Basic Precepts, the Buddha also explained very clearly: not taking life, not taking what is not given, not committing sexual misconduct, not lying, and not drinking intoxicants. Besides, laypeople should have good relationships of his family and society: between parents and children, between husband and wife, between teacher and student, among relatives and neighbors, between monks, nuns, and laypeople, between employer and employee. These relationships should be based on human love, loyalty, gratitude, sincerity, mutual acceptance, mutual understanding, and mutual respect. If left-home people and laypeople can practice these rules, they are freed from sufferings and afflictions in this very life.

## *Appendix D*

### *Buddhism: The Garden of Flowers of Enlightenment & Emancipation*

The term Enlightenment is from the Sanskrit word of “Bodhi” from the root “Bodha” which means knowing, understanding, and illumination. Buddhiboddhavya also means knowing and knowable. To enlighten means to awaken in regard to the real in contrast to the seeming, as to awake from a deep sleep. To enlighten also means to realize, to perceive, or to apprehend illusions which are harmful to good deeds, or the intuitive awareness or cognition of the Dharma-Nature, the realization of ultimate reality. According to Buddhism, enlightenment is the great avenue that leads practitioners to Nirvana. The concept of “Bodhi” in Sanskrit has no equivalent in Vietnamese nor in English, only the word “Lóe sáng,” “Bừng sáng,” “Enlightenment is the most appropriate term for the term Bodhi in Sanskrit. A person awakens the true nature of the all things means he awakens to a oneness of emptiness. The emptiness experienced here here is no nihilistic emptiness; rather it is something unperceivable, unthinkable, unfeeling for it is endless and beyond existence and nonexistence. Emptiness is no object that could be experienced by a subject, a subject itself must dissolve in it (the emptiness) to attain a true enlightenment. In real Buddhism, without this experience, there would be no Buddhism. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail. In Zen, the term “enlightenment” is used for direct apprehension of truth. It literally means “seeing nature,” and is said to be awareness of one’s true nature in an insight that transcends words and conceptual thought. It is equated with “Satori” in some Zen contexts, but in others “kensho” is described as an initial awakening that must be developed through further training, while

“satori” is associated with the awakening of Buddhas and the patriarchs of Zen. Enlightenment also means to see the nature, or awakening, or seeing into your True-nature and at the same time seeing into the ultimate nature of the universe and all things (This is another way of speaking of the experience of enlightenment or self-realization. Awakening to one’s true nature and hence of the nature of all existence). It is the sudden realization that “I have been complete and perfect from the very beginning. How wonderful, hoe miraculous!” If it is true awakening, its substance will always be the same for whoever experiences it, whether he be the Sakyamuni Buddha, the Amitabha Buddha, or any one of you. But this does not mean that we can all experience awakening to the same degree, for in the clarity, the depth, and the completeness of the experience there are great difference.

According to the Northern Buddhist School, there are eight awakenings of great people. The form of the Sutra “Eight Awakenings of Great People” is very simple. The text form is ancient, just like the Forty-Two Chapters and the Sutra on the Six Paramitas. However, its content is extremely profound and marvelous. Shramana An Shi Kao, a Partian monk, translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in about 150 A.D. (during the Later Han Dynasty). Most Venerable Thích Thanh Từ translated from Chinese into Vietnamese in the 1970s. The original text of this sutra in Sanskrit is still extant to this day. This sutra is entirely in accord with both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions. In fact, each of the eight items in this sutra can be considered as a subject of meditation which Buddhist disciples should at all times, by day and by night, with a sincere attitude, recite and keep in mind eight truths that all great people awaken to. These are eight Truths that all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and great people awaken to. After awakening, they then energetically cultivate the Way. By steeping themselves in kindness and compassion, they grow wisdom. They sail the Dharma-body ship all the way across to Nirvana’s other shore, only to re-enter the sea of death and rebirth to rescue all living beings. They use these Eight Truths to point out the right road to all beings and in this way, help them to recognize the anguish of death and rebirth. They inspire all to cast off and forsake the Five Desires, and instead to cultivate their minds in the way of all Sages. If Buddhist disciples recite this Sutra on the Eight Awakenings, and constantly ponder its meaning, they will



certainly eradicate boundless offenses, advance toward Bodhi, quickly realize Proper Enlightenment, forever be free of death and rebirth, and eternally abide in joy. Everyone of us knows what we deeply aspire to gain is happiness and what we try to avoid is sufferings and afflictions; however, our actions and behaviors in daily life do not bring us any joy and happiness; on the contrary, they only lead us to more sufferings and afflictions. Why? Buddhism believes that we cause our own sufferings and afflictions because we are not awakening of the truth. Buddhism claims that experiences which are apparently pleasurable in this world are ultimately states of suffering. Devout Buddhists should see clearly the point is that we perceive them as states of pleasure only because, in comparison to states of sufferings and afflictions, they appear as a form of relief. A disciple of the Buddha, day and night, should wholeheartedly recite and meditate on the eight awakenings discovered by the great beings. *The First Awakening* is the awareness that the world is impermanent. All regimes are subject to fall; all things composed of the four elements that are empty and contain the seeds of suffering. Human beings are composed of five aggregates, and are without a separate self. They are always in the process of change, constantly being born and constantly dying. They are empty of self, without sovereignty. The mind is the source of all unwholesome deeds and confusion, and the body is the forest of all impure actions. If we meditate on these facts, we can gradually be released from the cycle of birth and death. The world is impermanent, countries are perilous and fragile; the body's four elements are a source of pain; ultimately, they are empty; the Five Aggregates (Skandhas) are not me; death and rebirth are simply a series of transformations; misleading, unreal, and uncontrollable; the mind is the wellspring of evil; the body is the breeding ground of offenses; whoever can investigate and contemplate these truths, will gradually break free of death and rebirth. *The Second Awakening* is the awareness that more desire brings more suffering. The awareness that more desire brings more suffering. All hardships in daily life arise from greed and desire. Those with little desire and ambition are able to relax, their bodies and minds are free from entanglement. Too much desire brings pain. Death and rebirth are tiresome ordeals which stem from our thoughts of greed and desire. By reducing desires, we can realize absolute truth and enjoy independence

and well-being in both body and mind. *The Third Awakening* is the awareness that the human mind is always searching for possessions and never feels fulfilled. This causes impure actions to ever increase. In our daily life we always want to have good food, nice clothes, attractive jewellery, but we only feel satisfied with them for a short time, after that, the very same object that once gave us pleasure might cause us frustration now. The same can also be applied to fame. At the beginning we might think ourselves that we are so happy when we are famous, but after some time, it could be that all we feel is frustration and dissatisfaction. Bodhisattvas, however, always remember the principle of having few desires. They live a simple life in peace in order to practice the Way, and consider the realization of perfect understanding as their only career. Our minds are never satisfied or content with just enough. The more we obtain, the more we want; thus we create offenses and do evil deeds; Bodhisattvas do not make mistakes, instead, they are always content, nurture the way by living a quiet life in humble surroundings. Their sole occupation is cultivating wisdom. *The Fourth Awakening* is the awareness of the extent to which laziness is an obstacle to practice. For this reason, we must practice diligently to destroy the unwholesome mental factors which bind us, and to conquer the four kinds of Mara, in order to free ourselves from the prison of the five aggregates and the three worlds. Idleness and self-indulgence will be our downfall. With unflagging vigor, Great people break through their afflictions and baseness. They vanquish and humble the Four Kinds of Demons, and they escape from the prison of the Five Skandhas. *The Fifth Awakening* is the awareness that ignorance is the cause of the endless cycle of birth and death. Therefore, Bodhisattvas always listen and learn in order to develop their understanding and eloquence. This enables them to educate living beings and bring them to the realm of great joy. Stupidity and ignorance are the cause of death and rebirth, Bodhisattvas are always attentive to and appreciative of extensive study and erudition. They strive to expand their wisdom and refine their eloquence. Teaching and transforming living beings, nothing brings them greater joy than this. *The Sixth Awakening* is the awareness that poverty creates hatred and anger, which creates a vicious cycle of negative thoughts and activity. When practicing generosity, Bodhisattvas consider everyone, friends

and enemies alike, as equal. They do not condemn anyone's past wrongdoings, nor do they hate those who are presently causing harm. The suffering of poverty breeds deep resentment; wealth unfairly distributed creates ill-will and conflict among people. So, Bodhisattvas practice giving and treat friend and foe alike. They neither harbor grudges nor despise evil-natured people. *The Seventh Awakening* is the awareness that the five categories of desire lead to difficulties. Although we are in the world, we should try not to be caught up in worldly matters. A monk, for example, has in his possession only three robes and one bowl. He lives simply in order to practice the Way. His precepts keep him free of attachment to worldly things, and he treats everyone equally and with compassion. Great people, even as laity, are not blighted by worldly pleasures; instead, they constantly aspire to take up the three precepts-robes and blessing-bowl of the monastic life. Their ideal and ambition is to leave the household and family life to cultivate the way in immaculate purity. Their virtuous qualities are lofty and sublime; their attitudes toward all creatures are kind and compassionate. *The Eighth Awakening* is the awareness that the fire of birth and death is raging, causing endless suffering everywhere. Bodhisattvas should take the Great Vow to help everyone, to suffer with everyone, and to guide all beings to the realm of great joy. Rebirth and death are beset with measureless suffering and afflictions, like a blazing fire. Thus, great people make the resolve to cultivate the Great Vehicle to rescue all beings. They endure endless hardship while standing in for others. They lead everyone to ultimate happiness.

Enlightenment in Zen Buddhism means we must strive to cultivate until we begin to get a glimmer that the problem in life is not outside ourselves, then we have really stepped on the path of cultivation. Only when that awakening starts, we can really see that life can be more open and joyful than we had ever thought possible. In Zen, enlightenment is not something we can achieve, but it is the absence of something. All our life, we have been running east and west to look for something, pursuing some goal. True enlightenment is dropping all that. However, it is easy to say and difficult to do. The practice has to be done by each individual, and no-one can do it for us, no exception! Even though we read thousands of sutras in thousands of years, it will not do anything for us. We all have to practice, and we have to practice

with all our efforts for the rest of our life. The term 'Enlightenment' is very important in the Zen sects because the ultimate goal of Zen discipline is to attain what is known as 'enlightenment.' Enlightenment is the state of consciousness in which Noble Wisdom realizes its own inner nature. And this self-realization constitutes the truth of Zen, which is emancipation (moksha) and freedom (vasavartin). Enlightenment is the whole of Zen. Zen starts with it and ends with it. When there is no enlightenment, there is no Zen. Enlightenment is the measure of Zen, as is announced by a master. Enlightenment is not a state of mere quietude, it is not tranquilization, it is an inner experience which has no trace of knowledge of discrimination; there must be a certain awakening from the relative field of consciousness, a certain turning-away from the ordinary form of experience which characterizes our everyday life. In other words, true enlightenment means the nature of one's own self-being is fully realized. The technical Mahayana term for it is 'Paravritti,' turning back, or turning over at the basis of consciousness. By this entirety of one's mental construction goes through a complete change. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail.

"Satori" is a Japanese term for "Awakening." In Japanese, it literally means "to know." In Zen, this refers to non-conceptual, direct apprehension of the nature of reality, because it is said to transcend words and concepts. It is often equated with another term "Chien-Hsing" in Chinese, both of which signify the experience of awakening to truth, but which are not considered to be the end of the path; rather, the experience must be deepened by further meditation training. In Zen, the state of satori means the state of the Buddha-mind or consciousness of pure consciousness itself. However, go back to the time of the Buddha, Prince Siddhartha, beneath the Bodhi Tree, attained Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. What did he attain? Very simple, He attained the Truth, the Eternal Truth. The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path are what the Buddha found. Devout Buddhists

who want to attain the same peace and happiness, have no other route but cultivating in accordance with these Truths. That is to say, we must learn about these Truths and walk the Path the Buddha showed. As the Buddha told his disciples: “All I did can be done by every one of you; you can find Nirvana and attain joy and happiness any time you give up the false self and destroy the ignorance in your minds.”

According to the Samanaphalasuttanta, the Buddha taught the followings on the experience of enlightenment: “With his heart thus serene, made pure, translucent, cultured, devoid of evil, supple, ready to act, firm, and imperturbable, he directs and bends down to the knowledge of the destruction of the defilements. He knows as it really is: ‘this is pain’, ‘this is the origin of pain’, this is the cessation of pain’, and ‘this is the Way that leads to the cessation of pain’. He also knows as it really is: ‘this is affliction’, ‘this is the origin of affliction’, this is the cessation of affliction’, and ‘this is the Way that leads to the cessation of affliction’. To him, thus knowing, thus seeing, the heart is set free from the defilement of lusts, of existence, of ignorance... In him, thus set free, there arises the knowledge of his emancipation, and he knows: ‘Rebirth has been destroyed. The higher life has been fulfilled. What had to be done has been accomplished. After this present life there will be no more life beyond!’ However, the dharma which I have realized is indeed profound, difficult to perceive, difficult to comprehend, tranquil, exalted, not within the sphere of logic, subtle, and is to be understood by the wise. Sentient beings are attached to material pleasures. This causally connected ‘Dependent Arising’ is a subject which is difficult to comprehend. And Nirvana, the cessation of the conditioned, the abandoning of all passions, the destruction of craving, the non-attachment, and the cessation is also a matter not easily comprehensible.” It is quite clear that “Satori” is the true fulfillment of the state of a perfect normal state of mind in which you will be more satisfied, more peaceful, fuller of joy than anything you ever experienced before. So, “Satori” is a state in which the person is completely tuned to the reality outside and inside of him, a state in which he is fully aware of it and fully grasped it. He is aware of it that is, not in his brain nor any part of his organism, but as the whole man. He is aware of it; not as of an object over there which he grasps with his thought, but it, the flower, the dog, or the man in its or his full

reality. He who awakes is open and responsive to the world, and he can be open and responsive because he has given up holding on to himself as a thing, and thus has become empty and ready to receive. To be enlightened means “the full awakening of the total personality to reality.”

Enlightenment is the perfect normal state of mind even the final aim of Zen is the experience of enlightenment, called “Satori.” Satori is not an abnormal state of mind; it is not a trance in which reality disappears. It is not a narcissistic state of mind, as it can be seen in some religious manifestations. If anything, it is a perfect normal state of mind. As Joshu declared, “Zen is your everyday thought,” it all depends on the adjustment of the hinge, whether the door opens in or opens out. Satori has a peculiar effect on the person who experiences it. All your mental activities will now be working in a different key, which will be more satisfying, more peaceful, fuller of joy than anything you ever experienced before. The tone of life will be altered. There is something rejuvenating in the possession of Zen. The spring flowers will look prettier, and the mountain stream runs cooler and more transparent. Enlightenment is the full awakening to reality. It is very important to understand that the state of enlightenment is not a state of dissociation or of a trance in which one believes oneself to be awakened, when one is actually deeply asleep. The Western psychologist, of course, will be prone to believe that “satori” is just a subjective state, an auto-induced sort of trance. A satori is the acquisition of a new viewpoint. The full awakening to reality means to have attained fully “productive orientation.” That means not to relate oneself to the world receptively, exploitatively, hoardingly, or in a marketing fashion, but creatively and actively. In the state of full productiveness, there are no veils which separate me from “not me.” The object is not an object anymore; it does not stand against me, but is with me. The rose I see is not an object for my thought, in the manner that when I say “I see a rose” I only state that the object, a rose, falls under the category “rose,” but in the manner that “a rose is a rose.” The state of productiveness is at the same time the state of highest activity; I see the object without distortions by my greed and fear. I see it as it or he is, not as I wish it or him to be or not to be. In this mode of perception there are no parataxic distortions. There is complete

aliveness, and the synthesis is of subjectivity-objectivity. I experience intensely yet the object is left to be what it is. I bring it to life, and it brings me to life. Satori appears mysterious only to the person who is not aware to what degree his perception of the world is purely mental, or parataxical. If one is aware of this, one is also aware of a different awareness, that which one can also call a fully realistic one. One may have only experienced glimpses of it, yet one can imagine what it is. One day Hsuan-Chieh went to Cao-Xi to visit the Sixth Patriarch. Upon his first meeting with Hui Neng, Hsuan-Chieh struck his staff on the ground and circled the Sixth Patriarch three times, then stood there upright. The Sixth Patriarch said, "This monk possesses the three thousand noble characteristics and the eighty thousand fine attributes. Oh monk! Where have you come from? How have you attained such self-possession?" Hsuan-Chieh replied, "The great matter of birth and death does not tarry." The Sixth Patriarch said, "Then why not embody what is not born and attain what is not hurried?" Hsuan-Chieh said, "What is embodied is not subject to birth. What is attained is fundamentally unmoving." The Sixth Patriarch said, "Just so! Just so!" Upon hearing these words, everyone among the congregation of monks was astounded. Hsuan-Chieh then formally paid his respect to the Sixth Patriarch. He then advised that he was immediately departing. The Sixth Patriarch said, "Don't go so quickly!" Hsuan-Chieh said, "Fundamentally there is nothing moving. So how can something be too quick?" The Sixth Patriarch said, "How can one know there's no movement?" Hsuan-Chieh said, "The distinction is completely of the master's own making." The Sixth Patriarch said, "You have fully attained the meaning of what is unborn." Hsuan-Chieh said, "So, does what is unborn have a meaning?" The Sixth Patriarch said, "Who makes a distinction about whether there is a meaning or not?" Hsuan-Chieh said, "Distinctions are meaningless." The Sixth Patriarch shouted, "Excellent! Excellent! Now, just stay here a single night!" Thus people referred to Hsuan-Chieh as the "Overnight Guest." The next day Hsuan-Chieh descended the mountain and returned to Wen-Chou, where Zen students gathered to study with him.





## ***Appendix E***

### ***In Order to Be Able to Pick Flowers of Enlightenment & Emancipation, Practitioners Must Herd the Mind As They Herd Their Oxen***

#### ***I. To Buddhist Practitioners, Buddhism Is Considered As A Garden Which Is Full of Flowers of Enlightenment & Emancipation:***

The term Enlightenment is from the Sanskrit word of “Bodhi” from the root “Bodha” which means knowing, understanding, and illumination. Buddhoboddhavya also means knowing and knowable. To enlighten means to awaken in regard to the real in contrast to the seeming, as to awake from a deep sleep. To enlighten also means to realize, to perceive, or to apprehend illusions which are harmful to good deeds, or the intuitive awareness or cognition of the Dharma-Nature, the realization of ultimate reality. According to Buddhism, enlightenment is the great avenue that leads practitioners to Nirvana. Enlightenment in Buddhism means we must strive to cultivate until we begin to get a glimmer that the problem in life is not outside ourselves, then we have really stepped on the path of cultivation. Only when that awakening starts, we can really see that life can be more open and joyful than we had ever thought possible. Enlightenment in Zen Buddhism means we must strive to cultivate until we begin to get a glimmer that the problem in life is not outside ourselves, then we have really stepped on the path of cultivation. Only when that awakening starts, we can really see that life can be more open and joyful than we had ever thought possible. In Zen, enlightenment is not something we can achieve, but it is the absence of something. All our life, we have been running east and west to look for something, pursuing some goal. True enlightenment is dropping all that. However, it is easy to say and difficult to do. The practice has to be done by each individual, and no-one can do it for us, no exception! Even though we read thousands of sutras in thousands of years, it will not do anything for us. We all have to practice, and we have to practice with all our efforts for the rest of

our life. The term 'Enlightenment' is very important in the Zen sects because the ultimate goal of Zen discipline is to attain what is known as 'enlightenment.' Enlightenment is the state of consciousness in which Noble Wisdom realizes its own inner nature. And this self-realization constitutes the truth of Zen, which is emancipation (moksha) and freedom (vasavartin). Enlightenment is the whole of Zen. Zen starts with it and ends with it. When there is no enlightenment, there is no Zen. Enlightenment is the measure of Zen, as is announced by a master. Enlightenment is not a state of mere quietude, it is not tranquilization, it is an inner experience which has no trace of knowledge of discrimination; there must be a certain awakening from the relative field of consciousness, a certain turning-away from the ordinary form of experience which characterizes our everyday life. In other words, true enlightenment means the nature of one's own self-being is fully realized. The technical Mahayana term for it is 'Paravritti,' turning back, or turning over at the basis of consciousness. By this entirety of one's mental construction goes through a complete change. Enlightenment is the most intimate individual experience and therefore cannot be expressed in words or described in any manner. All that one can do in the way of communicating the experience to others is to suggest or indicate, and this only tentatively. The one who has had it understands readily enough when such indication are given, but when we try to have a glimpse of it through the indices given we utterly fail.

Meanwhile, "Emancipation" means to release from the round of birth and death. The liberation the experiencing of which is the goal of all Buddhists and all meditative training in Buddhism. Liberation is also used as a synonym for enlightenment. To emancipate from the round of birth and death means to deliverance from all the trammels of life, the bondage of the passion and reincarnation. Final emancipation or liberation, eternal liberation, release from worldly existence or the cycle of birth and death. Emancipation means the escaping from bonds and the obtaining of freedom, freedom from transmigration, from karma, from illusion, from suffering of the burning house in the three realms (lokiya). In Buddhism, it is not the Buddha who delivers men, but he teaches them to deliver themselves, even as he delivered himself. Above all, for Buddhist practitioners, emancipation denotes nirvana. Liberation or release from suffering through knowledge of the

cause of suffering and the cessation of suffering, through realization of the four noble truths to eliminate defilements. Vimukti is the extinction of all illusions and passions. It is liberation from the karmic cycle of life and death and the realization of Nirvana.

Generally speaking, all teachings of the Buddha are aimed at releasing human beings' sufferings and afflictions in this very life. They have a function of helping individual see the way to make arise the skilful thought, and to release the evil thought. Moksha means the escaping from bonds and the obtaining of freedom, freedom from transmigration, from karma, from illusion, from suffering of the burning house in the three realms (lokiya). According to Buddhism, deliverance means deliverance from all the trammels of life, the bondage of the passion and reincarnation. Thus, moksha also denotes nirvana. Moksha can be achieved in dhyana-meditation. Zen practitioners should always remember that in Buddhism, it is not the Buddha who delivers men, but he teaches them to deliver themselves, even as he delivered himself. To say that Buddhism is the garden which is full of flowers of enlightenment and liberation is not exaggerated at all, for once having entered this stream and tasted liberation, we will not return, we will have gone beyond wrongdoing and wrong understanding. Our mind will have turned, will have entered the stream, and it will not be able to fall back into suffering again. How could it fall? It has given up unskillful actions because it sees the danger in them and can not again be made to do wrong in body or speech. It has entered the Way fully, knows its duties, knows its work, knows the Path, knows its own nature. It lets go of what needs to be let go of and keep letting go without doubting. But it is best not to speak about these matters too much. We'd better to begin practice without delay.

Buddhist practitioners should always remember that man's mind influences his body profoundly. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome thoughts, mind can cause disaster, it can even kill a being, but it can cure a sick body. According to the Buddhist Zen, in order to be able to pick flowers of Enlightenment & Emancipation, practitioners must herd their mind as they herd their oxen. When the mind is concentrated on right thoughts with right effort and understanding the effect it can produce is immense. A mind with pure and wholesome thoughts really does lead to healthy relaxed living.

Thus, the Buddha taught: “No enemy can harm one so much as one’s own thoughts of craving, thoughts of hate, thoughts of jealousy, and so on. A man who does not know how to adjust his mind according to circumstances would be like a corpse in a coffin. Turn your mind to yourself, and try to find pleasure within yourself, and you will always find therein an infinite source of pleasure ready for your enjoyment. It is only when the mind is controlled and is kept to the right road of orderly progress that it becomes useful for its possessor and for society. A disorderly mind is a liability both to its owner and to others. All the havoc in the world is created by men who have not learned the way of mind control, balance and poise. Calmness is not weakness. A calm attitude at all times shows a man of culture. It is not too difficult for a man to be calm when things are favourable, but to be calm when things are going wrong is difficult indeed. Calmness and control build up a person’s strength and character. The mind is influenced by bad mood, provoke, emotion, and worry. You should not come to any hasty decision regarding any matter when you are in a bad mood or when provoked by someone, not even when you are in good mood influenced by emotion, because such decision or conclusion reached during such a period would be a matter you could one day regret. Angry is the most dangerous enemy. Mind is your best friend and worst foe. You must try to kill the passions of lust, hatred and ignorance that are latent in your mind by means of morality, concentration and wisdom. The secret of happy, successful living lies in doing what needs to be done now, and not worrying about the past and the future. We cannot go back into the past and reshape it, nor can we anticipate everything that may happen in the future. There is one moment of time over which we have some conscious control and that is the present. In order to be able to pick flowers of Enlightenment & Emancipation, Buddhist practitioners should always remember that “Mind-Body-Environment” have no-self. In other words, everything has no self, and no-self means no permanent nature per se and that we are not true masters of ourselves. This point, too, is divided into the no-self body, the no-self mind, and the no-self environment. First, the no-self body means that this body is illusory, not its own master. It cannot be kept eternally young or prevented from decaying and dying. Even gods and immortals can only postpone death for a certain period of time. Second, the no-self of mind refers to the

deluded mind of sentient beings, which has no permanent nature. For example, the mind of greed, thoughts of sadness, anger, love, and happiness suddenly arise and then disappear, there is nothing real. Third, the no-self of environment means that our surroundings are illusory, passive and subject to birth and decay. Cities and towns are in time replaced by abandoned mounds, mulberry fields soon give way to the open seas, every single thing changes and fluctuates by the second, one landscape disappears and another takes its place.

***II. In Order to Be Able to Pick Flowers of Enlightenment & Emancipation, Practitioners Must Herd the Mind As They Herd Their Oxen:***

***Ten Stages of Mind-Herding As Compared to Ten Stages of Ox-Herding:*** Ten stages of mind-herding or Ten ox-herding pictures of cattle-grazing or Ten Oxen Pictures are one of the most widespread sets of images of the Ch'an tradition. There is a tremendous difference between shallow and deep realization, and these different levels are depicted in the Ten Ox-herding Pictures. In fact, we must say that among the various formulations of the levels of realization in Zen, none is more widely known than the Ox-herding Pictures, a sequence of ten illustrations annotated with comments in prose and verse. It is probably because of the sacred nature of the ox in ancient India this animal came to be used to symbolize man's primal nature of Buddha-mind. People believe that Zen Master Kuo-An Shih Yuan was the author of the original drawings of the "Ox-Herding" and the commentary that accompanied them are both attributed to him. In fact, Zen Master Kuo-An was not the first to illustrate the developing stages of Zen realization through pictures. Before his time, earlier versions of five and eight pictures exist in which the Ox becomes progressively whiter, and the last painting being a circle. This implied that the realization of Oneness, that is, the effacement of every conception of self and other, was the ultimate goal of Zen. But Zen Master Kuo-An Shih Yuan, feeling this to be incomplete, added two more pictures beyond the one with the circle to make it clear that the Zen practitioner of the highest spiritual development lives in the mundane world of form and diversity and mingles with the utmost freedom among ordinary men. Moreover, a Zen practitioner must inspire these

ordinary people at any possible time with his compassion and radiance to walk in the Way of the Buddha. It is this version that has gained the widest acceptance in Japan, has proved itself over the years to be a source of instruction and effective inspiration to Zen students. These following Ten Ox-herding Pictures with commentary were based on the Three Pillars of Zen, published by Zen Master Philip Kapleau in 1956. The Chinese verses from Tui Sy's extracts from the Ordinary Collection of Writings; and the Vietnamese interpretations from Truc Thien, An Tiem Publisher published in 1972 in Saigon, Vietnam. ***First, looking (searching) for an Ox (seeking the Ox):*** As a matter of fact, the Ox has never gone astray, so why search for it? Having turned his back on his True nature, the man cannot see it. Because of his defilements he has lost sight of the Ox. Suddenly he finds himself confronted by a maze of crisscrossing roads. Greed for worldly gain and dread of loss spring up like searing flames, ideas of right and wrong dart out like daggers.

"Desolate through forests and fearful in jungles,  
He is seeking an Ox which he does not find.  
Up and down dark, nameless, wide-flowing rivers,  
In deep mountain thickets he treads many bypaths.  
Bone-tired, heart-weary, he carries on his search  
For this something which he yet cannot find.  
At evening he hears cicadas chirping in the trees."

***Second, seeing its tracks (finding the tracks):*** Through the sutras and teachings he discerns the tracks of the Ox. He has been informed that just as different-shaped golden vessels are all basically of the same gold, so each and every thing is a manifestation of the Self. But he is unable to distinguish good from evil, truth from falsity. He has not actually entered the gate, but he sees in a tentative way the tracks of the Ox.

"Innumerable footprints has he seen  
In the forest and along the water's edge.  
Over yonder does he see the trampled grass?  
Even the deepest gorges of the topmost mountains  
Can't hide this Ox's nose which reaches right to heaven."

***Third, seeing the Ox (first glimpse of the Ox):*** Namely, that of seeing the Ox. If he will but listen intently to everyday sounds, he will

come to realization and at that instant see the very Source. In every activity the Source is manifestly present. It is analogous to the salt in water or the binder in paint. When the inner vision is properly focused, one comes to realize that which is seen is identical with the true Source. In other words, Zen practitioners have only caught a glimpse of the realm "beyond the manifestation of form"; however, seeing into own nature is such that Zen practitioners easily lose sight if it is they become lazy and forego further practice. Furthermore, though Zen practitioners have attained enlightenment, they still remain the same old, nothing has been added, and they become no grander.

"A nightingale warbes on a twig,  
The sun shines on undulating willows.  
There stands the Ox, where could he hide?  
That splendid head, those stately horns,  
What artist could portray them?"

But if they continue with sitting meditation, they will soon reach *the fourth stage of the point of grasping the Ox or catching the Ox*: Right now Zen practitioners do not, so to speak, own their realization. Today he encountered the Ox, which had long been cavorting in the wild fields, and actually grasped it. For so long a time has it reveled in these surroundings that breaking it of its old habits is not easy. It continues to yearn for sweet-scented grasses, it is still stubborn and unbridled. If he would tame it completely, the man must use his whip.

"He must tightly grasp the rope and not let it go,  
For the Ox still has unhealthy tendencies.  
Now he charges up to the highlands,  
Now he loiters in a misty ravine."

*The fifth stage, beyond the stage of grasping the Ox is the stage of taming it (feeding the Ox)*: With the rising of one thought another and another are born. Enlightenment brings the realization that such thoughts are unreal since even they arise from our True-nature. It is only because delusion still remains that they are imagined to be unreal. This state of delusion does not originate in the objective world but in our own minds.

"He must hold the nose-rope tight  
And not allow the Ox to roam,  
Lest off to muddy haunts it should stray.

Properly tended, it becomes clean and gentle.

Untethered, it willingly follows its master."

***The sixth stage, riding the Ox home:*** Which is a state of awareness in which enlightenment and ego are seen as one and the same. The struggle is over, "gain" and "loss" no longer affect him. He hums the rustic tune of the woodsman and plays the simple songs of the village children. Astride the Ox's back, he gazes serenely at the clouds above. His head does not turn in the direction of temptations. Though one may try to upset him, he remains undisturbed.

"Riding free as air he buoyantly comes home  
Through evening mists in wide straw-hat and cape.  
Wherever he may go he creates a fresh breeze,  
While in his heart profound tranquility prevails.  
This Ox requires not a blade of grass."

***Seventh, forgetting the Ox, self alone (Ox dies, man lives):*** In the Dharma there is no two-ness. The Ox is his Primal-nature: this he has now recognized. A trap is no longer needed when a rabbit has been caught, a net becomes useless when a fish has been snared. Like gold which has been separated from dross, like the moon which has broken through the clouds, one ray of luminous Light shines eternally.

"Only on the Ox was he able to come Home,  
But lo, the Ox is now vanished,  
and alone and serene sits the man.  
The red sun rides high in the sky  
As he dreams on placidly.  
Yonder beneath the thatched roof  
His idle whip and idle rope are lying."

***Eighth, forgetting the Ox and self:*** Both Ox and Man dead. All delusive feelings have perished and ideas of holiness too have vanished. He lingers not in the state of "I am a Buddha", and he passes quickly on through the stage of "And now I have purged myself of the proud feeling 'I am not Buddha.'" Even the thousand eyes of five hundred Buddhas and patriarchs can discern in him no specific quality. If hundreds of birds were now to strew flowers about his room, he could not but feel ashamed of himself.

"Whip, rope, Ox, and man alike belong to Emptiness.  
So vast and infinite the azure sky



That no concept of any sort can reach it.  
 Over a blazing fire a snowflake cannot survive.  
 When this state of mind is realized  
 Comes at last comprehension  
 Of the spirit of the ancient patriarchs."

***Ninth, returning to the source:*** Return whence both came, the grade of grand enlightenment, which penetrates to the very bottom and where one no longer differentiates enlightenment from non-enlightenment. From the very beginning there has not been so much as a speck of dust to mar (spoil) the intrinsic Purity. He observes the waxing and waning of life in this world while abiding unassertively in a state of unshakable serenity. This waxing and waning is no phantom or illusion but a manifestation of the Source. Why then is there need to strive for anything? The waters are blue, the mountains are green. Alone with himself, he observes things endlessly changing.

"He has returned to the Origin,  
 Come back to the Source,  
 But his steps have been taken in vain.  
 It is as though he were now blind and deaf.  
 Seated in his hut, he hankers not for things outside.  
 Streams meander on of themselves,  
 Red flowers naturally bloom red."

***The last, the tenth stage, entering the market place with helping hands (enter the dust):*** The gate of his cottage is closed and even the wisest cannot find him. His mental panorama has finally disappeared. He goes his own way, making no attempt to follow the steps of earlier sages. Carrying a gourd, he strolls into the market; leaning on his staff, he returns home. He leads innkeepers and fishmongers in the Way of the Buddha.

"Barechested, barefooted,  
 he comes into the marketplace.  
 Muddied and dust-covered,  
 how broadly he grins!  
 Without recourse to mystic powers,  
 Withered trees he swiftly brings to bloom."

The stage in which Zen practitioners have completely finished their practice. They can move among ordinary people, help them wherever

possible; they are free from all attachment to enlightenment. To live in this stage is the aim of life of any Zen practitioner and its accomplishment many cycles of existence. Zen practitioners should try to set foot on the path leading to this goal. In short, these pictures depict the levels of increasing realization of a student of Cha'n. In some depictions, the ox is black at the beginning, becomes gradually whiter, and then becomes pure white. After this the ox disappears. The sequence symbolizes the student's gradual mastery of meditation practice, in which the mind is progressively brought under control and trained. Eventually the training is left behind, and one is able to function in the world with a changed perspective.

## ***Appendix F***

### ***Cultivation Plays the Key Role In Advancing to the Doors of Enlightenment & Emancipation***

#### ***I. An Overview of Cultivation In Buddhism:***

To lead a religious life. Cultivation in Buddhism is to put the Buddha's teachings into practice on a continued and regular basis. Cultivation in Buddhism also means to nourish the seeds of Bodhi by practicing and developing precepts, dhyana, and wisdom. Thus, cultivation in Buddhism is not only practicing Buddha recitation or sitting meditation, it also includes cultivation of six paramitas, ten paramitas, thirty-seven aids to Enlightenment, etc. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that time is extremely precious. An inch of time is an inch of life, so do not let the time pass in vain. Someone is thinking, "I will not cultivate today. I will put it off until tomorrow." But when tomorrow comes, he will put it off to the next day. He keeps putting it off until his hair turns white, his teeth fall out, his eyes become blurry, and his ears go deaf. At that point in time, he wants to cultivate, but his body no longer obeys him. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that living in this world, we all are like fish in a pond that is evaporating. We do not have much time left. Thus ancient virtues taught: "One day has passed, our lives are that much less. We are like fish in a shrinking pond. What joy is there in this? We should be diligently and vigorously cultivating as if our own heads were at stake. Only be mindful of impermanence, and be careful not to be lax." From beginningless eons in the past until now, we have not had good opportunity to know Buddhism, so we have not known how to cultivate. Therefore, we undergo birth and death, and after death, birth again. Oh, how pitiful! Today we have good opportunity to know Buddhism, why do we still want to put off cultivating? Sincere Buddhists! Time does not wait anybody. In the twinkling of an eye, we will be old and our life will be over!

There are as many as eighty-four thousand Dharma-doors for cultivating the Path. For the sake of understanding, we should be familiar with each one of these Dharma-doors. You should not limit

yourself in just a single method of cultivation. However, for the sake of practicing, we should focus on the dharma-door that is the most appropriate for us. “Tu” means correct our characters and obey the Buddha’s teachings. “Tu” means to study the law by reciting sutras in the morning and evening, being on strict vegetarian diet and studying all the scriptures of the Buddha, keep all the precepts; however, the most important factors in real “Tu” are to correct your character, to eliminate bad habits, to be joyful and compassionate, to build virtue. In reciting sutras, one must thoroughly understand the meaning. Furthermore, one should also practise meditation on a daily basis to get insight. For laypeople, “Tu” means to mend your ways, from evil to wholesome (ceasing transgressions and performing good deeds). According to the first patriarch Bodhidharma, “Requite hatred” is one of the four disciplinary processes. What is meant by ‘How to requite hatred?’ Those who discipline themselves in the Path should think thus when they have to struggle with adverse conditions: “During the innumerable past eons I have wandered through multiplicity of existences, never thought of cultivation, and thus creating infinite occasions for hate, ill-will, and wrong-doing. Even though in this life I have committed no violations, the fruits of evil deeds in the past are to be gathered now. Neither gods nor men can fortell what is coming upon me. I will submit myself willingly and patiently to all the ills that befall me, and I will never bemoan or complain. In the sutra it is said not to worry over ills that may happen to you, because I thoroughly understand the law of cause and effect. This is called the conduct of making the best use of hatred and turned it into the service in one’s advance towards the Path.

In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: “He who applies himself to that which should be avoided, not cultivate what should be cultivated; forgets the good, but goes after pleasure. It’s only an empty admiration when he says he admires people who exert themselves in meditation (Dharmapada 209).” According to the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, one evening a Sramana was reciting the Sutra of Bequeating the Teaching by Kasyapa Buddha. His mind was mournful as he reflected repentantly on his desire to retreat. The Buddha asked him: “When you were a householder in the past, what did you do?” He replied: “I was fond of playing the lute.” The Buddha said: “What happened when the

strings were slack?” He replied: “They did not sound good.” The Buddha then asked: “What happened when the strings were taut?” He replied: “The sounds were brief.” The Buddha then asked again: “What happened when they were tuned between slack and taut?” He replied: “The sounds carried.” The Buddha said: “It is the same with a Sramana who *cultivates or studies the Way*. If his mind is harmonious, he can obtain (achieve) the Way. If he is impetuous about the Way, this impetuosity will tire out his body, and if his body is tired, his mind will give rise to afflictions. If his mind produces afflictions, then he will retreat from his practice. If he retreats from his practice, it will certainly increase his offenses. You need only be pure, peaceful, and happy and you will not lose the Way.”

We can cultivate in charity. The pitiable, or poor and needy, as the field or opportunity for charity. We can also cultivate the field of religion and reverence of the Buddhas, the saints, the priesthood. We can also cultivate of happiness by doing offerings to those who are still in training in religion. Or we can cultivate by making Offerings to those who have completed their course. According to The Commentary on the Ten Stages of Bodhisattvahood, there are two paths of cultivation. The first way is “the Difficult Path”. The difficult path refers to the practices of sentient beings in the world of the five turbidities, who, through countless Buddha eras, aspire to reach the stage of Non-Retrogression. The difficulties are truly countless, as numerous as specks of dust or grains of sand, too numerous to imagine; however, there are basically five major kinds of difficulties: externalists are legion, creating confusion with respect to the Bodhisattva Dharma; evil beings destroy the practitioner’s good and wholesome virtues; worldly merits and blessings can easily lead the practitioner astray, so that he ceases to engage in virtuous practices; it is easy to stray onto the Arhat’s path of self-benefit, which obstructs the Mind of great loving kindness and great compassion; and relying exclusively on self-power, without the aid of the Buddha’s power, make cultivation very difficult and arduous; it is like the case of a feeble, handicapped person, walking alone, who can only go so far each day regardless of how much effort he expends. The second way is the Easy Path. The easy path of cultivation means that, if sentient beings in this world believe in the Buddha’s words, practice Buddha Recitation and vow to be reborn

in the Pure Land, they are assisted by the Buddha's vow-power and assured of rebirth. This is similar to a person who floats downstream in a boat; although the distance may be thousands of miles far away, his destination will be reached sooner or later. Similarly, a common being, relying on the power of a 'universal monarch' or a deity, can traverse the five continents in a day and a night, this is not due to his own power, but, rather, to the power of the monarch. Some people, reasoning according to 'noumenon,' or principle may say that common beings, being conditioned, cannot be reborn in the Pure Land or see the Buddha's body. The answer is that the virtues of Buddha Recitation are 'unconditioned' good roots. Ordinary, impure persons who develop the Bodhi Mind, seek rebirth and constantly practice Buddha Recitation can subdue and destroy afflictions, achieve rebirth and, depending on their level of cultivation, obtain vision of the rudimentary aspects of the Buddha (the thirty-two marks of greatness, for example). Bodhisattvas, naturally, can achieve rebirth and see the subtle, loftier aspects of the Buddha, i.e., the Dharma body. There can be no doubt about this. Thus the Avatamsaka Sutra states: "All the various Buddha lands are equally purely adorned. Because the karmic practices of sentient beings differ, their perceptions of these lands are different."

***According to Buddhist traditions, there are two modes or values of observing commandments:*** *First*, prohibitive or restraining from evil. *Second*, constructive or constraining to goodness. According to Most Venerable Thích Thiên Tâm in *The Thirteen Patriarchs of Pureland Buddhism*, ***Buddha Recitation has two components:*** Practice-Recitation and Theory-Recitation. The application of harmonizing Theory and Practice. If cultivators are able to practice Buddha Recitation in this way and maintain it throughout their lives, then in the present life, they will attain the Buddha Recitation Samadhi and upon death they will gain Rebirth to the Highest Level in the Ultimate Bliss World. *The first way is the "Practice-Recitation":* Reciting the Buddha-name at the level of phenomenal level means believing that Amitabha Buddha exists in His Pure Land in the West, but not yet comprehending that he is a Buddha created by the Mind, and that this Mind is Buddha. It means you resolve to make vows and to seek birth in the Pure Land, like a child longing for its mother, and never forgetting her for a moment. This is one of the two types of practices that Most Venerable

Thích Thiện Tâm mentioned in The Thirteen Patriarchs of Pureland Buddhism. Practice-Recitation means having faith that there is a Buddha named Amitabha in the West of this Saha World, the cultivators should be about the theory: mind can become Buddha, and mind is Buddha. In this way, they practice Buddha Recitation diligently and vigorously like children missing their mother, without a moment of discontinuity. Thereafter, sincerely vow and pray to gain rebirth in the Ultimate Bliss World. Practice-Recitation simply means people reciting Buddha's name without knowing the sutra, the doctrine, Mahayana, Hinayana teachings, or anything else. It is only necessary for them to listen to the teaching of a Dharma Master that in the Western direction, there is a world called Ultimate Bliss; in that world there are Amitabha Buddha, Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta, and Great Ocean Assembly of Peaceful Bodhisattvas. To regularly and diligently practice Reciting Amitabha Buddha's Name as many times as they possibly can, follow by reciting the three enlightened ones of Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta, and Great Ocean Assembly of Peaceful Bodhisattvas. Thereafter, sincerely and wholeheartedly vow and pray to gain rebirth in the Pureland of Ultimate Bliss. After hearing the above teachings, practitioners should maintain and cultivate as they were taught, making vows to pray for rebirth in the Ultimate Bliss World for the remainder of their lives, to their last bath, and even after they have passed away, they continue to remember to recite Buddha's name without forgetting. This is called Practice-Recitation. Cultivators are guaranteed to gain rebirth in the Ultimate Bliss World. *The second method is the "Theory-Recitation"*: This is one of the two types of practices that Most Venerable Thích Thiện Tâm mentioned in The Thirteen Patriarchs of Pureland Buddhism. Theory-Recitation is to have faith that Amitabha Buddha in the Western Direction is pre-existing and is an inherent nature within everyone because Buddha arises from within cultivator's mind. Thereafter, the cultivators use the "Virtuous Name" already complete within their minds to establish a condition to tame the mind and influence it to "Never ever forget to recite the Buddha's name." Theory-Recitation also means "the people reciting Buddha" are individuals who learn and examine the sutra teachings, clearly knowing different traditions, doctrines, and deepest and most profound dharma teachings, etc. Generally speaking, they are

well-versed knowledgeable, and understand clearly the Buddha's Theoretical teachings such as the mind creates all ten realms of the four Saints and the six unenlightened. Amitabha Buddha and Buddhas in the ten directions are manifested within the mind. This extends to other external realities such as heaven, hell, or whatever, all are the manifestations within the mind. The virtuous name of Amitabha Buddha is a recitation that already encompasses all the infinite virtues and merits accumulated through the vow-power of Amitabha Buddha. Use the one recitation of "Namo Amitabha Buddha" as a rope and a single condition to get hold of the monkey-mind and horse-thoughts, so it can no longer wander but remain undisturbed and quiescent. At minimum, this will allow the cultivator to have a meditative mind during the ritual or at least for several minutes of that time. Never forgetting to maintain that recitation. Vowing to gain rebirth.

***Also according to Buddhist traditions, there are three sources of cultivation:*** *The first method* is the cultivation of Compassion and pity. *The second method* is the cultivation of Patience. *The third method* is the cultivation of emptiness or unreality of all things. Everything is being dependent on something else and having no individual existence apart from other things; hence the illusory nature of all things as being composed of elements and not possessing reality. ***For lay people, the Buddha always reminded about the three means to cultivate or practice Buddha dharma in their daily activities:*** *First*, to control one's body for not doing bad deeds. *Second*, to control one's mouth for not speaking vain talk or harsh speech. *Third*, to control one's mind for not wandering with unwholesome karma. ***For the hearers, there are also three ways of cultivation:*** These are also three ways of discipline of Sravaka. These three trainings are the three inseparable aspects for any cultivators. The three Universal Characteristics (Existence is universally characterized by impermanence, suffering and not-self). Three methods according to the Mahayana Buddhism. *First, practice on the impermanence:* No realization of the eternal, seeing everything as everchanging and transient. *Second, practice on suffering:* Joyless, through only contemplating misery and not realizing the ultimate nirvana-joy. *Third, practice on non-self:* Non-ego discipline, seeing only the perishing self and not realizing the immortal self. ***While according to the Theravadan Buddhism, three ways to Enlightenment***



*are “Sila-Samdhī-Prajna”:* First, keeping the precepts, or training in Moral discipline by avoiding karmically unwholesome activities. Cultivating ethical conduct. *Second, mental discipline*, or training the mind in Concentration, or practicing concentration of the mind. *Third, wisdom or prajna*, meaning always acting wisely, or training in Wisdom, the development of prajna through insight into the truth of Buddhism. These are also the three studies or endeavors of the non-outflow, or the those who have passionless life and escape from transmigration. In Buddhism, there is no so-called cultivation without discipline, and also there is no Dharma without discipline. Precepts are considered as cages to capture the thieves of greed, anger, stupidity, pride, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, lust, and lying. In the same manner with keeping precepts, in Buddhism, there is no so-called cultivation without concentration, or training the mind. The resulting wisdom, or training in wisdom. If you want to get rid of greed, anger, and ignorance, you have no choice but cultivating discipline and samadhi so that you can obtain wisdom paramita. With wisdom paramita, you can destroy these thieves and terminate all afflictions.

## ***II. The Strength of Cultivation:***

Leading a religious life or cultivation in Buddhism is to put the Buddha’s teachings into practice on a continued and regular basis. Cultivation in Buddhism also means to nourish the seeds of Bodhi by practicing and developing precepts, dhyana, and wisdom. Thus, cultivation in Buddhism is not only practicing Buddha recitation or sitting meditation, it also includes cultivation of six paramitas, ten paramitas, thirty-seven aids to Enlightenment, etc. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that time is extremely precious. An inch of time is an inch of life, so do not let the time pass in vain. Someone is thinking, “I will not cultivate today. I will put it off until tomorrow.” But when tomorrow comes, he will put it off to the next day. He keeps putting it off until his hair turns white, his teeth fall out, his eyes become blurry, and his ears go deaf. At that point in time, he wants to cultivate, but his body no longer obeys him. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that living in this world, we all are like fish in a pond that is evaporating. We do not have much time left. Thus ancient virtues taught: “One day has passed, our lives are that much less. We

are like fish in a shrinking pond. What joy is there in this? We should be diligently and vigorously cultivating as if our own heads were at stake. Only be mindful of impermanence, and be careful not to be lax.” From beginningless eons in the past until now, we have not had good opportunity to know Buddhism, so we have not known how to cultivate. Therefore, we undergo birth and death, and after death, birth again. Oh, how pitiful! Today we have good opportunity to know Buddhism, why do we still want to put off cultivating? Sincere Buddhists! Time does not wait anybody. In the twinkling of an eye, we will be old and our life will be over!

There are as many as eighty-four thousand Dharma-doors for cultivating the Path. For the sake of understanding, we should be familiar with each one of these Dharma-doors. You should not limit yourself in just a single method of cultivation. However, for the sake of practicing, we should focus on the dharma-door that is the most appropriate for us. “Tu” means correct our characters and obey the Buddha’s teachings. “Tu” means to study the law by reciting sutras in the morning and evening, being on strict vegetarian diet and studying all the scriptures of the Buddha, keep all the precepts; however, the most important factors in real “Tu” are to correct your character, to eliminate bad habits, to be joyful and compassionate, to build virtue. In reciting sutras, Buddhists, especially lay people, must thoroughly understand the meaning so we can put these teachings in practice in our daily activities. Furthermore, one should also practise meditation on a daily basis to get insight. For laypeople, “Tu” means to mend your ways, from evil to wholesome (ceasing transgressions and performing good deeds). According to the first patriarch Bodhidharma, “Requite hatred” is one of the four disciplinary processes. What is meant by ‘How to requite hatred?’ Those who discipline themselves in the Path should think thus when they have to struggle with adverse conditions: “During the innumerable past eons I have wandered through multiplicity of existences, never thought of cultivation, and thus creating infinite occasions for hate, ill-will, and wrong-doing. Even though in this life I have committed no violations, the fruits of evil deeds in the past are to be gathered now. Neither gods nor men can fortell what is coming upon me. I will submit myself willingly and patiently to all the ills that befall me, and I will never bemoan or

complain. In the sutra it is said not to worry over ills that may happen to you, because I thoroughly understand the law of cause and effect. This is called the conduct of making the best use of hatred and turned it into the service in one's advance towards the Path.

In the Dharmapada Sutra, the Buddha taught: "He who applies himself to that which should be avoided, not cultivate what should be cultivated; forgets the good, but goes after pleasure. It's only an empty admiration when he says he admires people who exert themselves in meditation (Dharmapada 209)." According to the Forty-Two Sections Sutra, one evening a Sramana was reciting the Sutra of Bequeating the Teaching by Kasyapa Buddha. His mind was mournful as he reflected repentantly on his desire to retreat. The Buddha asked him: "When you were a householder in the past, what did you do?" He replied: "I was fond of playing the lute." The Buddha said: "What happened when the strings were slack?" He replied: "They did not sound good." The Buddha then asked: "What happened when the strings were taut?" He replied: "The sounds were brief." The Buddha then asked again: "What happened when they were tuned between slack and taut?" He replied: "The sounds carried." The Buddha said: "It is the same with a Sramana who cultivates or studies the Way. If his mind is harmonious, he can obtain (achieve) the Way. If he is impetuous about the Way, this impetuousness will tire out his body, and if his body is tired, his mind will give rise to afflictions. If his mind produces afflictions, then he will retreat from his practice. If he retreats from his practice, it will certainly increase his offenses. You need only be pure, peaceful, and happy and you will not lose the Way."

We can cultivate in charity. The pitiable, or poor and needy, as the field or opportunity for charity. We can also cultivate the field of religion and reverence of the Buddhas, the saints, the priesthood. We can also cultivate of happiness by doing offerings to those who are still in training in religion. Or we can cultivate by making Offerings to those who have completed their course. According to The Commentary on the Ten Stages of Bodhisattvahood, there are two paths of cultivation. *The first way is "the Difficult Path":* The difficult path refers to the practices of sentient beings in the world of the five turbidities, who, through countless Buddha eras, aspire to reach the stage of Non-Retrogression. The difficulties are truly countless, as numerous as

specks of dust or grains of sand, too numerous to imagine; however, there are basically five major kinds of difficulties: externalists are legion, creating confusion with respect to the Bodhisattva Dharma; evil beings destroy the practitioner's good and wholesome virtues; worldly merits and blessings can easily lead the practitioner astray, so that he ceases to engage in virtuous practices; it is easy to stray onto the Arhat's path of self-benefit, which obstructs the Mind of great loving kindness and great compassion; and relying exclusively on self-power, without the aid of the Buddha's power, make cultivation very difficult and arduous; it is like the case of a feeble, handicapped person, walking alone, who can only go so far each day regardless of how much effort he expends. *The second way is the Easy Path:* The easy path of cultivation means that, if sentient beings in this world believe in the Buddha's words, practice Buddha Recitation and vow to be reborn in the Pure Land, they are assisted by the Buddha's vow-power and assured of rebirth. This is similar to a person who floats downstream in a boat; although the distance may be thousands of miles far away, his destination will be reached sooner or later. Similarly, a common being, relying on the power of a 'universal monarch' or a deity, can traverse the five continents in a day and a night, this is not due to his own power, but, rather, to the power of the monarch. Some people, reasoning according to 'noumenon,' or principle may say that common beings, being conditioned, cannot be reborn in the Pure Land or see the Buddha's body. The answer is that the virtues of Buddha Recitation are 'unconditioned' good roots. Ordinary, impure persons who develop the Bodhi Mind, seek rebirth and constantly practice Buddha Recitation can subdue and destroy afflictions, achieve rebirth and, depending on their level of cultivation, obtain vision of the rudimentary aspects of the Buddha (the thirty-two marks of greatness, for example). Bodhisattvas, naturally, can achieve rebirth and see the subtle, loftier aspects of the Buddha, i.e., the Dharma body. There can be no doubt about this. Thus the Avatamsaka Sutra states: "All the various Buddha lands are equally purely adorned. Because the karmic practices of sentient beings differ, their perceptions of these lands are different."

According to Buddhist traditions, there are two modes or values of observing commandments. First, prohibitive or restraining from evil. Second, constructive or constraining to goodness. According to Most

Venerable Thích Thiện Tâm in *The Thirteen Patriarchs of Pureland Buddhism*, Buddha Recitation has two components: Practice-Recitation and Theory-Recitation. The application of harmonizing Theory and Practice. If cultivators are able to practice Buddha Recitation in this way and maintain it throughout their lives, then in the present life, they will attain the Buddha Recitation Samadhi and upon death they will gain Rebirth to the Highest Level in the Ultimate Bliss World. *The first way is the "Practice-Recitation"*: Reciting the Buddha-name at the level of phenomenal level means believing that Amitabha Buddha exists in His Pure Land in the West, but not yet comprehending that he is a Buddha created by the Mind, and that this Mind is Buddha. It means you resolve to make vows and to seek birth in the Pure Land, like a child longing for its mother, and never forgetting her for a moment. This is one of the two types of practices that Most Venerable Thích Thiện Tâm mentioned in *The Thirteen Patriarchs of Pureland Buddhism*. Practice-Recitation means having faith that there is a Buddha named Amitabha in the West of this Saha World, the cultivators should be about the theory: mind can become Buddha, and mind is Buddha. In this way, they practice Buddha Recitation diligently and vigorously like children missing their mother, without a moment of discontinuity. Thereafter, sincerely vow and pray to gain rebirth in the Ultimate Bliss World. Practice-Recitation simply means people reciting Buddha's name without knowing the sutra, the doctrine, Mahayana, Hinayana teachings, or anything else. It is only necessary for them to listen to the teaching of a Dharma Master that in the Western direction, there is a world called Ultimate Bliss; in that world there are Amitabha Buddha, Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta, and Great Ocean Assembly of Peaceful Bodhisattvas. To regularly and diligently practice Reciting Amitabha Buddha's Name as many times as they possibly can, follow by reciting the three enlightened ones of Avalokitesvara, Mahasthamaprapta, and Great Ocean Assembly of Peaceful Bodhisattvas. Thereafter, sincerely and wholeheartedly vow and pray to gain rebirth in the Pureland of Ultimate Bliss. After hearing the above teachings, practitioners should maintain and cultivate as they were taught, making vows to pray for rebirth in the Ultimate Bliss World for the remainder of their lives, to their last bath, and even after they have passed away, they continue to remember to recite Buddha's

name without forgetting. This is called Practice-Recitation. Cultivators are guaranteed to gain rebirth in the Ultimate Bliss World. *The second method is the "Theory-Recitation"*: This is one of the two types of practices that Most Venerable Thích Thiên Tâm mentioned in The Thirteen Patriarchs of Pureland Buddhism. Theory-Recitation is to have faith that Amitabha Buddha in the Western Direction is pre-existing and is an inherent nature within everyone because Buddha arises from within cultivator's mind. Thereafter, the cultivators use the "Virtuous Name" already complete within their minds to establish a condition to tame the mind and influence it to "Never ever forget to recite the Buddh'a name." Theory-Recitation also means "the people reciting Buddha" are individuals who learn and examine the sutra teachings, clearly knowing different traditions, doctrines, and deepest and most profound dharma teachings, etc. Generally speaking, they are well-versed knowledgeable, and understand clearly the Buddha's Theoretical teachings such as the mind creates all ten realms of the four Saints and the six unenlightened. Amitabha Buddha and Buddhas in the ten directions are manifested within the mind. This extends to other external realities such as heaven, hell, or whatever, all are the manifestations within the mind. The virtuous name of Amitabha Buddha is a recitation that already encompasses all the infinite virtues and merits accumulated through the vow-power of Amitabha Buddha. Use the one recitation of "Namo Amitabha Buddha" as a rope and a single condition to get hold of the monkey-mind and horse-thoughts, so it can no longer wander but remain undisturbed and quiescent. At minimum, this will allow the cultivator to have a meditative mind during the ritual or at least for several minutes of that time. Never forgetting to maintain that recitation. Vowing to gain rebirth.

According to Buddhist traditions, there are three sources of cultivation. The first method is the cultivation of Compassion and pity. The second method is the cultivation of Patience. The third method is the cultivation of emptiness or unreality of all things. Everything is being dependent on something else and having no individual existence apart from other things; hence the illusory nature of all things as being composed of elements and not possessing reality. For lay people, the Buddha always reminded about the three means to cultivate or practice Buddha dharma in their daily activities. *First*, to control one's body for

not doing bad deeds. *Second*, to control one's mouth for not speaking vain talk or harsh speech. *Third*, to control one's mind for not wandering with unwholesome karma. For the hearers, there are also three ways of cultivation. These are also three ways of discipline of Sravaka. These three trainings are the three inseparable aspects for any cultivators. The three Universal Characteristics (Existence is universally characterized by impermanence, suffering and not-self). Three methods according to the Mahayana Buddhism. *First, practice on the impermanence*: No realization of the eternal, seeing everything as everchanging and transient. *Second, practice on suffering*: Joyless, through only contemplating misery and not realizing the ultimate nirvana-joy. *Third, practice on non-self*: Non-ego discipline, seeing only the perishing self and not realizing the immortal self. While according to the Theravadan Buddhism, three ways to Enlightenment are "Sila-Samdhi-Prajna". First, keeping the precepts, or training in Moral discipline by avoiding karmically unwholesome activities. Cultivating ethical conduct. Second, mental discipline, or training the mind in Concentration, or practicing concentration of the mind. Third, wisdom or prajna, meaning always acting wisely, or training in Wisdom, the development of prajna through insight into the truth of Buddhism. These are also the three studies or endeavors of the non-outflow, or those who have passionless life and escape from transmigration. In Buddhism, there is no so-called cultivation without discipline, and also there is no Dharma without discipline. Precepts are considered as cages to capture the thieves of greed, anger, stupidity, pride, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, lust, and lying. In the same manner with keeping precepts, in Buddhism, there is no so-called cultivation without concentration, or training the mind. The resulting wisdom, or training in wisdom. If you want to get rid of greed, anger, and ignorance, you have no choice but cultivating discipline and samadhi so that you can obtain wisdom paramita. With wisdom paramita, you can destroy these thieves and terminate all afflictions.

Should Buddhists wait until getting old and after retirement to cultivate? It is traditional for Buddhists to honour the Buddha, to respect the Sangha and to pay homage the religious objects of veneration such as the relics of the Buddha, Buddha images, monastery, pagoda, and personal articles used by the Buddha.

However, Buddhists never pray to idols. The worship of the Buddha, ancestors, and deceased parents, are encouraged. However, the word “worship” itself is not appropriate from the Buddhist point of view. The term “Pay homage” should be more appropriate. Buddhists do not blindly worship these objects and forget their main goal is to practice. Buddhists kneel before the image of the Buddha to pay respect to what the image represents, and promise to try to achieve what the Buddha already achieved 25 centuries ago, not to seek worldly favours from the image. Buddhists pay homage to the image not because they are fear of the Buddha, nor do they supplicate for worldly gain. The most important aspect in Buddhism is to put into practice the teaching given by the Buddha. The Buddha always reminded his disciples that Buddhists should not depend on others, not even on the Buddha himself, for their salvation. During the Buddha’s time, so many disciples admired the beauty of the Buddha, so the Buddha also reminded his disciples saying: “You cannot see the Buddha by watching the physical body. Those who see my teaching see me.” Some people believe that they should wait until after their retirement to cultivate because after retirement they will have more free time. Those people may not understand the real meaning of the word “cultivation”, that is the reason why they want to wait until after retirement to cultivate. According to Buddhism, cultivation means to turn bad things into good things, or to improve your body and mind. So, when can we turn bad things into good things, or when can we improve our body and mind? Ancient virtues taught: “Do not wait until your are thirsty to dig a well, or don’t wait until the horse is on the edge of the cliff to draw in the reins for it is too late; or don’t wait until the boat is in the middle of the river to patch the leaks for it’s too late, and so on”. Most of us have the same problem of waiting and delaying of doing things. If we wait until the water reaches our navel to jump, it’s too late, no way we can escape the drown if we don’t know how to swim. In the same way, at ordinary times, we don’t care about proper or improper acts, but wait until after retirement or near death to start caring about our actions, we may never have that chance. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that impermanence and death never wait for anybody. So, take advantage of whatever time we have



at the present time to cultivate, to plant good roots and to accumulate merits and virtues.

### ***III. To Study the Teachings Will Help Creating More Energy & Strength in Cultivation:***

Right after the Buddha's Enlightenment at Buddha Gaya, he moved slowly across India until he reached the Deer Park near Benares, where he preached to five ascetics his First Sermon. The Sermon preached about the Middle Way between all extremes, the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. In the Deer Park, Benares, at first the Buddha was ignored by the five brothers of Kaundinya, but as the Buddha approached them, they felt that there was something very special about him, so they automatically stood up as He drew near. Then the five men, with great respect, invited the Buddha to teach them what He has enlightened. So, the Buddha delivered His First Teaching: Turning the Wheel of the Dharma. He began to preach: "O monk! You must know that there are Four Noble Truths. The first is the Noble Truth of Suffering. Life is filled with the miseries and afflictions of old age, sickness, unhappiness and death. People chase after pleasure but find only pain. Even when they do find something pleasant they soon grow tired of it. Nowhere is there any real satisfaction or perfect peace. The second is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering. When our mind is filled with greed and desire and wandering thoughts, sufferings of all types follow. The third is the Noble Truth of the End of Suffering. When we remove all craving, desire, and wandering thoughts from our mind, sufferings will come to an end. We shall experience undescribable happiness. And finally, the Noble Truth of the Path. The Path that helps us reach the ultimate wisdom." The path leading to the end (extinction) of suffering, the fourth of the four axioms, i.e. the eightfold noble path. The truth of the PATH that leads to the cessation of suffering (the way of cure). To practice the Eight-fold Noble Truths. The Buddha taught: "Whoever accepts the four dogmas, and practises the Eightfold Noble Path will put an end to births and deaths. In short, finally, the Buddha already discovered supportive conditions leading to bodhi or Buddhahood. The Noble Truth of the Right Way includes the following Noble Paths: The Eightfold Noble Truth, Seven Bodhi Shares, Four Right Efforts, Four

Sufficiencies, Five Faculties, Five Powers, Four Elements of Popularity, Four Immeasurable Minds, and Four Kinds of Mindfulness.

To someone, all that the Buddha said can only be considered as life of the Buddha Himself. However, in fact, the example that the Buddha and his immediate disciples set, that glorious feat of a man, who stood before men as a man and declared a path of deliverance. To others, Buddhism would mean the massive doctrine as recorded in the Buddhist Tripitaka (literature), and it is described a very lofty, abstruse, complex and learned philosophy of life. The name Buddhism comes from the word “Bodhi” which means “waking up,” and thus Buddhism is the philosophy of Awakening. Therefore, the real definition of Buddhism is Noble Truth. The Buddha did not teach from theories. He always taught from a practical standpoint based on His understanding, His enlightenment, and His realization of the Truth. This philosophy has its origins in the experience of the man named Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, who was himself awakened at the age of 36. Buddhism is now older than 2,500 years old and has more than 800 million followers world wide, including Chinese followers in Mainland China. People in the West had heard of the Buddha and his teaching as early as the thirteenth century when Marco Polo (1254-1324), the Italian traveler who explored Asia, wrote accounts on Buddhism in his book, “Travels of Marco Polo”. From the eighteenth century onwards, Buddhist text were brought to Europe and translated into English, French and German. Until a hundred years ago, Buddhism was mainly an Asian philosophy but increasingly it is gaining adherents in Europe and America. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Alan Bennett, an Englishman, went to Burma to become a Buddhist monk. He was renamed Ananda Metteya. He returned to Britain in 1908. He was the first British person to become a Buddhist monk. He taught Dharma in Britain. Since then, Buddhist monks and nuns from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Japan, China and other Buddhist countries in Asia have come to the West, particularly over the last seventy years. Many of these teachers have kept to their original customs while others have adapted to some extent to meet the demands of living in a western society. In recent years, there has been a marked growth of interest in Buddhism in Europe. The membership of existing societies has increased and many new Buddhist centers have been established. Their members include

large numbers of professionals and scholars. Today, Britain alone has over 140 Buddhist centers found in most major cities.

To the Buddha, man is a supreme being, thus, he taught: “Be your own torch and your own refuge. Do not seek refuge in any other person.” This was the Buddha’s truthful word. He also said: “All realizations come from effort and intelligence that derive from one’s own experience. Man is the master of his destiny, since he can make his life better or worse. If he tries his best to cultivate, he can become a Buddha.” Buddhism is the only way that leads people from the evil to the virtuous, from deluded to fully enlightened sagehood. Buddhism is a philosophy, a way of life or a religion. The religion of the awakened one. One of the three great world religions. It was founded by the historical Buddha Sakyamuni over 25 centuries ago. Sakyamuni expounded the four noble truths as the core of his teaching, which he had recognized in the moment of his enlightenment. He had shown people how to live wisely and happily and his teachings soon spread from India throughout Asia, and beyond.

The Buddha admitted the presence of sufferings and afflictions in human life because of the ignorant attachment to all things. But it is truly wrong to believe that Buddhism is a religion of pessimism. This is not true even with a slight understanding of basic Buddhism. When the Buddha said that human life was full of sufferings and afflictions, he did not mean that life was pessimistic. In this manner, the Buddha admitted the presence of sufferings and afflictions in human life, and by a method of analysis he pointed out to his disciples that attachment to things without a correct view as to their nature is the cause of sufferings and afflictions. Impermanence and change are inherent in the nature of all things. This is their true nature and this is the correct view. He concluded: “As long as we are at variance with this truth, we are bound to run into conflicts. We cannot alter or control the nature of things. The result is ‘hope deferred made the heart sick’. The only solution lies in correcting our point of view.” In fact, the thirst for things begets sorrow. When we like someone or something, we wish that they belonged to us and were with us forever. We never think about their true nature, in other words, or we refuse to think about their true nature. We expect them to survive forever, but time devours everything. Eventually we must yield to old age and freshness of the

morning dew disappears before the rising sun. In the Nirvana Sutra, when Ananda and other disciples were so sad and cried when the Buddha lay on his death-bed, the Buddha taught: “Ananda! Lament not. Have I not already told you that from all good things we love and cherish we would be separated, sooner or later... that they would change their nature and perish. How then can Tathagata survive? This is not possible!” This is the philosophy which underlies the doctrine of the “Three Marks” (impermanence, suffering and no-self) of existence of the Buddhist view of life and the world. All Buddhist values are based on this. The Buddha expected of his disciples, both laity and clergy, good conduct and good behavior and decent standard of living in every way. With him, a simple living did not amount to degenerate human existence or to suffer oneself. The Buddha advised his disciples to follow the “Middle Path”. It is to say not to attach to things nor to abandon them. The Buddha does not deny the “beauty”, however, if one does not understand the true nature of the objects of beauty, one may end up with sufferings and afflictions or grief and disappointment. In the “Theragatha”, the Buddha brought up the story of the Venerable Pakka. One day, going to the village for alms, Venerable Pakka sat down beneath a tree. Then a hawk, seizing some flesh flew up into the sky. Other hawks saw that attacked it, making it drop the piece of meat. Another hawk grabbed the fallen flesh, and was flundered by other hawks. And Pakka thought: “Just like that meat are worldly desires, common to all, full of pain and woe.” And reflecting hereon, and how they were impermanent and so on, he continued to contemplate and eventually won Arahanship. The Buddha advised his disciples not to avoid or deny or attach to objects of beauty. Try not to make objects of beauty our objects of like or dislike. Whatever there is in the world, pleasant or unpleasant, we all have a tendency to attach to them, and we develop a like or dislike to them. Thus we continue to experience sufferings and afflictions. Buddhists recognize beauty where the sense can perceive it, but in beauty we should also see its own change and destruction. And Buddhist should always remember the Buddha’s teaching regarding to all component things: “Things that come into being, undergo change and are eventually destroyed.” Therefore, Buddhists admire beauty but have no greed for acquisition and possession.

For devout Buddhists, the first important thing is that we must see the benefits of studying the Dharma, only then will we develop the strong desire to study it. Truly speaking, studying the Dharma can help practitioners having more energy and strength, for owing to our study, we understand Dharma; owing to our study, we stop committing wrong doings; owing to our study, we abandon the meaningless behaviors; owing to our study, we eventually achieve nirvana. In other words, by virtue of our study, we will know all the key points for modifying our behavior. Owing to study, we will understand the meaning of the Vinaya Basket and, as a result, will stop committing sins by following the high training of ethics. Owing to study, we will understand the meaning of the Sutra Basket, and as a result, we will be able to abandon such meaningless things as distractions, by following the high training in single-pointed concentration. Also owing to study, we understand the meaning of the Abhidharma Basket, and so come to abandon delusions by means of the high training in wisdom. Study is the lamp to dispel the darkness of ignorance. It is the best of possession that thieves cannot rob us of it. Study is a weapon to defeat our enemies of blindness to all things. It is our best friend who instructs us on the means. Study is a relative who will not desert us when we are poor. It is a medicine against sorrow that does us no harm. It is the best force that dispatches against our misdeeds. Devout Buddhists should always remember that when we know one more letter, we get rid of ourselves a bit of ignorance around that letter. So, when we know the other letters, we have dispelled our ignorance about them too, and added even more to our wisdom. The more we study the more light of wisdom we gain that helps us decrease ignorance. We should not study teaching without applying the basic and essential practices of Buddhism in order to transform our afflictions and habit energies. We also try to study teachings of a profound, metaphysical, and mystical nature, and should always ask ourselves how we may apply these teachings in our daily life to transform our sufferings and realize emancipation. Finally, the urgent and essential purposes of studying the teachings of lay people are trying not to cause sufferings, afflictions, and troubles for us and for other people, on the contrary, the benefits from studying the teachings will not only help relieve our sufferings, afflictions, and troubles, but also relieve other people's sufferings,

afflictions, and troubles in this very life, so that everyone will have a life of more peace, mindfulness and happiness. In short, studying the teachings will help creating more strength in cultivation. The power derived from the strength of studying the teachings enables Buddhist practitioners, if not yet attain enlightenment and emancipation, but if practicing good deeds still can be reborn among men, and or to be born among devas.

#### ***IV. Cultivation of Blessedness:***

In Buddhism, cultivate merits, sundry practices or practices of blessing means cultivate to gather merits includes various practices for a Buddhist such as practicing charity, distributing free sutras, building temples and stupas, keeping vegetarian diet and precepts, etc. However, the mind is not able to focus on a single individual practice and it is difficult to achieve one-pointedness of mind. Practices of blessing are various practices in cultivation for a Buddhist such as practicing charity, distributing free sutras, building temples and stupas, keeping vegetarian diet and precepts, etc. Sincere Buddhists should always remember that we must create our own blessings. If we cultivate blessings, we will obtain blessings; if we cultivate wisdom, we will obtain wisdom. However, to cultivate both blessings and wisdom is even better. Blessings come from ourselves. If we perform good deeds, we will have blessings. On the contrary, if we commit evil deeds, we will not have blessings. Buddhists should make demands on ourselves, not to make demands on others and seek outside appearances. Ancient Virtues taught: “Calamities and blessings are not fixed; we bring them upon ourselves,” or “Sickness enters through the mouth; calamities come out of the mouth”. We are beset with calamities on all sides, careless talking may very well be the cause. We may momentarily enjoy all kinds of good tasty foods such as steak, chicken, and seafood, but in the long run, these foods may cause us a lot of deadly diseases because nowadays animal flesh contains a lot of poisons from their chemical foods that help make them grow faster to be ready for selling in the market. However, Zen practitioners should always remember that in Zen, a deed is considered to be totally pure when it is done without any thought of reward, whether worldly or divine. It is called ‘deed of no merit’. For no merit is sought, it is a

deed of immeasurable merit, of infinite merit. For a deed to be great, it is not necessary that it be grandiose. What is important is the motive behind the deed and not the magnitude of the deed itself. If the motive is pure, then the deed is pure; if the motive is impure, then, no matter how big the deed is, it is still impure. Perhaps this is why, when Emperor Liang Wu-Ti asked Bodhidharma how much merit he had acquired for promoting Buddhism in large-scale way, and Bodhidharma replied 'No merit at all'.

"Punya" is the result of the voluntary performance of virtuous actions, also means field of merit, or field of happiness. Merit, karmic merit gained through giving alms, performing worship and religious services, reciting sutras, praying, and so on, which is said to assure a better life in the future. Accumulating merit is a major factor in the spiritual effort of a Buddhist layperson. Mahayana Buddhism teaches that accumulated merit should serve the enlightenmen of all beings by being transferred to others. The commitment to transfer a part of one's accumulated merit to others is a significant aspect of the Bodhisattva vow. Perfection in this is achieved in the eighth stage of a Bodhisattva's development. However, in Theravada countries, making merit is a central focus of the religious lives of laypeople, who are generally thought to be incapable of attaining the higher levels of meditative practice or Nirvana. In early Buddhism, it appears that it was assumed that merit is non-transferable, but in Mahayana the doctrine of "transference of merit" became widespread, and is said to be one of the key virtues of a Bodhisattva, who willingly gives away the karmic benefits of his or her good works for the benefit of others. All good deeds, or the blessing arising from good deeds. The karmic result of unselfish action either mental or physical. The blessing wealth, intelligence of human beings and celestial realms; therefore, they are temporary and subject to birth and death. Various practices for a Buddhist such as practicing charity, distributing free sutras, building temples and stupas, keeping vegetarian diet and precepts, etc. Devout Buddhists should always remember that the law of cause and effect or the relation between cause and effect in the sense of the Buddhist law of "Karma" is inconceivable. The law of causation (reality itself as cause and effect in momentary operation). Every action which is a cause will have a result or an effect. Likewise every resultant action or

effect has its cause. The law of cause and effect is a fundamental concept within Buddhism governing all situations. The Moral Causation in Buddhism means that a deed, good or bad, or indifferent, brings its own result on the doer. Good people are happy and bad ones unhappy. But in most cases “happiness” is understood not in its moral or spiritual sense but in the sense of material prosperity, social position, or political influence. For instance, kingship is considered the reward of one’s having faithfully practiced the ten deeds of goodness. If one meets a tragic death, he is thought to have committed something bad in his past lives even when he might have spent a blameless life in the present one.

In Buddhism, the term “field of blessing” is used just as a field where crops can be grown. People who grow offerings to those who deserve them will harvest blessing results accordingly. Sincere Buddhists should always cultivate the Field of Blessing by offerings to Buddha, His Dharma, and the Sangha. The field of blessedness or the field for cultivation of happiness, meritorious or other deeds, i.e. any sphere of kindness, charity, or virtue. Someone who is worthy of offerings. Just as a field can yield crops, so people will obtain blessed karmic results if they make offerings to one who deserves them. According to Buddhism, Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Arhats and all sentient beings, whether friends or foes, are fields of merits for the cultivator because they provide him with an opportunity to cultivate merits and virtues. Filial piety toward one’s parents and support them, serve and respect one’s teachers and the elderly, maintain a compassionate heart, abstain from doing harm, and keep the ten commandments. One of the four fields for cultivating happiness (blessing). The Buddha taught: “Children should pay special attention to their parents. As parents age, it is inevitable that their bodies will gradually weaken and deteriorate in a variety of ways, making them increasingly susceptible to physical illnesses that can affect every organ in their system. This is natural and there is no escape. Even though, children have no forceful obligation to care for their aged and sick parents, and aged parents have to depend on their children’s goodwill. Zen practitioners should take good care of their parents piously, and practitioners should always remember that there is no better institution to care for the aged parents other than the family itself.” Beside the filial piety toward one’s parents and support



them, Zen practitioners should take refuge in the Triratna, and should always serve and respect teachers and the elderly, maintain a compassionate heart, abstain from doing harm, and keep the ten commandments.

### ***V. Cultivations of Wisdom:***

According to Buddhist legendary, in Buddhist teachings, there are eighty-four thousand dharma-doors. Eighty-four thousand is a symbolic number which represents a countless number of the Buddha Dharma-door. Although talking about numerous dharma doors, all of them concentrate only on two matters. First, cultivation of blessing to accumulate merits; and the second matter is the cultivation of wisdom to accumulate virtues. In the limitation of this chapter, we only discuss about the cultivation of wisdom. The real wisdom is not something we can attain externally, only because most of us have become confused through general misconceptions and therefore, are unable to realize this potential wisdom. If we can eliminate this confusion, we will realize this intrinsic part of our nature. This is the main purpose of cultivation in Buddhism. The ultimate goal in cultivating is the complete enlightenment. Practitioners should always remember that the Buddha's teachings: "All things arise from the mind." Therefore, when the mind is pure, everything else is pure. Devout Buddhists should always remember that Buddhist religion is the path of returning to self (looking inward), the goal of its education must be inward and not outward for appearances and matters. As mentioned above, the main causes of sufferings and afflictions are greed, anger, hatred, ignorance, pride, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and so on... and the ultimate goal of Buddhism is to help sentient beings, especially human beings, to observe and practice discipline, meditation, and wisdom so that we can eliminate these troubles so that if we are not able to become a Buddha, at least we can become a real Buddhist who has a peaceful, mindful and happy life.

The Buddha taught his disciples numerous methods to practice to help the mind remain calm and unaffected in all situations, not giving rise to any wandering and discriminating thoughts or attachments so practitioners can recover their own original nature. Cultivation of wisdom means nothing profound but correcting our previous erroneous

thoughts, speech, and acts. In cultivating to attain wisdom, observing precepts and practicing meditation play an extremely important role because observing precepts will help practitioners not to commit wrong-doings, while practicing meditation will help practitioners attain a pure mind. Fundamental wisdom which is inherent in every man and which can manifest itself only after the veil of ignorance, which screens it, has been transformed by means of self-cultivation as taught by the Buddha. According to the Buddha, wisdom is extremely important for it can be commensurate with enlightenment itself. It is wisdom that finally opens the door to freedom, and wisdom that removes ignorance, the fundamental cause of suffering. It is said that while one may sever the branches of a tree and even cut down its trunk, but if the root is not removed, the tree will grow again. Similarly, although one may remove attachment by means of renunciation, and aversion by means of love and compassion, as long as ignorance is not removed by means of wisdom, attachment and aversion will sooner or later arise again. As for the Buddha, immediately after witnessing the unhappy incident involving the worm and the bird at the plowing ceremony, the prince sat under a nearby rose-apple tree and began to contemplate. This is a very early experience of meditation of the Buddha. Later, when he renounced the world and went forth to seek the ultimate truth, one of the first disciplines he developed was that of meditation. Thus, the Buddha himself always stressed that meditation is the only way to help us to achieve wisdom.

In Buddhism, wisdom is of the highest importance; for purification comes through wisdom, through understanding. But the Buddha never praised mere intellect. According to him, knowledge should go hand in hand with purity of heart, with moral excellence (*vijja-caranasampanna-p*). Wisdom gained by understanding and development of the qualities of mind and heart is wisdom par excellence (*bhavanamaya panna-p*). It is saving knowledge, and not mere speculation, logic or specious reasoning. Thus, it is clear that Buddhism is neither mere love of, nor inducing the search after wisdom, nor devotion, though they have their significance and bearing on mankind, but an encouragement of a practical application of the

teaching that leads the follower to dispassion, enlightenment and final deliverance.

For Buddhist practitioners, to begin to cultivate wisdom means to start our own inner struggle. Zen Master Philip Kapleau wrote in *The Three Pillars of Zen*: "Zazen that leads to Self-realization is neither idle reverie nor vacant inaction but an intense inner struggle to gain control over the mind and then to use it, like a silent missile, to penetrate the barrier of the five senses and the discursive intellect (that is, the sixth sense). It demands energy, determination and courage. Yasutani-roshi (Zen master Hakuun Yasutani 1885-1973) calls it 'a battle between the opposing forces of delusion and bodhi.' This state of mind has been vividly described in these words, said to have been uttered by the Buddha as he sat beneath the Bo tree making his supreme effort, and often quoted in the zendo during sesshin: 'Though only my skin, sinews, and bones remain and my blood and flesh dry up and wither away, yet never from this seat will I stir until I have attained full enlightenment.' The drive toward enlightenment is powered on the one hand by a painful felt inner bondage, a frustration with life, a fear of death, or both; and on the other by the conviction that through awakening one can gain liberation. But it is in zazen that the body-mind's force and vigor are enlarged and mobilized for the breakthrough into this new world of freedom."

The Buddha often taught his disciples that all sentient beings possess a Buddha's wisdom or original nature which has abilities to know the past, present and future. These are our original abilities. Unfortunately, they are covered and hidden by our delusion. Delusion occurs when the mind is not still, while an enlightened one remains unaffected. It should be noted that when our six senses encounter the environment, our mind moves, giving rise to wandering thoughts. The resulting wisdom, or training in wisdom. Even though wisdom involves cause and effect. Those who cultivated and planted good roots in their past lives would have a better wisdom. However, in this very life, if you want to get rid of greed, anger, and ignorance, you have no choice but cultivating discipline and samadhi so that you can obtain wisdom paramita. With wisdom paramita, you can destroy these thieves and terminate all afflictions. Wisdom is one of the three studies in Buddhism. The other two are precepts and meditation. According to

Bhikkhu Piyadassi Mahathera in *The Spectrum of Buddhism*, high concentration is the means to the acquisition of wisdom or insight.

#### ***VI. Simultaneous Cultivations of Blessings & Wisdom:***

In Buddhist cultivations, there are several different dharma doors, but there are only two ways of cultivation: Cultivation of merits and cultivation of wisdom. Cultivate to gather merits (practices of blessing or sundry practices) includes various practices for a Buddhist such as practicing charity, distributing free sutras, building temples and stupas, keeping vegetarian diet and precepts, etc. Merit is the result of the voluntary performance of virtuous actions, also means field of merit, or field of happiness. All good deeds, or the blessing arising from good deeds. The karmic result of unselfish action either mental or physical. The blessing wealth, intelligence of human beings and celestial realms; therefore, they are temporary and subject to birth and death. Merit is the quality in us which ensures future benefits to us, material or spiritual. It is not difficult to perceive that to desire merit, to hoard, store, and accumulate merit, does, however meritorious it may be, imply a considerable degree of self-seeking. It has always been the tactics of the Buddhists to weaken the possessive instincts of the spiritually less-endowed members of the community by withdrawing them from such objects as wealth and family, and directing them instead towards one aim and object, i.e. the acquisition of merit. But that, of course, is good enough only on a fairly low spiritual level. At higher stages one will have to turn also against this form of possessiveness, one will have to be willing to give up one's store of merit for the sake of the happiness of others. The Mahayana drew this conclusion and expected its followers to endow other beings with their own merit, or, as the Scriptures put it, 'to turn over, or dedicate, their merit to the enlightenment of all beings.' "Through the merit derived from all my good deeds I wish to appease the suffering of all creatures, to be the medicine, the physician, and the nurse of the sick as long as there is sickness. Through rains of food and drink I wish to extinguish the fire of hunger and thirst. I wish to be an exhaustible treasure to the poor, a servant who furnishes them with all they lack. My life, and all my re-birth, all my possessions, all the merit that I have acquired or

will acquire, all that I abandon without hope of any gain for myself in order that the salvation of all beings might be promoted.”

Truly speaking, owing to the practice of wisdom, practitioners will attain a number of virtues that contribute a considerable part in the process of going beyond the six paths of the samsara. Virtue is practicing what is good like decreasing greed, anger and ignorance. Virtue is to improve oneself, which will help transcend birth and death and lead to Buddhahood. Merit is what one established by benefitting others, while virtue is what one practices to improve oneself such as decreasing greed, anger, and ignorance. Both merit and virtue should be cultivated side by side. These two terms are sometimes used interchangeably. However, there is a crucial difference. Merits are the blessings (wealth, intelligence, etc) of the human and celestial realms; therefore, they are temporary and subject to birth and death. Virtue, on the other hand, transcend birth and death and lead to Buddhahood. The same action of giving charity with the mind to obtain mundane rewards, you will get merit; however, if you give charity with the mind to decrease greed and stingy, you will obtain virtue. While blessing (merit) is obtained from doing the Buddha work, while virtue gained from one’s own practice and cultivation. If a person can sit stillness for the briefest time, he creates merit and virtue which will never disappear. Someone may say, ‘I will not create any more external merit and virtue; I am going to have only inner merit and virtue.’ It is totally wrong to think that way. A sincere Buddhist should cultivate both kinds of merit and virtue. When your merit and virtue are perfected and your blessings and wisdom are complete, you will be known as the ‘Doubly-Perfected Honored One.’ According to the Platform Sutra, Chapter Three, the Master told Magistrate Wei, “Emperor Wu of Liang’s mind was wrong; he did not know the right Dharma. Building temples and giving sanction to the Sangha, practicing giving and arranging vegetarian feasts is called ‘seeking blessings.’ Do not mistake blessings for merit and virtue. Merit and virtue are in the Dharma body, not in the cultivation of blessings.” The Master further said, “Seeing your own nature is merit, and equanimity is virtue. To be unobstructed in every thought, constantly seeing the true, real, wonderful function of your original nature is called merit and virtue. Inner humility is merit and the outer practice of reverence is virtue.

Your self-nature establishing the ten thousand dharmas is merit and the mind-substance separate from thought is virtue. Not being separate from the self-nature is merit, and the correct use of the undefiled self-nature is virtue. If you seek the merit and virtue of the Dharma body, simply act according to these principles, for this is true merit and virtue. Those who cultivate merit in their thoughts, do not slight others but always respect them. Those who slight others and do not cut off the 'me and mine' are without merit. The vain and unreal self-nature is without virtue, because of the 'me and mine,' because of the greatness of the 'self,' and because of the constant slighting of others. Good Knowing Advisors, continuity of thought is merit; the mind practicing equality and directness is virtue. Self-cultivation of one's nature is merit and self-cultivation of the body is virtue. Good Knowing Advisors, merit and virtue should be seen within one's own nature, not sought through giving and making offerings. That is the difference between blessings and merit and virtue."

According to Buddhist teachings, the root or organ of wisdom or sense of wisdom is one of the five organs. The wisdom that people of religion must maintain. This is not a self-centered wisdom but the true wisdom that we obtain when we perfectly free ourselves from ego and illusion. So long as we have this wisdom, we will not take the wrong way. We can say the same thing of our belief in religion itself, not to mention in our daily lives. If we don't cultivate with our wisdom, we will surely be attached to selfish, small desires. Eventually, we are apt to stray toward a mistaken religion. However, earnestly we may believe in it, endeavoring to practice its teaching, keeping it in mind, and devoting ourselves to it, we cannot be saved because of its basically wrong teaching, and we sink farther and farther into the world of illusion. There are many instances around us of people following such a course. Although "sense of wisdom" is mentioned as the last of the five organs leading man to good conduct, it should be the first in the order in which we enter a religious life.

For any Buddhist practitioners, Wisdom and Concentration play an extremely important role on the path of cultivation. Meditation and wisdom, two of the six paramitas; likened to the two hands, the left meditation, the right wisdom. According to the Platform Sutra, Chapter Four, the Sixth, Patriarch instructed the assembly: "Good Knowing

Advisors, this Dharma-door of mine has concentration and wisdom as its foundation. Great assembly, do not be confused and say that concentration and wisdom are different. Concentration and wisdom are one substance, not two. Concentration is the substance of wisdom, and wisdom is the function of concentration. Where there is wisdom, concentration is in the wisdom. Where there is concentration, wisdom is in the concentration. If you understand this principle, you understand the balanced study of concentration and wisdom. Students of the Way, do not say that first there is concentration, which produces wisdom, or that first there is wisdom, which produces concentration: do not say that the two are different. To hold this view implies a duality of dharma. If your speech is good, but your mind is not, then concentration and wisdom are useless because they are not equal. If mind and speech are both good, the inner and outer are alike, and concentration and wisdom are equal. Self-enlightenment, cultivation, and practice are not a matter for debate. If you debate which comes first, then you are similar to a confused man who does not cut off ideas of victory and defeat, but magnifies the notion of self and dharmas, and does not disassociate himself from the four marks. Good Knowing Advisors, what are concentration and wisdom like? They are like a lamp and its light. With the lamp, there is light. Without the lamp, there is darkness. The lamp is the substance of the light and the light is the function of the lamp. Although there are two names, there is one fundamental substance. The dharma of concentration and wisdom is also thus.”

Devout Buddhists should always remember that hinderers or barriers caused by passions and delusion which aid rebirth and hinder to arising of wisdom. Owing to the practice of all knowledge, the practice of the unexcelled knowledge and wisdom of Buddhas, nothing that we don't know. Besides, owing to the practice of wisdom, practitioners will attain the wisdom eye that sees all things as unreal. With the wisdom-eye, a Bodhisattva takes in at a glance all the wonders and inconceivabilities of the spiritual realm to its deepest abyss. This also means to discern the entity of things and their real state. This, in a sense, a philosophical way of looking at things. A person with the eye of wisdom can observe things that are invisible to the average person and can perceive matters that are beyond imagination. He realizes that all things in this world are always

changing and there is nothing existing in a fixed form. That is to say all things are impermanent, nothing in the universe is an isolated existence, having no relation to other things; everything exists in relationship with everything else like the meshes of a net, nothing has an ego. At the same time, practitioners will attain the force of wisdom or the ability to maintain clear wisdom or the power of wisdom (awareness) which rests on insight into the four noble truths and leads to the knowledge that liberates.

The goal of practicing of meditation is to attain wisdom. True wisdom arises from purity of mind. The real wisdom is not attained from reading and studying sutras or books; the wisdom we attain from reading and studying is only worldly knowledge and not true wisdom. Besides, practitioners who cultivate wisdom should always be clear and not be deluded on the law of cause and effect. Buddhist ancients often said: “Bodhisattvas fear (are afraid of) causes; living beings fear effects (results or consequences).” As a matter of fact, all those who cultivate wisdom know that both cause and effect are closely related as they co-exist mutually. Everything in this world is subject to the law of cause and effect. Everything is empty and impermanent, but the law of cause and effect never changes. Because Bodhisattvas, those who cultivate wisdom, are afraid of bad consequences in the future, not only they avoid planting evil-causes or evil karma in the present, but they also diligently cultivate to gradually diminish their karmic obstructions; at the same time to accumulate their virtues and merits, and ultimately to attain Buddhahood. However, sentient beings complete constantly to gather evil-causes; therefore, they must suffer evil effect. When ending the effect of their actions, they are not remorseful or willing to repent. Not only do they blame Heaven and other people, but they continue to create more evil karma in opposition and retaliation. Therefore, enemies and vengeance will continue to exist forever in this vicious cycle. From the beginningless time, due to our lack of wisdom, we perceive and behave foolishly, and thus suffer afflictions and sufferings. According to Buddhism, there are consequences, either good or bad, to our thoughts, words and actions. Some people believe that reasons that cause sufferings and afflictions come from external environments and conditions, but to Buddhism, these reasons lie within everyone of us. Devout Buddhists should always remember that



sufferings and afflictions caused by ignorance, while the source of happiness and Nirvana is wisdom. For this reason, we must cultivate to transform these sufferings and afflictions into peace, mindfulness, happiness, and final goal of Nirvana. If we want to change direction away from greed, anger, delusion, arrogance, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconducts, lying... the only way to achieve our goal is to attain a real wisdom. For with the real wisdom we can overcome the above mentioned ten evil robbers. The, our lives will become more pure and peaceful.

In Buddhism, Prajna is often interchanged with wisdom. Wisdom means knowledge, the science of the phenomenal, while prajna more generally to principles or morals. Wisdom is described as the understanding of the Four Noble Truths, the understanding of interdependent origination, and the like. The attainment of wisdom is the ability of transformation of these doctrinal items from mere objects of intellectual knowledge into real, personal experience. In other words, according to Buddhism, wisdom is the ability to change our knowledge of the four Noble Truths and the like from mere sutra learning into actual, living truth. To attain wisdom, we must first cultivate good conduct, then cultivate mental development. It should be noted that reading and understanding the meaning of a sutra doesn't mean attaining wisdom. Wisdom means reading, understanding, and transforming doctrinal items from sutras into real, personal experience. Wisdom gives us the ability of "seeing the truth" or "seeing things as they really are" because the attainment of wisdom is not an intellectual or academic exercise, it is understanding or seeing these truths directly.

In Buddhism, wisdom is the highest virtue of all. It is usual to translate the Sanskrit term "Prajna" (pali-Panna) by "wisdom," and that is not positively inaccurate. When we are dealing with the Buddhist tradition, however, we must always bear in mind that there Wisdom is taken in a special sense that is truly unique in the history of human thought. "Wisdom" is understood by Buddhists as the methodical contemplation of 'Dharmas.' This is clearly shown by Buddhaghosa's formal and academic definition of the term: "Wisdom has the characteristic of penetrating into dharmas as they are themselves. It has the function of destroying the darkness of delusion which covers the own-being of dharmas. It has the manifestation of not being deluded.

Because of the statement: 'He who is concentrated knows, sees what really is,' concentration is its direct and proximate cause." Wisdom is a weapon of enlightening beings, dissolving all ignorance and afflictions. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can annihilate the afflictions, bondage, and compulsion accumulated by all sentient beings in the long night of ignorance. In short, practitioners who cultivate merits alongside wisdom will realize how this body of liberties and endowments is found but once, is difficult to obtain, and is easily lost; and partake of its essence, make it worthwhile, undistracted by the meaningless affairs of this life. Practitioners who cultivate merits alongside wisdom will always enthusiastically practice avoiding negative actions and always cultivate to accumulate virtues and finally reach the complete emancipation.

The Buddha taught that the ultimate perfect wisdom is innate. The Flower Adornment Sutra taught: "Every being possesses the same wisdom and virtuous capabilities as Buddhas." However, why do we have not this wisdom now? It is because of wandering thoughts and attachments. Now we try to cultivate in order to restore that innate wisdom. If we have the real wisdom, our thoughts, speech and behavior will be correct; how can we suffer where there are no ill consequences to suffer from? Of course, what kind of life do we have if we don't want to say a life of peace, mindfulness and happiness? Buddhist teachings show us that with a real wisdom, people can change lives of afflictions and sufferings into ones of peace, mindfulness and happiness. In summary, cultivation in Buddhism means to restore lives of wisdom, restore the ultimate and complete wisdom that the Buddha once did more than twenty-six centuries ago.

Finally, in Buddhist cultivations, merits and wisdom are two feet of a practitioner who is walking toward the Buddha-Land. If lack just one, that person immediately becomes disabled and will never be able to reach the Buddha-Land. As a matter of fact, according to Buddhist teachings, without purity of conduct there will be no calm equipoise of thought. In other words, if we don't cultivate merits in our own body, our mind will wander around without the calm equipoise of thought there will be no completion of insight. The completion of insight (prajna) means the perfection of intellect and wisdom, i.e., perfect enlightenment. It is the result of self-creation and the ideal of the self-

creating life. The code of conduct set forth by the Buddha is not a set of mere negative prohibitions, but an affirmation of doing good, a career paved with good intentions for the welfare of happiness of mankind. These moral principles aim at making society secure by promoting unity, harmony and mutual understanding among people. Devout Buddhists should always remember that Buddhist religion is the path of returning to self (looking inward), the goal of its education must be inward and not outward for appearances and matters. As mentioned above, the main causes of sufferings and afflictions are greed, anger, hatred, ignorance, pride, doubt, wrong views, killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and so on... and the ultimate goal of Buddhism is to help sentient beings, especially human beings, to observe and practice discipline, meditation, and wisdom so that we can eliminate these troubles so that if we are not able to become a Buddha, at least we can become a real Buddhist who has a peaceful, mindful and happy life.



## ***Appendix G***

### ***The Buddha's Last Teachings to His Disciples on Enlightenment & Emancipation***

#### ***I. The Buddha's Last Teachings on Cultivation Leading to Enlightenment & Emancipation:***

Beneath the Sala Trees at Kusinagara, the Buddha taught his last words to his disciples on enlightenment and emancipation as follows: Make yourself a light. Rely upon yourself, do not depend upon anyone else. Make my teachings your light. Rely on them; do not rely on any other teaching. Consider your body, think of its impurity. Consider your body, knowing that both its pains and its delight are alike causes of suffering, how can you indulge in its desires? Consider your “self,” think of its transiency, how can you fall into delusion about it and cherish pride and selfishness, knowing that they must end in inevitable suffering and afflictions? Consider substances, can you find among them any enduring “self” ? Are they aggregates that sooner or later will break apart and be scattered? Do not be confused by the universality of suffering, but follow my teaching, even after my death, and you will be rid of pain. Do this and you will indeed be my disciples. My disciples, the teachings that I have given you are never be forgotten or abandoned. They are always to be treasured, they are to be thought about, they are to be practiced. If you follow these teachings, you will always be happy. My disciples, the point of the teachings is to control your own mind. Keep your mind from greed, and you will keep your behavior right; keep your mind pure and your words faithful. By always thinking about the transiency of your life, you will be able to resist greed and anger, and will be able to avoid all evils. If you find your mind tempted and so entangled in greed, you must try to suppress and control the temptation; be the master of your own mind. A man’s mind may make him a Buddha, or it may make him a beast. Misled by error, one becomes a demon; enlightened, one become a Buddha. Therefore, control your mind and do not let it deviate from the right path. You should respect each other, follow my teachings, and

refrain from disputes. You should not like water and oil, repel each other, but should like milk and water, mingle together. My disciples, you should always study together, learn together, practise my teachings together. Do not waste your mind and time in idleness and quarreling. Enjoy the blossoms of Enlightenment in their season and harvest the fruit of the right path. My disciples, the teachings which I have given you, I gained by following the path myself. You should follow these teachings and conform to their spirit on every occasion. My disciples, if you neglect them, it means that you have never really met me. It means that you are far from me, even if you are actually with me. But if you accept and practice my teachings, then you are very near to me, even though you are far away. My disciples, my end is approaching, our parting is near, but do not lament. Life is ever changing; none can escape the dissolution of the body. This I am now to show by my own death, my body falling apart like a dilapidated cart. Do not vainly lament, but realize that nothing is permanent and learn from it the emptiness of human life. Do not cherish the unworthy desire that the changeable might become unchanging. My disciples, you should always remember that the demon of worldly desires is always seeking chances to deceive the mind. If a viper lives in your room and you wish to have a peaceful sleep, you must first chase it out. You must break the bonds of worldly passions and drive them away as you would a viper. You must positively protect your own mind. My disciples, my last moment has come, do not forget that death is only the end of the physical body. The body was born from parents and was nourished by food; just as inevitable are sickness and death. But the true Buddha is not a human body: it is Enlightenment. A human body must die, but the Wisdom of Enlightenment will exist forever in the truth of the Dharma, and in the practice of the Dharma. He who sees merely my body does not see me. Only he who accepts and practices my teaching truly sees me. After my death, the Dharma shall be your teacher. Follow the Dharma and you will be true to me. During the last forty-five years of my life, I have withheld nothing from my teachings. There is no secret teaching, no hidden meaning; everything has been taught openly and clearly. My dear disciples, this is the end. In a moment, I shall be passing into Nirvana. This is my last instruction.

## ***II. Buddha's Priceless Message:***

Priceless Message from the Buddha or the Four Noble Truths is one of the most important parts in the Buddha's Teachings. The Buddha gave this message to suffering humanity for their guidance, to help them to be rid of the bondage of "Dukkha" and to attain happiness, both relative and absolute (relative happiness or worldly happiness, absolute happiness or Nirvana). These Truths are not the Buddha's creation. He only re-discovered their existence. The Buddha said: "I am neither a vaguely so-called God nor an incarnation of any vaguely so-called God. I am only a man who re-discovers what had been covered for so long. I am only a man who attains enlightenment by completely comprehending all Noble Truths." In fact, the Buddha is a man who deserves our respect and reverence not only as a teacher but also as a Saint. He was a man, but an extraordinary man, a unique being in the universe. All his achievements are attributed to his human effort and his human understanding. He achieved the highest mental and intellectual attainments, reached the supreme purity and was perfect in the best qualities of human nature. He was an embodiment of compassion and wisdom, two noble principles in Buddhism. The Buddha never claimed to be a savior who tried to save 'souls' by means of a revelation of other religions. The Buddha's message is simple but priceless to all of us: "Infinite potentialities are latent in man and that it must be man's effort and endeavor to develop and unfold these possibilities. That is to say, in each man, there exists the Buddha-nature; however, deliverance and enlightenment lie fully within man's effort and endeavor."

When it was about time for Him to enter Nirvana, the Buddha uttered His last words: "Nothing in this world is precious. The human body will disintegrate. Only is Dharma precious. Only is Truth everlasting." When the day of the Buddha's passing away was drawing near, and the Bhiksus were reluctant for the parting. The Buddha instructed them saying: "The Buddha's incarnation body cannot stay in the world forever. This is the natural law. But my dharma can live on for a long time. You should observe and practice according to my teachings." Ananda and others then consulted the Buddha on four things of the Buddha's disciples after the Buddha's passing away. Right before entering Nirvana, beneath the Sala Trees at Kusinagara, the

Buddha taught his last words to his disciples as follows: *First*, make yourself a light. Rely upon yourself, do not depend upon anyone else. *Second*, make my teachings your light. Rely on them; do not rely on any other teaching. *Third*, consider your body, think of its impurity. *Fourth*, consider your body, knowing that both its pains and its delight are alike causes of suffering, how can you indulge in its desires? *Fifth*, consider your “self,” think of its transiency, how can you fall into delusion about it and cherish pride and selfishness, knowing that they must end in inevitable suffering and afflictions? *Sixth*, consider substances, can you find among them any enduring “self”? Are they aggregates that sooner or later will break apart and be scattered? *Seventh*, do not be confused by the universality of suffering, but follow my teaching, even after my death, and you will be rid of pain. Do this and you will indeed be my disciples. *Eighth*, my disciples, the teachings that I have given you are never be forgotten or abandoned. They are always to be treasured, they are to be thought about, they are to be practiced. If you follow these teachings, you will always be happy. *Ninth*, my disciples, the point of the teachings is to control your own mind. Keep your mind from greed, and you will keep your behavior right; keep your mind pure and your words faithful. By always thinking about the transiency of your life, you will be able to resist greed and anger, and will be able to avoid all evils. *Tenth*, if you find your mind tempted and so entangled in greed, you must try to suppress and control the temptation; be the master of your own mind. *Eleventh*, a man’s mind may make him a Buddha, or it may make him a beast. Misled by error, one becomes a demon; enlightened, one become a Buddha. Therefore, control your mind and do not let it deviate from the right path. *Twelfth*, you should respect each other, follow my teachings, and refrain from disputes. You should not like water and oil, repel each other, but should like milk and water, mingle together. *Thirteenth*, my disciples, you should always study together, learn together, practise my teachings together. Do not waste your mind and time in idleness and quarreling. Enjoy the blossoms of Enlightenment in their season and harvest the fruit of the right path. *Fourteenth*, my disciples, the teachings which I have given you, I gained by following the path myself. You should follow these teachings and conform to their spirit on every occasion. *Fifteenth*, my disciples, if you neglect them, it



means that you have never really met me. It means that you are far from me, even if you are actually with me. But if you accept and practice my teachings, then you are very near to me, even though you are far away. *Sixteenth*, my disciples, my end is approaching, our parting is near, but do not lament. Life is ever changing; none can escape the disolution of the body. This I am now to show by my own death, my body falling apart like a dilapidated cart. *Seventeenth*, do not vainly lament, but realize that nothing is permanent and learn from it the emptiness of human life. Do not cherish the unworthy desire that the changeable might become unchanging. *Eighteenth*, my disciples, you should always remember that the demon of worldly desires is always seeking chances to deceive the mind. If a viper lives in your room and you wish to have a peaceful sleep, you must first chase it out. You must break the bonds of worldly passions and drive them away as you would a viper. You must positively protect your own mind. *Nineteenth*, my disciples, my last moment has come, do not forget that death is only the end of the physical body. The body was born from parents and was nourished by food; just as inevitable are sickness and death. *Twentieth*, but the true Buddha is not a human body: it is Enlightenment. A human body must die, but the Wisdom of Enlightenment will exist forever in the truth of the Dharma, and in the practice of the Dharma. He who sees merely my body does not see me. Only he who accepts and practices my teaching truly sees me. *Twenty-first*, after my death, the Dharma shall be your teacher. Follow the Dharma and you will be true to me: *Twenty-Second*, during the last forty-five years of my life, I have withheld nothing from my teachings. There is no secret teaching, no hidden meaning; everything has been taught openly and clearly. My dear disciples, this is the end. In a moment, I shall be passing into Nirvana. This is my last instruction.

According to the Mahaparinirvana Sutra in the Digha Nikaya, volume 16, the Buddha compassionately reminded Ananda: "It is through not understanding the Four Noble Truths, o Bhiksus, that we have had to wander so long in this weary path of rebirth, both you and I!" On his last days, the Buddha always reminded his disciples to be mindful and self-possessed in learning the Three-fold training "Such is right conduct, such is concentration, and such is wisdom." In His last instructions to the Order, the Buddha told Ananda: "The Tathagata

does not think that he should lead the Order or the Order is dependent on Him. Therefore, Ananda, be lamps to yourselves. Be a refuge to yourselves. Go to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Dharma as a lamp. Hold fast to the Dharma as a refuge. And how, O Ananda, is a Bhiksu to be a lamp to himself, a refuge to himself, going to no external refuge, holding fast to the Dharma as a lamp? Herein, a Bhiksu lives diligent, mindful, and self-possessed, overcoming desire and grief in the world, reflecting on the body, feeling, and mind and mental objects.” In Kusinagara, the Buddha told his last disciple, Subhadda: “O Subhadda, in whatever doctrine, the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, neither is there found the first Samana, nor the second, nor the third, nor the fourth. Now in this doctrine and discipline, O Subhadda, there is the Noble Eightfold Path, and in it too, are found the first, the second, the third and the fourth Samanas. The other teachers’ schools are empty of Samanas. If, O Subhadda, the disciples live rightly, the world would not be void with Arahants. Void of true Saints are the system of other teachers. But in this one, may the Bhiksus live the perfect life, so that the world would not be without saints.” Then the Buddha turned to everyone and said his final exhortation: “Remember what I have taught you. Craving and desire are the cause of all unhappiness. Everything sooner or later must change, so do not become attached to anything. Instead, devote yourself to clearing your mind and finding true and lasting happiness. Behold now, O Bhiksus, I exhort you! Subject to change are all component things! Strive on with diligence!”

## *Appendix H*

### *The Ultimate Arrival: Nirvana*

#### *I. An Overview & Meanings of Nirvana in Buddhist Point of View:*

After picking up flowers of Enlightenment and Emancipation, in front of practitioners would be a place where there exists no sorrow, no birth, and no extinction, according to Buddhism, that's Nirvana, the ultimate arrival of any Buddhist practitioners. Total extinction of desires and sufferings. Nirvana is the supreme goal of Buddhist endeavor. When we speak about Nirvana we encounter some problems of expression, because the exact nature of an experience cannot and never can be communicated merely by words. This experience must be experienced directly by each one of us, without any exception. We have to experience the end of sufferings and afflictions for ourselves, and the only way we can do this is by eliminating the causes of sufferings and afflictions: the attachment, aversion, and ignorance. When we have eliminated such causes of sufferings and afflictions, then we will experience nirvana for ourselves. "Nirvana" is a Sanskrit term for "cessation." The term is a combination of the Sanskrit prefix "nir" plus the verbal root "va" and literally means "blow out" or "extinguish." This is a "cessation" of the process of becoming, eternal peace, or extinction or Ultimate reality Absolute Truth, or the state achieved by the conquest of craving, the extinction of birth and death. This is the highest state of bliss, peace and purity. This is the unconditioned reality. This is also the supreme Goal of Buddhist endeavour (the spiritual goal of Buddhism); release from the limitations of existence. A state which is free from rebirth by extinguishing of all desires and the elimination of egoism. According to the Lankavatara Sutra, Nirvana means to see the abode of reality as it is, and after seeing this a Bodhisattva with great compassion forgo his own nirvana in order to lead others to liberation. Nirvana consists of 'nir' meaning exit, and 'vana' meaning craving. Nirvana means the extinguishing or liberating from existence by ending all suffering. So Nirvana is the total extinction of desires and sufferings, or release (giải

thoát). It is the final stage of those who have put an end to suffering by the removal of craving from their mind. In Mahayana Buddhism, Nirvana has the following meanings: inaction or without effort (diệt), no rebirth (vô sanh), calm joy (an lạc), and extinction or extinguish or tranquil extinction or transmigration to extinction (tịch diệt). In other word, Nirvana means extinction of ignorance and craving and awakening to inner Peace and Freedom. Nirvana with a small “n” stands against samsara or birth and death. Nirvana also refers to the state of liberation through full enlightenment. Nirvana is also used in the sense of a return to the original purity of the Buddha-nature after the dissolution of the physical body, that is to the perfect freedom of the unconditioned state. The supreme goal of Buddhist endeavor. An attainable state in this life by right aspiration, purity of life, and the elimination of egoism. The Buddha speaks of Nirvana as “Unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, and unformed,” contrasting with the born, originated, created and formed phenomenal world. The ultimate state is the Nirvana of No Abode (Apratisthita-nirvana), that is to say, the attainment of perfect freedom, not being bound to one place. Nirvana is used in both Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhist schools. In the Lankavatara Sutra, the Buddha told Mahamati: “Oh Mahamati, Nirvana means seeing into the abode of reality in its true significance. The abode of reality is where a thing stands by itself. To abide in one’s self-station means not to be astir, i.e., to be eternally quiescent. By seeing into the abode of reality as it is means to understand that there is only what is seen of one’s own mind, and no external world as such.” After the Buddha’s departure, most of the metaphysical discussions and speculations centered around the subject of Nirvana. The Mahaparinirvana Sutra, the Sanskrit fragments of which were discovered recently, one in Central Asia and another in Koyasan, indicates a vivid discussion on the questions as to what is ‘Buddha-nature,’ ‘Thusness,’ ‘the Realm of Principle,’ ‘Dharma-body’ and the distinction between the Hinayana and Mahayana ideas. All of these topics relate to the problem of Nirvana, and indicate the great amount of speculation undertaken on this most important question.

The most probable explanation of Nirvana is that it is the highest level of meditation, the ceasing of ideation and feeling. The attainment of Nirvana is also called the cessation of consciousness, since rebirth is

effected through the medium of *vijnana* and the Nirvana is the cessation of rebirth, the reality of no-self. In the stream of consciousness processes, of which *vijnana* consists, is stopped and emptied, usually by means of the meditational exercises to insight exist. Buddhism had always maintained that the state of Nirvana can not be expressed in words by a lot of negation such as: 'There is the not-born, the not-become, the not-created, the not-compounded. There is the realm where there is neither earth nor water; neither the boundless realm of space nor boundless consciousness. There is neither coming nor going nor standing, neither origination nor annihilation... This is the end of suffering. So, Nirvana is beyond all suffering and change. It is as unfading, still, undecaying, taintless, as peace and blissful. It is an island, the shelter, the refuge and the goal. In addition, the term Nibbana in the literature of Pali Nikayas clearly refers to a unity eternally existing beyond the three world. It is infinite, inexpressible, unborn, undecaying and empty. It is homogeneous and knows no individuality. In it, all discriminations or dichotomy cease.

The Buddha said that Nirvana is supreme happiness, peace, immortal, uncreated, beyond earth, water, fire, and air, the sun and moon. It is unfathomable and immeasurable. He has described Nirvana in the following terms: infinite (*ananta-p*), non-conditioned (*asamkhata-p*), incomparable (*anupameya-p*), supreme (*anuttara-p*), highest (*para-p*), beyond (*para-p*), highest refuge (*parayana-p*), safety (*tana-p*), security (*khema-p*), happiness (*siva-p*), unique (*kevala-p*), abodeless (*analaya-p*), imperishable (*akkhara -p*), absolute purity (*visuddho -p*), supramundane (*lokuttara-p*), immortality ( *amata-p*), emancipation (*mutti-p*), peace (*santi-p*), etc. Nirvana has the following general characteristics: permanent, tranquil extinguish, no aging, no death, purity, liberated from existence, passiveness (without effort), no rebirth, calm joy, transmigration to extinction, extinction or end of all return to reincarnation (cessation of rebirth), extinction of passion, and extinction of all misery and entry into bliss. You should always remember that when you are still reborn in the Samsara, you still have to prepare for a long journey from here (*samsara*) to Nirvana. It is important to cultivate on a regular basis so you can obtain wisdom that is necessary for your journey. Do not seek the transcendental events or

supernatural powers of just one existence. Look to the end of the journey: Nirvana.

The word “Nirvana” literally means “extinguished” and therefore “tranquil.” A question is raised whether Nirvana is only a transformed state of mind or whether it is another dimension of being. The word has been used both for a transformed psychological state and for a metaphysical status. Buddhist literature is full of statements which go to show that Nirvana is a transformed state of personality and consciousness. The transformation is described in negative terms as a destruction of craving and attachments and in positive terms as the emergence of transcendental wisdom and peace. ***According to Buddhist philosophy, there are four ways of description of a Nirvana:*** *The first way of description of Nirvana is “Negative”:* The negative description is the most common. Nirvana is deathless, unchanging, imperishable, without end, non-production, extinction of birth, unborn, not liable to dissolution, uncreated, free from disease, un-aging, freedom from transmigration, utmost, cessation of pain, and final release. *The second way of description of Nirvana is “Positive”:* Nirvana is peace, bliss, transcendental wisdom, pure and security. Impermanent, indeed, are all conditioned things. It is their very nature to come into being and then to cease. Having been produced, they are stopped. Their cessation brings peace and ease. Cessation also means extinction of craving and cessation of suffering with a state of calm. In a positive way, Nirvana also means the supreme bliss, transcendental wisdom, illumination, and pure radiant consciousness. *The third way of description of Nirvana is “Paradoxical”:* This statement is mostly found in Prajnaparamita or Madhyamika literature. Nirvana is abiding in a state of non-abiding. The only way of reaching the goal is to realize that in the ultimate sense there is no goal to be reached. Nirvana is reality which is void (sunya). *The fourth way of description of Nirvana is “Symbolical”:* Symbolical description differs from the paradoxical in avoiding to speak in abstractions and using concrete images instead. From this standpoint, Nirvana is the cool cave, the island in the flood, the further shore, the holy city, the refuge, the shelter, and the safe asylum.

***According to Buddhism, Nirvana has many characteristics:*** First, nirvana may be enjoyed in the present life as an attainable state.

*Second*, Nirvana has four virtues or transcendental characteristics in Buddhism, or four noble qualities of the Buddha's life expounded in the Nirvana Sutra: eternity, or permanence (permanence versus impermanence); joy, or happiness (Bliss versus suffering or the paramita of joy); personality or soul or true self (Supreme self versus personal ego); purity (equanimity versus anxiety). ***Besides, Nirvana also has many other special characteristics:*** *First*, an attainable state in this life by right aspiration, purity of life, and the elimination of egoism. The Buddha speaks of Nirvana as "Unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, and unformed," contrasting with the born, originated, created and formed phenomenal world. *Second*, the fact that Nirvana is realized as one of the mental states. It is not a state of nothingness. *Third*, nirvana is not a place or a kind of heaven where a self or soul resides. Nirvana is the attainment of a state which is dependent on this body itself and this state can be achieved in this very life. Nirvana is beyond description of words. It is beyond time and space described by ordinary people. *Fourth*, nirvana is a place where (if we can temporarily say so) craving, hate and delusion are destroyed. Nirvana is the attainment of the cessation of sufferings. However, there are some heretic opinions in Nirvana. Nirvana is permanent and eternal; however, heretics believe that everything including nirvana as impermanent. Nirvana is a real Buddha-nature; however, heretics believe that there is no such Buddha-nature. Nirvana is a permanent place of bliss; however, heretics believe that everywhere including nirvana as no pleasure, but suffering. This is one of the eight upside-down views which belongs to the four upside-down views on impermanence. Buddhism believes that Nirvana is permanent and eternal; however, heretics believe that everything including nirvana as impermanent. Nirvana is pure; however, heretics believe that everything is impure. This is one of the eight upside-down views which belongs to the four upside-down views on impermanence. Buddhism believes that Nirvana is permanent and eternal; however, heretics believe that everything including nirvana as impermanent.

At the time of the Buddha, there existed some problems concerning Nirvana. Some are born in a womb; evil-doers are reborn in hells; the righteous people go to blissful states; the undefiled ones pass away into Nirvana (Dharmapada 126). In the Dharmapada Sutra, whenever the

Buddha was asked by a questioner whether he was to live after death or what sort of world he was to enter after Nirvana, he always remained silent. When the Buddha remained silent to a question requiring an answer of 'yes' or 'no,' his silence usually meant assent. Ut his silence on the question concerning Nirvana was due to the fact that his listeners could not understand the profound philosophy involved. The main problem of Buddhism either formalistic or idealistic, was concerning the extinction of human passion, because this distorted state of mind is considered to be the source of all evils of human life. Human passion can be extinguished even during one's lifetime. Therefore liberation from such disorder of mind is the chief object of Buddhist culture. Nirvana means the extinction of passion, of desire, of sense, of mind, and even of individual consciousness. To Buddhist mind, Nirvana did not contain any idea of deification of the Buddha. It simply meant the eternal continuation of his personality in the highest sense of the word. It meant returning to his original state of Buddha-nature, which is his Dharma-body, but not his scripture-body as misunderstood by people. Dharma means the 'ideal' itself which the Buddha conceived in his perfect Enlightenment. Nirvana is this ideal body which is without any restricting conditions. The formalists, on the other hand, hold that the scripture is the perfect representation of the ideal of the Buddha. Hence their opinion that the Buddha lives forever in the scripture-body, Nirvana being his entire annihilation and extinction otherwise. The principle of Nirvana or the state of a fire blown out in the light of space and time. It was an illusion on the part of philosophers, especially some of the Indian philosophers, to believe that space and time were infinite. Buddhism, however, has never treated space and time as infinite, for Buddhism takes them to be physical matters. The theory that space is curved, set forth by modern physicists, has considerably facilitated the elucidation of the doctrine of Nirvana. The universe, or the Realm of Principle (Dharmadhatu) as it is technically called, is the region which is occupied by space and time and in which they control all the waves of existence. So in practice, the space-time world is the ocean of the waves of life and death. It is the sphere of the flowing cycles of life or samsara, the world of creation, of energy, of action, of causation and ideation, of self-creation and of dynamic becoming. It is the sphere of desire, matter (form) and mind.



Space is considered one of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and space), and it is sometimes represented to be of round shape. Time is treated as real in some schools while in other schools it is treated as unreal. But it is to be particularly noted that time has never been considered to exist separately from space. That is to say, every being or thing has time of its own. Space and time are always correlative. Men have an average lifetime of one hundred years. But a crane is said to live for a thousand years, and a tortoise even ten thousand years. And with the heavenly beings, their one day and night is said to be as long as the whole fifty years of the earthly men. A day-fly, on the other hand, live a short wave-length of only one day.

## ***II. Heaven Is Not A Nirvana in Buddhism:***

According to dictionary, “heaven” means the dwelling place of the deity. However, for a Buddhist, both heaven and hell are right here, right in this world. That is to say you can create your own heaven or hell right here in this world. It’s ridiculous to create all kinds of unwholesome deeds, then simply with faith or praying you can create a heaven. Buddhist belief in heaven is simple, if you live and act according to moral principles, you can create your own heaven right here in this world. If not, you can also create the hell on this earth itself. Sincere Buddhists never expect a heaven elsewhere to reward a virtue, or a hell to punish vice, virtue and evil have inevitable consequences in this world itself. These consequences can be considered as heaven or hell at the very moment. Buddhist literature contains too many descriptions of realms in which beings are reborn as a consequence of their past performance. According to Abhidharma-Kosa, there are six heavens in the “Desire Realm,” and seventeen in the “Form Realm.” Sentient beings who are born into these heavens are referred to as “gods.” Celestial beings or gods are one of the three good modes of existence as a reward for their previous good deeds. Devas allotted a very long, happy life in the Deva although they are still subject to the cycle of rebirth. However, this happiness may constitute a substantial hindrance on their path to liberation for they cannot recognize the truth of suffering. So heaven is seen as undesirable in Buddhism, because gods inevitably exhaust their good karma and are reborn in one of the lower realms of existence, where

they again become subject to suffering. Thus the final goal of any Buddhists should be a liberation of all kinds of existence in the cycle of rebirth.

### ***III. The Path of Removal of Sufferings: A Journey Towards Nirvana:***

As above mentioned, enlightenment is a complete and deep realization of what it means to be a Buddha. In Buddhism, enlightenment is achieving a complete and deep realization of what it means to be a Buddha and how to reach Buddhahood. For lay practitioners, in daily life, enlightenment means to see the path of removal of sufferings, because this will help us a lot in reaching a life with more peace, mindfulness and happiness for ourselves. The essential steps of the path to the removal of suffering which are pointed out by the Buddha. It is a journey towards Nibbana, the way of careful cultivation of the mind so as to produce unalloyed happiness and supreme rest from the turmoil of life. The path is indeed very difficult, but if we, with constant heedfulness, and complete awareness, walk it watching our steps, we will one day reach our destination. The way of walking or the way of cultivation. People often walk without seeing the way. Religions generally lay importance on practice, that is, how to walk, but neglect teaching the intellectual activity with which to determine the right way, that is, how to see. In Mahayana Buddhism, this is the path on which one has directly realized emptiness. This also coincides with the first Bodhisattva level (bhumi). On this path meditators completely remove the artificial conceptions of a permanent self. The Buddha stressed in His Teachings the experimental process in Buddhist cultivation is a chain of objective observations before any practices because through objective observations we realize the real face of sufferings and afflictions. It's is objective observation that gives us an opportunity to cultivate to totally destroy sufferings and afflictions. Thus, at any time, objective observation plays a key role in the experimental process in Buddhist cultivation. *The first path is the path of overcoming anger:* According to the Buddhist theory, in order to overcome anger, one must contemplate that a person or an animal which causes us to be angry today may have been our friend, relative or even our father or mother in a certain previous life. *The second path*

*is the path of overcoming attachment:* We should meditate or contemplate that a friend today may become an enemy tomorrow and therefore, there is nothing for us to attach to. *The third path is the path of overcoming attachment overcoming demons:* To overcome demons, e.g. as the Buddha did at his enlightenment. *The fourth path is the path of overcoming doubts:* To study scriptures, to read stories of enlightened ones, as well as to contemplate will help us perceive the truth and overcome doubts. *The fifth path is the path of renouncing wealth and sex:* According to the Sutra in Forty-Two Sections, Chapter 22, the Buddha said: “People who cannot renounce wealth and sex are like small children who, not satisfied with one delicious helping, lick the honey off the blade of the knife and in doing so, cut their tongues.” *The sixth path is the path of getting rid of deluded thoughts:* One of the best methods to get rid of deluded thoughts is either meditation to obtain concentration or just keep one method such as reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha. *The seventh path is the path of not to slander any enlightening teachings:* Should not slander any enlightening teachings. This is one of the ten kinds of rules of behavior of great enlightening beings. Enlightening beings who abide by these can attain the supreme discipline of great knowledge. *The eighth path is the path of not to look for faults in others:* In daily life, always look above, look below, look to the east or to the west, to the north or to the south and so on to try to find faults in others. Buddha taught that we should look into ourselves, we should reflect the light of awareness inwardly to become enlightened. The Buddha taught: “When we do not see others’ mistakes or see only our own rightness, we are naturally respected by seniors and admired by juniors.” According to the Dharmapada, sentence 50, the Buddha taught: “Let not one look on the faults of others, nor things left done and undone by others; but one’s own deeds done and undone.” *The ninth path is the path of examining ourselves:* We, devoted Buddhists, must examine ourselves so that we are able to know who we are. Know our body and mind by simply watching. In sitting, in sleeping, in eating, know our limits. Use wisdom. The practice is not to try to achieve anything. Just be mindful of what is. Our whole meditation is to look directly at the mind. We will be able to see suffering, its cause, and its end. *The tenth path is the path of controlling emotions:* In Buddhism, controlling emotions does not mean a

repression or suppression of emotions, but to recognize that they are destructive and harmful. If we let emotions simply come and go without checking them, we will have a tendency to be prone to emotional outbursts. In the contrary, if we have a clear recognition of their destructive potential, we can get rid of them easily. *The eleventh path is the path of getting rid of desires:* A Buddhist practitioner should be keenly anxious to get rid of desires, and wants to persist in this. *The twelfth path is the path of eliminating suffering:* Suffering can be eliminated because suffering itself isn't the intrinsic nature of our minds. Since suffering arises from ignorance or misconception, once we realize emptiness, or the nature of things as they are, ignorance or misconception no longer influences us. It's like turning a light on in a dark room, once the light is on, the darkness vanishes. Similarly, wisdom can help us cleanse ignorance and disturbing attitudes from our minds forever. In addition, wisdom cleanses the karmic imprints currently on our minds, so they won't bring results. After perceiving the true picture of life, the Buddha said to himself: "I must get rid of the oppression of disease, old age and death." *The thirteenth path is the path of eliminating perversions:* Eliminating deluded and confused. This means eliminating delusion in regard to reality. Delusion also implies a belief in something that is contrary to reality. Illusion, on the other hand, suggests that what is seen has objective reality but is misinterpreted or seen falsely. In Buddhism, delusion is ignorance, an unawareness of the true nature of things or of the real meaning of existence. We are deluded or led astray by our senses (which include the intellect and its discriminating thoughts) insofar as they cause us to accept the phenomenal world as the whole of reality when in fact it is but a limited and ephemeral aspect of reality, and to act as though the world is external to us when in truth it is but a reflection of ourselves. This does not say all phenomena are illusory, they mean that compared with Mind itself the world apprehended by the senses is such a partial and limited aspect of truth that it is dreamlike. When we fail to see the true nature of things our views always become clouded. Because of our likes and dislikes, we fail to see the sense organs and sense objects objectively and in their proper perspective and go after mirages, illusions and deceptions. The sense organs delude and mislead us and then we fail to see things in their true light as a result of which our way

of seeing things becomes perverted. The delusion of mind mistakes the unreal for the real, the passing shadows for permanence, and the result is confusion, conflict, disharmony and perpetual sorrow. When we are caught up in these illusions, we perceive, think and view things incorrectly. We perceive permanence in the impermanence; pleasure in pain; self in what is not self; beauty in repulsive. We think and view in the same erroneous manner. We are perverted for four reasons: our own senses, unwise reflection, unsystematic attention, failure to see true nature of this world. The Buddha recommended us to utilize right understanding or insight to remove these illusions and help us recognize the real nature of all things. Once we really understand that all thing is subject to change in this world without any exception, we will surely want to rely on nothing. *The fourteenth path is the path of eliminating of all hindrances and afflictions:* By realizing for oneself with direct knowledge, one here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints. *The fifteenth path is the path of getting rid of covetousness:* Getting rid of covetousness, anger, delusion, and fear, by taming their own minds, one of the ten kinds of action of Great Enlightening Beings. Enlightening Beings who abide by these can achieve the action of Buddhas that has no coming or going. *The sixteenth path is the path of getting rid of deluded thoughts:* One of the best methods to get rid of deluded thoughts is either meditation to obtain concentration or just keep one method such as reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha. *The seventeenth path is the path of letting go:* A basic teaching of the Buddha on how to calm and rein in the “monkey” mind. When we feel asleep, just lie down in a quiet place, put the lights out and let go our minds and bodies. In Buddhism, we have always been hearing about letting go and not clinging to anything. What does the Buddha mean on letting go? He means in daily activities, no way we can let go everything. We have to hold on things; however, try not to cling to them. For example, we try to make money for our living expenses, but not try to cling on making a lot of money to accumulate regardless of the means of making the money. Practitioners do everything with a mind that lets go. Do not expect any praise or reward. If we let go a little, we will have a little peace. If we let go a

lot, we will have a lot of peace. If we let go completely, we will know complete peace and freedom.

#### ***IV. The Buddha's Nirvana:***

At the age of eighty, the Buddha accompanied by a large assembly of monks, made a long journey from the Vulture Peak near Rajagaha to many towns, cities, and villages, where he preached the Dharma, enlightening his disciples with various discourses and emphasizing the fundamental doctrine of the Four Noble Truths. He said: "It is through not comprehending the Four Noble Truths, you and I have had to wander so long in the six miserable paths with rebirth after rebirth." He also emphasized on the Three-Fold Training of right conduct, concentration and wisdom. When they arrived at Vesali, a prosperous city, they stayed at Ambapali's mango-grove, where the Buddha gave a lecture to the Licchavis and Ambapali, who later offered the Buddha and his Sangha her mango grove. In his last retreat in Beluva, a village near Vesali. Here he felt sharp pains, but he bore them without any complaint. Soon after his recovery, in his last instruction to the Order, he addressed the Venerable Ananda: "The Tathagata does not think that he should lead the Order, nor does the Order depend on him. Therefore, Ananda, be lamps to yourselves. Take no external refuge. Hold fast to the Dharma as a lamp. Hold fast to the Dharma as a refuge. And how, Ananda, is a Bhiksu to be a lamp to himself, a refuge to himself, taking no external refuge, holding fast to the Dharma as a lamp? Herein, a Bhiksu lives diligent, mindful, and self-possessed, overcoming desire and grief in the world, reflecting on the body, feeling, mind and mental objects." The Buddha emphasized on the importance of personal striving for purification and freedom from suffering. The Buddha and the Order arrived at Pava and stayed at Cunda's mango grove, where they were treated by the black smith the Buddha's last meal. The Buddha reminded the Order that the Buddha's last and first meals were of greater profit than any others. Eventually, they moved on to the Sala grove of the Mallas in Kusinara, where a wandering ascetic, Subhadda, approached the Buddha and requested him to clear his doubt about other religious teachers at that time. The Buddha spoke: "In whatever doctrine and discipline, Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, neither is there found the first

samana, nor the second, nor the third, nor the fourth. Now in this doctrine and discipline, Subhadda, there is the Noble Eightfold Path, and in it too, are found the first, the second, the third, and the fourth Samanas. The other teachers' schools are empty of Samanas. If, Subhadda, the disciples live rightly, the world would not be void of Arahants: Void of true saints are the systems of other teachers. But in this one, may the Bhiksus live the perfect life, so that the world would not be without saints." The ascetic Subhadda became the Buddha's last disciple and soon after his ordination he also became an Arahant. At last the Buddha addressed the Order before his final exhortation: "Behold now, Bhiksus, I exhort you! Subject to change are all component things! Strive on with diligence!" Then the Buddha passed away on the Full Moon of the Vesak month in 543 B.C. His body was cremated with great ceremony and the relics were divided among Brahmins, Kings, and nobles and were then enshrined in the Eight Great Stupas.

#### ***V. Incomplete and Complete Nirvanas:***

The realm of nirvana (the abode of Nirvana), or bliss, where all virtues are stored and whence all good comes, one of the three dharmas of inaction. Mahayana Buddhism also agrees with the Pali literature, Nirvana is that which is neither discarded nor attained; it is neither a thing destroyed nor a thing eternal; it is neither suppressed nor does it arise. It is the state of final release. However, the Mahayanists gave further explanation on Nirvana: "Nirvana is the state of the Bodhisattva who does not want to retire into the final release, even though he is fully entitled to it, and who by his free choice devotes himself to the services of all sentient beings. In the Madhyamika Sastra Karikavrtti, Candrakirti defined that Nirvana is "What is not abandoned nor acquire; what is not annihilation nor eternality; what is not destroyed nor created." According to Nagarjuna Bodhisattva in the Madhyamaka Philosophy, the absolute is transcendent to both thought and speech. Neither the concept of 'bhava' nor 'abhava' is applicable to it. Nirvana or the Absolute Reality cannot be a 'bhava' or empirical existence, for in that case it would be subject to origination, decay, and death; there is no empirical existence which is free from decay and death. If it cannot be 'bhava' or

existence, far less can it be 'abhava' or non-existence, for non-existence is only the concept of absence of existence (abhava). When 'bhava' itself is proved to be inapplicable to Reality, 'abhava' cannot stand scrutiny, for abhava is known only as the disappearance of 'bhava.' When the concept of 'bhava' or empirical existence, and 'abhava' or the negation of bhava cannot be applied to the Absolute, the question of applying any other concept to it does not arise, for all other concepts depend upon the above two. In summary, the absolute is transcendent to thought, and because it is transcendent to thought, it is inexpressible. What cannot be an object of thought cannot be an object of speech.

*According to Keith in The Dictionary of Chinese-English Buddhist Terms, there are two kinds of Nirvana: The first kind of Nirvana is the "Incomplete Nirvana" (Kilesa-parinibbana-p):* The cause of reincarnation is ended. Nirvana reached by those enlightened beings who have not yet completely rid themselves of their samsaric burden of skandhas. The cause has been annihilated, but the remnant of effect still remains. A saint may enter into this nirvana during life, but has continue to live in this mortal realm (has not yet eliminated the five aggregates) till the death of his body. There are two different views on the Incomplete Nirvana. Hinayana holds that the arhat, with the full extinction of afflictions, after his last term of mortal existence enters into nirvana, while alive here he is in the state of limited or modified nirvana (sopadhisesa-nirvan), in contrasted with complete nirvana (nirupadhisesa-nirvana). An Arhat whose taints are destroyed, who has lived the life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, attained Arahatsip by stages, destroyed completely the bond of becoming, one who is free through knowing rightly. As his faculties have not been demolished he experiences what is agreeable and disagreeable, he experiences pleasure and pain. The five aggregates remain. It is his extinction of lust, hate and delusion, that is called the Nibbana element with a basis remaining (saupadisesa-nibbanadhatu). The Mahayana holds that when the cause of reincarnation is ended the state is that of incomplete nirvana; when the effect is ended, and the eternal Buddha-body has been obtained, then there is a complete nirvana. The Mahayana says that in the Hinayana "Remainderless Nirvana" for the arhat, there are still remains of illusion, karma, and suffering, and it is



therefore only an “Incomplete nirvana” in Mahayana. In Mahayana, complete nirvana, these remains of illusion, karma, etc., are ended. As a technical term the extinction of human passion is called the ‘Nirvana with the condition of being still remaining’ or, ‘the Nirvana with the upadhi remnant,’ upadhi being the material and immaterial condition of being. *The second kind of Nirvana is the Nirvana element without a basis remaining:* The nirvana of arhat extinction of body and mind where there are no more cause and effect, the connection with the chain of mortal life being ended. A saint enters this perfect nirvana upon the death of his body (the aggregates have been eliminated). This is the Final nirvana without remainder of reincarnation where all the effects (quā) are ended. The nirvana state in which exists no remainder of the karma of suffering, or the full extinction of the groups of existence. Final nirvana without remainder of reincarnation where all the effects (quā) are ended. The nirvana state in which exists no remainder of the karma of suffering, or the full extinction of the groups of existence. The nirvana of arhat extinction of body and mind. An Arhat whose taints are destroyed, who has lived the life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, attained Arahatship by stages, destroyed completely the bond of becoming, one who is free through knowing rightly. All his feelings not being welcome, not being delighted in, will here and now become cool; it is thus, that is called the Nibbana element without a basis remaining. Static nirvana, the nirvana after death, the remainderless extinction of liberated one, in which all relationship to the world is broken off and there is no activity. It opposed to Apratisthita-nirvana, in which the liberated one choose to remain in the world where Bodhisattvas renounce entry into pratisthita-nirvana so that he can, in accordance with his vow, lead beings on the way to liberation. The Nirvana without the upadhi remnant. It is the total extinction of the conditions of being as well as of passion. One may call it the annihilation of being. This is Nirvana of Perfect Freedom, or the passing away of Sakyamuni Buddha.

***Five Kinds of Nirvana:*** Besides, according to the Surangama Sutra, book Nine, in the section of the ten states of formation skandha, the Buddha reminded Ananda about the five kinds of immediate Nirvana: “Further, in his practice of samadhi, the good person’s mind is firm, unmoving, and proper and can no longer be disturbed by demons. He

can thoroughly investigate the origin of all categories of beings and contemplate the source of the subtle, fleeting, and constant fluctuation. But if he begins to speculate on existence after death, he could fall into error with five theories of Nirvana. Because of these speculations about five kinds of immediate Nirvana, he will fall into externalism and become confused about the Bodhi nature. *First*, he may consider the Heavens of the Desire Realm a true refuge, because he contemplates their extensive brightness and longs for it. *Second*, he may take refuge in the First Dhyana, because there his nature is free from worry. *Third*, he may take refuge in the Second Dhyana, because there his mind is free from suffering. *Fourth*, he may take refuge in the Third Dhyana, because he delights in its extreme joy. *Fifth*, he may take refuge in the Fourth Dhyana, reasoning that suffering and bliss are both ended there and that he will no longer undergo transmigration. These heavens are subject to outflows, but in his confusion he thinks that they are unconditioned; and he takes these five states of tranquility to be refuge of supreme purity. Considering back and forth in this way, he decides that these five states are ultimate. ***Five Kinds of Anagamins:*** According to the Sangiti Sutta in the Long Discourses of the Buddha, there are five kinds of anagamins (Na Hâm) who never return to the desire-real. *First*, the “less-than-half-timer”, where the anagamin who enters on the intermediate stage between the realm of desire and the higher realm of form. *Second*, the “more-than-half-timer”, where the anagamin who is born into the form world and soon overcome the remains of illusions. *Third*, the “gainer with exertion”, where the anagamin who diligently works his way through the final stage. *Fourth*, the “gainer without exertion”, where the anagamin whose final departure is delayed through lack of aid and slackness. *Fifth*, Nirvana where he who goes upstream to the highest. The anagamin who proceeds from lower to higher heavens into nirvana.

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