

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Immovability Ground

H. THE EIGHTH GROUND: THE IMMOVABILITY GROUND

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

The Paranirmita Vaśavartin Deva King
along with all the devas and bodhisattvas,
on hearing the explanation of these superior practices,
were all moved to feelings of great exultation.
Presenting offerings to the Buddha and those sons of the Buddha, ⁽¹⁾
they then showered down supremely marvelous blossoms, incenses,
jeweled necklaces, many sorts of banners and canopies,
powdered scents, robes embroidered with gems,
real and wondrous *maṇi* jewels,
and all manner of other bodily adornments,
all of them descending like a cloud from space above,
sprinkling down on the Buddha and that immense congregation. ⁽²⁾
Then, from their place in the space above, the celestial nymphs
made many and various sorts of music
as their offering to the Tathāgata
and to all of the bodhisattvas as well,
while also uniting in a chorusing of sublime voices
in which they sang forth verses praising their meritorious qualities: ⁽³⁾
“He who is possessed of all-knowledge
and who, among all beings, is the most revered,
Because of his kindly pity for the inhabitants of the world,
the Buddha manifests the power of his spiritual superknowledges,
thereby causing these blossoms, incenses, jewels, and other such gifts
to also send forth these very same sounds. ⁽⁴⁾
Within every point of hair, mote of dust, or grain of sand,
there are manifest *nayutas*
of countless many buddhas,
who are proclaiming the Dharma therein. ⁽⁵⁾
Even in the tip of but a single hair,
one sees countless many buddha lands,
Sumerus, Iron Ring Mountains, and seas,
even as those worlds all reside therein without any constriction. ⁽⁶⁾

Even within the tip of but a single hair,
 There exist in their entirety the three wretched destinies,
 the devas, the humans, and the *asuras*, in each and every one of which
 there is the undergoing of their karmic retributions therein. (7)

One sees in all of these buddha lands
 all buddhas holding forth with their marvelous voices,
 turning the wheel of the unsurpassable Dharma
 in accordance with the thoughts arising in the minds of beings. (8)

Within the lands of the Buddhas,
 the bodies of the beings therein are of all different sorts.
 These lands contain the bodies of these beings
 and these beings' bodies themselves contain lands as well.

All of the devas and humans therein
 in every case dwell separately from each other.
 After first closely contemplating them, the Buddhas
 afterward speak the Dharma for their sakes. (9)

In those lands residing within even the finest atoms,
 it is in correspondence to beings' thoughts that they appear minute,
 whereas, in the case of lands that manifest as large,
 it is in correspondence to beings' thoughts that they appear large.²²⁹

The Buddhas manifest such phenomena as these as a function of
 the power of their many different sorts of spiritual superknowledges.
 Even if all beings at once attempted to describe them all, their
 narration of such phenomena could never be brought to an end." (10)

It was in this way that they used such sublime sounds
 to set forth the praises of the Bhagavat.
 The minds of everyone there were filled with immense delight
 as they then became silent and gazed up at the Buddha.

Liberation Moon Bodhisattva
 then set forth the request to Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, saying:
 "O Son of the Buddha, could it be that you will now explain
 the characteristic features of the eighth ground?" (11)

2. VAJRAGARBHA COMMENCES THE EIGHTH GROUND'S EXPLANATION

{A} Vajragarbha Bodhisattva then replied, saying:

3. 10 ACCOMPLISHMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH ENTERING THE 8TH GROUND

O Son of the Buddha, here we have those bodhisattva *mahāsattvas*
 who, on seven grounds:

- Have already implemented sublime practices;
- Have followed the path of wisdom and skillful means;

Have, with purity, well accumulated the dharmas assisting realization of the path;
 Have, due to the power of their great vows, caused their resolve to endure and never cease;²³⁰
 Have become protected by the spiritual powers of the Buddhas;²³¹
 Have acquired the power arising from their roots of goodness;²³²
 Have remained ever mindful of and compliant with the Tathāgata's powers, fearlessnesses, and exclusive dharmas;²³³
 Have well purified their higher aspirations and intentions;²³⁴
 Have completely developed the power of merit and wisdom;²³⁵
 And, by resort to the greatly kind and compassionate mind, have refrained from ever forsaking any being. So it is that they cultivate the path of measureless knowledge.²³⁶

4. 10 TYPES OF COMPREHENSION ASSOCIATED WITH 8TH GROUND ACCESS

(B) They have become able to penetratingly comprehend all dharmas:²³⁷

As originally unproduced;
 As undestroyed;
 As signless;
 As neither coming forth into existence nor being lost;
 As neither going nor coming;
 As, by nature, devoid of any inherent existence;
 As the same in the past, the present, and the future;
 As not differing when penetrated by the Tathāgata's non-discriminating cognition;
 As beyond any covetous grasping by the mind and mental consciousness's discriminations;
 And they penetratingly comprehend all dharmas as, by nature, like empty space.

(C) This is what defines the bodhisattvas' acquisition of the unproduced-dharmas patience and marks their entry into eighth ground.

5. THE UNPRODUCED DHARMAS PATIENCE BASIS OF "PROFOUND PRACTICE"

It is on this basis that they immediately gain this eighth ground, the Ground of Immovability, and become known as "profound practice" bodhisattvas, those who have achieved a state that is difficult to know, one impenetrable by anyone's discriminating thought, one that has transcended all characteristic signs, one that has left behind all conceptual thought and all covetous attachment, one that is measureless, boundless, inconceivable,

insurmountable by any *śrāvaka*-disciple or *pratyekabuddha*, and one in which deep and vast transcendence is directly manifest.

6. "PROFOUND PRACTICE" LIKE A MONK WITH SUPERKNOWLEDGES & DHYĀNAS

Sons of the Buddha, this circumstance is comparable to that of a bhikshu who has acquired the spiritual superknowledges, whose mind has achieved sovereign mastery, and who has sequentially pursued the acquisition of the absorptions to the point of entering the absorption of complete cessation wherein all movement of mind, all recollective thought, all discriminations, and all endeavors carried out by the mind have become entirely extinguished. So too it is with this bodhisattva who, dwelling on this Far-Reaching Ground, suddenly extinguishes all of his urgent involvements and thereby reaches a state entirely free of physical, verbal, and mental undertakings wherein he abides in a state of great detachment.

7. 8TH GROUND LIKENED TO AWAKENING FROM A RIVER-FORDING DREAM

Sons of the Buddha, his situation is like that of a man in the midst of a dream in which he is striving to get across a deep river. This man then exerts intensely vigorous effort in pursuing some great means to cross over this river. When he has still not gotten all the way across, beset by distress, he wakes up, whereupon he immediately entirely abandons his urgently pursued efforts.

Sons of the Buddha, so too it is with the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* who from the very beginning on forth to the present, has been engaged in exerting himself with great vigor, applying himself in the vast endeavor of cultivating the path. On arriving at the Ground of Immovability, all urgent endeavors are entirely relinquished. He does not course in duality-based thought. There is no longer any present manifestation of any sort of recollective thought.

8. 8TH GROUND LIKENED TO THE BRAHMA WORLD'S ABSENCE OF AFFLICTIONS

This circumstance is comparable to that of someone reborn into the Brahma World Heavens wherein none of the desire realm afflictions any longer manifest in him. So it is, O Sons of the Buddha, with this bodhisattva dwelling on the Ground of Immovability. None of the mental activity associated with the intellectual mind consciousness is any longer presently manifest in him. He does not even bring forth any further manifestation of thought associated with buddhahood, thought associated with bodhi, or thought

associated with nirvāṇa, how much the less might he bring forth any sorts of worldly thoughts.

9. THE BUDDHAS' MANIFESTATION BEFORE THE 8TH GROUND BODHISATTVA

Sons of the Buddha, as this bodhisattva *mahāsattva* follow along in accordance with this ground, he does so in reliance upon the power of his original vows. Additionally, the Buddhas manifest their bodies before him so that, as he abides on the grounds, he abides within the flow of the Dharma wherein the wisdom of the Tathāgatas serves for him as a cause and condition.

10. THE BUDDHAS' PRAISE & INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE 8TH GROUND BODHISATTVA

(D) The Buddhas then say to him:

It is good indeed, good indeed, Son of Good Family, that you have acquired the foremost form of patience through which you accord with the Dharma of all buddhas. Son of Good Family. We are possessed of the ten powers of the Buddhas, the four fearlessness, and the eighteen dharmas exclusive to the Buddhas. You, however, have now still not acquired them. For the sake of acquiring these very qualities, you should bring diligence and vigor to bear even while you must still not allow yourself to relinquish this gateway of patience.

(E) Son of Good Family. Although you have acquired this foremost and extremely profound quiescent liberation, still, the common people and the other beings are not skilled in this and thus have not achieved this quiescence. They always bring forth all manner of afflictions and are injured by the many different sorts of ideation and discursive thought. You should extend your kindly pity to these beings.

(F) Furthermore, Son of Good Family. You should recall what you originally vowed to do in aspiring to bestow great benefit on beings and in aspiring to bring about their successful entry into the gateway of inconceivable wisdom.

(G) Additionally, Son of Good Family. Whether buddhas are present or buddhas are not present, the nature of all dharmas and the character of all dharmas always abide no differently. It is not on the basis of acquiring this dharma that the Tathāgatas are referred to as buddhas. Both *śrāvaka*-disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* are also able to acquire this dharma of quiescence and non-discrimination.

(H) Son of Good Family. Regard our measureless pure physical signs, our measureless wisdom, our measureless pure lands, our generation of measureless wisdom and measureless skillful means, our measureless light auras,²³⁸ and our measureless

pure voices. You should now bring forth these very phenomena yourself.

(i) Also, Son of Good Family. You have now acquired this one Dharma light,²³⁹ namely the quiescence and absence of differentiating distinctions of all dharmas.²⁴⁰ The light of the dharma of non-production that we have already acquired is such that it could never be known through calculations carried on across the course of an immeasurable and boundless number of however many *koṭis* of kalpas. It is for the sake of acquiring just such light as this that you should raise forth dharmas such as these.

(j) Son of Good Family. As you contemplate all the countless many lands, all the countless many beings, and all the countless many dharmas throughout the ten directions so possessed as they are of their distinct differences, you should develop an utterly penetrating reality-based comprehension of these phenomena that accords with knowledge such as this.

The Buddhas bestow upon this bodhisattva just so very countless and boundlessly many gateways into the generation of the causes and conditions associated with the development of wisdom. It is through employing these countless many gateways that this bodhisattva becomes able to generate countless many different wise karmic works and then bring them to complete realization.

11. THE IMPORTANCE OF BUDDHAS' APPEARING TO 8TH GROUND BODHISATTVAS

(k) Sons of the Buddha, I shall now explain this for your sakes. If the Buddhas did not cause this bodhisattva to dwell within gateways to wisdom such as these, this bodhisattva would then choose to enter into the absolute and final nirvāṇa, thereby abandoning his devotion to benefiting all beings. It is because the Buddhas bestow upon this bodhisattva just so countless and boundlessly many causes and conditions associated with the generation of wisdom that the wisdom he is then able to generate in but a single moment becomes such that all of that already produced from the first ground on through to the end of the seventh ground could not constitute even a single part in a hundred parts, a single part in a thousand myriads of *koṭis* of parts, a single part in a hundred thousand myriads of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of parts, and so forth until we come to its not being able to equal even a single part in countless and boundlessly many *asaṃkhyeyas* of parts, and its being unable to equal even a single part in a number of parts describable only by calculation or analogy.

12. THE REASONS 8TH GROUND BODHISATTVA PRACTICES ARE SO MEASURELESS

And why is this the case? This is because all of the meritorious qualities cultivated and accumulated so far have been the product of but a single body's progression along the path. Now, beginning with this ground, he acquires countlessly many bodies in which he cultivates the bodhisattva path, employing as he does so countlessly many voices and countlessly many expressions of wisdom in countlessly many places of rebirth, and in countlessly many pure lands wherein, in all such circumstances, he engages in teaching countlessly many beings and in making offerings to, providing for, and serving countlessly many buddhas.

This is because, in doing so, he accords with the Dharma of countlessly many Buddhas and avails himself of the power of countlessly many sorts of spiritual superknowledges. It is because he engages in these practices in the context of countlessly many different sorts of congregations and carries forth countlessly many physical, verbal, and mental deeds in accumulating the path practices engaged in by all bodhisattvas, doing so in reliance upon the dharma of immovability.

13. THIS BODHISATTVA'S PRACTICES LIKENED TO SAILING OUT ONTO THE OCEAN

Sons of the Buddha, in this, he is comparable to someone embarking on a boat, aspiring to set sail on the great ocean. Before he can even succeed in setting sail on the great ocean, he must first devote a great deal of effort, perhaps even having to use the strength of his own arms to set forth. If he does indeed succeed in reaching the great ocean, only then may he desist from further exertion, for he then requires only the power of the wind to continue traveling. Were one to compare all of the effortful exertion initially required in reaching the ocean to that required after successfully launching out onto the great ocean, the distance travelled in a single day at sea could not be matched by even a hundred thousand years of his previous types of effort.

Sons of the Buddha, so too it is with the bodhisattva *mahāsattva*. He must first assemble abundant provisions in the form of his roots of goodness, whereupon he then boards the ship of the Great Vehicle. Having reached the great ocean of wisdom coursed in by the bodhisattvas, in the course of but a single instant during which he does not devote any effortful application of his powers, he is then able to draw near to that wisdom that is employed by all buddhas. All of those accumulated efforts that he originally devoted to this could not even approach his current capacities

even if they were similarly employed for an entire kalpa or even if they were employed for a hundred thousand myriads of kalpas.

14. THE BODHISATTVA'S CONTEMPLATION OF BUDDHA'S ALL-KNOWLEDGE

(1) Sons of the Buddha, the bodhisattva *mahāsattva* who has reached the eighth ground gives birth to effortless functioning of mind arising from great²⁴¹ skillful means and knowledge. Then, as he abides on the bodhisattva path, he contemplates the power of all buddhas' wisdom.

15. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF WORLDS' ARISING, DETERIORATION, & DESTRUCTION

In particular, he thereby knows of the production of worlds, the destruction of worlds, the deterioration of worlds, and the creation of worlds. He knows on account of the cessation of which karmic causes and conditions worlds then deteriorate and he knows on account of the aggregation of which karmic causes and conditions worlds are then created.

16. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE FOUR ELEMENTAL PHASES

This bodhisattva knows with respect to the earth element its character when small, knows with respect to the earth element its character when large, knows with respect to the earth element its character when manifest on an immeasurable scale, knows with respect to the earth element its character in its different manifestations, and knows too with respect to the water, fire, and wind elements, their character when small, their character when large, their character when manifest on an immeasurable scale, and their character in their different manifestations.

17. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ATOMS' MANIFESTATIONS IN WORLDS AND BEINGS

He knows too with respect to atoms their character when minute and knows with respect to atoms their character in their different manifestations. He is able to completely know with respect to a single world system all of the different manifestations of the atoms contained within it, is able to completely know with respect to the earth element within this single world system precisely how many atoms are contained within it, and is able to completely know with respect to the water, fire, and wind element, precisely how many atoms are associated with each of them.

He knows however many precious things are contained therein, knows the volume and weight of atoms contained therein, knows the number of atoms contained in the beings therein, and knows with respect to the myriad things within that world system all of differences in the atoms comprising them.

He is able to distinguish with respect to the beings therein the character of their bodies when large and the character of their bodies when minute, knows how many atoms comprise the bodies of those born into the hell realms, knows how many atoms comprise the bodies of those born into the animal realms, knows how many atoms comprise the bodies of those born into the hungry ghost realms, knows how many atoms comprise bodies of those born into the celestial realms, and knows how many atoms comprise bodies of those born into the human realm. He completely knows all of these things. This bodhisattva accesses such forms of knowledge as are capable of distinguishing these manifestations of the atoms contained therein.

18. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE THREE REALMS OF EXISTENCE

He knows too with respect to the desire realm the character of destruction as it takes place therein, knows with respect to the desire realm the character of creation as it takes place therein, knows with respect to the form realm the character of destruction as it take place therein, knows with respect to the form realm the character of creation as it takes place therein, knows with respect to the formless realm the character of destruction as it takes place therein, and knows with respect to the formless realm the character of creation as it takes place therein. So it is that he knows with respect to the desire realm, form realm, and formless realm the character of creation and destruction as they take place therein.

He knows with respect to the desire realm the character of phenomena when they are small, knows with respect to the desire realm the character of phenomena when they are large, knows with respect to the desire realm the character of phenomena when they are manifest to an immeasurably vast extent, and knows with respect to the desire realm the character of phenomena in their various different manifestations.

He knows too with respect to form realm and formless realm phenomena their character when small, their character when large, their character when manifest to an immeasurably vast extent, and their character in their different manifestations. Just so is the character of his knowing of the three realms of existence.

19. HIS APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE IN ADAPTIVE BIRTHS TO TEACH BEINGS

These factors constitute aspects contributing to the bodhisattva's light of knowledge used in teaching beings. He thoroughly assesses the differences in the various bodies of beings and thoroughly contemplates into which circumstances he should take on rebirth. He accords with the circumstances into which beings are born and adapts to the types of bodies into which beings are born and thereby takes on bodies for their benefit.

This bodhisattva manifests bodies filling all places everywhere throughout the worlds of a great trichiliocosm that adapt to the types of bodies into which beings are born, adapting to each and every one of their different types. In this, he is comparable to the sun that manifests its reflected image in every single body of water. Whether it is in the worlds of two great trichiliocosms, of three, four, or five great trichiliocosms, of twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or a hundred great trichiliocosms, in the worlds of a thousand, a myriad, a hundred myriad, a thousand myriad, a *koṭi*, a hundred thousand myriad *koṭis*, or even in the worlds of a *nayuta* of great trichiliocosms, his bodies go forth everywhere within them. So too does this continue to be the case even on up to the point where, in the worlds of countlessly many, boundlessly many, inconceivably many, and ineffably many great trichiliocosms, his bodies go forth everywhere within them as, in each case, he takes on incarnations that adapt to the different variations in the bodies of the beings residing therein.

Having perfected wisdom such as this, even as this bodhisattva abides in but a single world in a body that remains utterly motionless, he manifests physical appearances within the great congregations of the buddha residing in even up to an indescribably great number of buddha worlds, adapting to the types of physical incarnations taken on by beings there and adapting, too, to those beings' resolute convictions.

(M) If a being amenable to liberation abides within an assembly of *śramaṇas*, he manifests in the form of a *śramaṇa*, if within a congregation of brahmins, he manifests in the form of a brahmin, if within a congregation of *kṣatriyas*, he manifests in the form of a *kṣatriya*, and if within a congregation of the laity, he then manifests in the form of a layman. So, too, if a being abides within a congregation associated with the Four Heavenly Kings, in a congregation associated with Śakra Devānām Indra, in a congregation of *māras*, or in a congregation associated with the Brahma Heaven King, then he manifests in forms appropriate to those

circumstances up to and including the circumstance where he manifests within a Brahma Heaven congregation. And so it goes all the way on up to that circumstance of a being amenable to liberation abiding in an Akaniṣṭha Heaven congregation whereupon he manifests in the form of a resident of the Akaniṣṭha Heaven.

Where there are those who would most readily achieve liberation through the Śrāvaka-disciple Vehicle, he then manifests in the form of a *śrāvaka*-disciple. Where someone would most readily achieve liberation through the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, he then manifests in the form of a *pratyekabuddha*. Where someone would most readily achieve liberation through the Bodhisattva Vehicle, he then manifests in the form of a bodhisattva. And for someone who would most readily achieve liberation through the appearance of a buddha's body, he then manifests in the form of a buddha's body.

20. HIS TRANSCENDENCE OF DISCRIMINATIONS & KNOWLEDGE OF 10 BODY TYPES

Sons of the Buddha, he manifests in this manner in all of the inefable numbers of buddha lands, manifesting rebirth in bodies adapting to the different physical forms of beings and adapting too to their different resolute dispositions. (N) Even so, he has actually completely abandoned any such discriminations regarding the distinctions in beings' characteristic physical features, for he always abides in the recognition of the uniformly equal character of all physical forms. This bodhisattva:

- Knows beings' bodies;
- Knows the physical bodies of lands;
- Knows those bodies received as karmic retribution;
- Knows the bodies of *śrāvaka*-disciples;
- Knows the bodies of *pratyekabuddhas*;
- Knows the bodies of bodhisattvas;
- Knows the bodies of *tathāgatas*;
- Knows the body of knowledge;
- Knows the Dharma body;
- And knows empty space bodies.

a. THE BODHISATTVA'S MANIFESTATION OF DIFFERENT BODIES FOR BEINGS

So it is that the bodhisattva, knowing a being's resolute convictions, may make the body of a being into his own body. So too, he may cause a being's body:

- To become the body of a land;

To become a karmic retribution body;
 To become the body of a *śrāvaka*-disciple;
 To become the body of a *pratyekabuddha*;
 To become the body of a bodhisattva;
 To become the body of a *tathāgata*;
 To become a knowledge body;
 To become the Dharma body;
 Or to become an empty space body.

So too may he turn the physical body of a land into his own body, into a body received as karmic retribution, and so forth on through to his turning of that physical body into an empty space body.

So too may he turn a body received as karmic retribution into his own body, and so forth on through to his doing this with all of the other sorts of bodies on up to and including an empty space body.

So too may he turn his own body into:

The body of a being;
 The body of a land;
 The body received as karmic retribution;
 The body of a *śrāvaka*-disciple;
 The body of a *pratyekabuddha*;
 The body of a bodhisattva;
 The body of a *tathāgata*;
 The knowledge body;
 The Dharma body;
 Or an empty space body.

b. THE BODHISATTVA'S KNOWLEDGE OF BEINGS' BODIES

This bodhisattva knows beings' bodies associated with the accumulation of karmic deeds, their karmic retribution bodies, their bodies associated with the afflictions, their form-realm bodies, and their formless-realm bodies.

c. THE BODHISATTVA'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE BODIES OF LANDS

He also knows with regard to the lands of buddhas:

Their characteristics when small;
 Their characteristics when large;
 Their characteristics when defiled;
 Their characteristics when pure;
 Their characteristics when immeasurable;

Their characteristics when vast;
 Their characteristics when inverted;
 Their characteristics when flat;
 Their characteristics when curved;
 Their characteristics when associated with a particular spatial direction;
 And their characteristics when associated with different spatial directions.

d. HIS KNOWLEDGE OF RETRIBUTION, 2-VEHICLES, AND BODHISATTVA BODIES

He knows with respect to karmic retribution bodies the distinctions in the conventional names applied to them, knows with respect to the bodies of *śrāvaka*-disciples the distinctions in the conventional names applied to them, knows with respect to the bodies of *pratyekabuddhas* the distinctions in the conventional names applied to them, and knows with respect to the bodies of bodhisattvas the distinctions in the conventional names applied to them.

e. THE BODHISATTVA'S KNOWLEDGE OF TATHĀGATAS' BODIES

So, too, he knows with respect to the bodies of *tathāgatas* the distinctions associated with them. Thus he knows their possession of:

Bodhi bodies;
 Bodies associated with vows;
 Transformationally produced bodies;
 Bodies sustained with spiritual powers;
 Bodies graced with the major marks and subsidiary signs;
 Bodies possessed of strength;
 Mind-generated bodies;
 Merit bodies;
 The knowledge body;
 And the Dharma body.

He skillfully distinguishes and discourses in accordance with reality on the characteristic features of all of these bodies. He knows with respect to the Dharma body its characteristics of uniform equality and indestructibility and knows with respect to empty space bodies their quality of immeasurability, their quality of universal pervasion, and their quality of formlessness.

21. THE BODHISATTVA'S ACQUISITION OF TEN KINDS OF SOVEREIGN MASTERY

(o) Having developed a skillful knowing with regard to the arising of all of these bodies, this bodhisattva then acquires:

Sovereign mastery in lifespan;
 Sovereign mastery of mind;
 Sovereign mastery in wealth;
 Sovereign mastery in karmic deeds;
 Sovereign mastery in births;
 Sovereign mastery in vows;
 Sovereign mastery in resolute faith;
 Sovereign mastery in psychic power;
 Sovereign mastery in knowledge;
 And sovereign mastery in Dharma.

(P) Having acquired these ten types of bodhisattva sovereign mastery, this bodhisattva then immediately becomes one whose knowledge is inconceivable, one whose knowledge is measureless, one whose knowledge is vast, and one whose knowledge is invincible.

22. TEN CHARACTERISTIC ASPECTS OF THIS EIGHTH GROUND BODHISATTVA

According with just such wisdom as this, the bodhisattva thereby becomes:

One who remains ultimately and always pure;
 One who remains entirely free of karmic transgressions in his physical karmic deeds, verbal karmic deeds, and mental karmic deeds;
 One in whom his physical karmic deeds are carried forth in accordance with knowledge, his verbal karmic deeds are carried forth in accordance with knowledge, and his mental karmic deeds are carried forth in accordance with knowledge;
 One in whom the *prajñāpāramitā* is dominant;
 One who takes the great compassion as what is foremost;
 One who skillfully cultivates expedient means;
 One who skillfully brings forth the vows;
 One who is well protected by the spiritual superknowledges of all buddhas;
 One who never abandons his practice of that knowledge through which he carries on the practice of benefiting beings;
 And one who completely knows the different phenomena occurring within all the boundlessly many worlds.

Sons of the Buddha, to state this in terms of the most essential point, this bodhisattva dwelling on the Ground of Immovability is able to gather all dharmas of the Buddha in all that he accomplishes through his physical, verbal, and mental deeds.

23. TEN TYPES OF POWER IN WHICH THIS BODHISATTVA IS WELL ESTABLISHED

Having reached this ground, this bodhisattva:

- Is well established in the power of the pure mind through abandoning all afflictions;
- Is well established in the power of the resolute intentions²⁴² through his mind's never departing from the path;
- Is well established in the power of the great compassion through never forsaking beings.
- Is well established in the power of the great kindness through rescuing the inhabitants of all worlds;
- Is well established in the power of the *dhāraṇīs* through never forgetting Dharma he has heard;
- Is well established in the power of eloquence through distinguishing and selectively choosing from among all dharmas of the Buddha;
- Is well established in the power of the spiritual superknowledges through coursing in boundlessly many different worlds;
- Is well established in the power of vows through never abandoning anything practiced by bodhisattvas;
- Is well established in the power of the *pāramitās* through cultivating and accumulating all dharmas of the Buddha;
- And is well established in the sustaining power of the Tathāgata²⁴³ through his skillful development of the knowledge of all modes.

Because this bodhisattva has acquired powers of knowledge such as these, he remains free of fault in any of the endeavors that he brings forth.

24. THE TEN NAMES OF THIS EIGHTH BODHISATTVA GROUND

(Q) Sons of the Buddha, regarding this ground:

- Because the bodhisattva *mahāsattvas* dwelling on this ground are invincible, it is known as the Ground of Immovability;
- Because they are irreversible in their wisdom it is known as the ground of irreversibility;
- Because no one in the entire world can fathom it, it is known as the ground of awe-inspiring qualities;
- Because it is free of the faults associated with the home life, it is known as the ground of the prince;²⁴⁴
- Because they possess sovereign mastery in accomplishing everything they turn their mind to, it is known as the ground of the bodhisattva's birth;

Because there is nothing more to be done, it is known as the ground of completion;
 Because they are skillful in investigation with knowledge, it is known as the ultimate ground;
 Because they are skillful in bringing forth great vows, it is known as the ground of transformations;
 Because they are invincible in all dharmas, this ground is known as the place of victory;²⁴⁵
 And because they have skillfully cultivated and developed the earlier phases of the path, it is known as the power of effortlessness ground.

25. ADDITIONAL 8TH GROUND BODHISATTVA QUALITIES AND PRACTICE ASPECTS

(R) Sons of the Buddha, when the bodhisattva *mahāsattvas* acquire wisdom such as this, they are said to thereby gain entry into the realms of the Buddhas, are said to become illuminated by the light of the Buddha's meritorious qualities, and are said to become accordant in their practice with the awe-inspiring deportment of the Buddha. They then progress toward the Dharma of buddhahood, are always well protected by the spiritual power of all buddhas, and are respectfully received by the Four Heavenly Kings, Śakra Devānām Indra, the Brahma Heaven King, and others of this sort while also always being surrounded and served by a protective coterie of traceless vajra-wielding guardian spirits.

They are well able then to generate all of the deep *dhyāna* absorptions and are well able to create countless different bodies, all of which bodies are then invested with powerful capacities, all of which acquire the power of superknowledges as karmically generated effects, all of which achieve sovereign mastery in boundlessly many samādhis, all of which become able to receive the bestowal of countless predictions, and all of which manifest the achievement of *anuttarasamyakṣambodhi* in circumstances adapted to the beings wherever this facilitates their complete development.

Having entered into such great wisdom as this, this bodhisattva skillfully achieves a penetrating comprehension of all dharmas, always sends forth the light of great wisdom, and moves along a path of unimpeded movement throughout the Dharma realm. He knows well the distinctions in the destinies associated with the worldly dharmas, is able to manifest all of the meritorious qualities, has sovereign mastery in whatever he directs his mind to, well understands both the past and the future, is able

to enter into the knowledge that turns back those ensconced in the paths of the *māras*, enters the realms in which the Tathāgata courses, and is able to practice the bodhisattva path in boundlessly many worlds. Because it is characterized by irreversibility, this ground is referred to as the Ground of Immovability.

26. THE BODHISATTVA'S SEEING AND SERVING OF COUNTLESS BUDDHAS

(S) Sons of the Buddha, because the bodhisattva *mahāsattvas* dwelling on the Ground of Immovability skillfully bring forth the power of *dhyāna* absorptions, they never depart from their viewing of all of the boundlessly many buddhas even as they never abandon their practice of making gifts of material offerings and providing sustaining support to the Buddhas.

In each and every kalpa and in all worlds, this bodhisattva sees many hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of incalculably and boundlessly many *asaṃkhyeyas* of buddhas. He makes offerings to them, pays them reverence, venerates them, and praises them. He acquires everything used as offerings and then uses them to present offerings to them.

27. THE BODHISATTVA'S FURTHER ACQUISITION OF BUDDHAS' DHARMA LIGHT

He draws close to all buddhas and receives from all buddhas the light with which to illuminate the differences among worlds and other such dharmas. This person enters ever more deeply into the Dharma treasury of the Tathāgata. In this, he becomes such that no one questioning him on matters related to the differences in world realms could ever come to the end of his understanding, for it could never be exhaustively narrated even in hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of kalpas.

28. THE RADIANCE OF GOOD ROOTS LIKENED TO A SAGE KING'S ADORNMENTS

Additionally, his roots of goodness become ever more supreme in their radiance and purity in the same way that occurs with the smelting of real gold and its skillful inlaying with various gems. After it has been made into a precious strand of jewels to be worn around the neck of the lord of the four continents, it becomes a precious object of a sort that none owned by anyone else on the continent of Jambudvīpa could ever rival its brilliance.

Sons of the Buddha, so too it is with this bodhisattva *mahāsattva* for, as he dwells on this Ground of Immovability, his roots of goodness become ever more superior in their radiance and purity, becoming such that *śrāvaka*-disciples, *pratyekabuddhas*, and even seventh-ground bodhisattvas cannot surpass them. Because the

bodhisattva dwelling on this ground skillfully distinguishes the gateways to knowledge, the light of his wisdom extinguishes the fevers of beings' afflictions.

29. THIS BODHISATVA'S RADIANCE LIKE THAT OF A BRAHMA HEAVEN KING

Sons of the Buddha, he is comparable in this to the king of the Great Brahma Heaven, the lord of a thousand worlds, who is able in but a moment to stream forth his thoughts of compassion in a way that causes them to entirely fill all of those thousand worlds even as he is also able to send forth light to entirely illuminate all places therein.

Sons of the Buddha, so too it is with this bodhisattva *mahāsattva* who abides on the Ground of Immovability, for he is able to send forth light from his body that illuminates beings in worlds as numerous as the atoms in the worlds of ten myriads of trichilio-cosms which is then able to extinguish the fevers of all their afflictions and cause them to experience clarity and coolness.

30. VAJRAGARBHĀ'S FINAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE 8TH GROUND BODHISATVA

Sons of the Buddha, this has been a summary explanation of the bodhisattva *mahāsattva's* Ground of Immovability. Were one to describe it extensively, one could never reach the end of that presentation even by continuing it for measurelessly many kalpas.

a. THE BODHISATVA'S STATION AND DHARMA PRACTICE

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground often serves as a king of the Great Brahma Heaven, the lord over a thousand worlds. There, equipped with acutely sharp faculties, he endlessly bestows teachings on beings including *śrāvaka*-disciples and *pratyekabuddhas*, teachings on the causes and conditions of the path of the *pāramitās*. No one is able to prevail over him in discussions on the distinctions among world realms.

b. THE BODHISATVA'S MINDFULNESS

In all of the good karmic works that he pursues, whether it be through giving, pleasing words, beneficial actions, or joint endeavors, he never departs from mindfulness of the Buddha, mindfulness of the Dharma, mindfulness of his bodhisattva companions, and so forth until we come to his never departing from mindfulness of his quest to acquire the knowledge of all modes.

c. THE BODHISATTVA'S ASPIRATION TO SERVE BEINGS

He always reflects, "Oh, when will I finally become able to serve beings as a leader, as one who, in this, becomes worthy of veneration?" and so forth until we come to his thinking, "Oh, when will I finally become one upon whom all beings can rely?"

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

If this bodhisattva wishes to apply himself to the diligent practice of vigor, then, in but a moment, he acquires samādhis as numerous as the atoms in the worlds within hundreds of myriads of trichiliocosms, and so forth on up to his ability to manifest bodhisattvas in his retinue as numerous as the atoms in the worlds existing within hundreds of myriads of trichiliocosms.

(1) Were he to avail himself of the power of vows, through sovereign mastery in the spiritual superknowledges, he could manifest these phenomena in numbers even greater than this so large that one could never calculate them even in however many hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of *nayutas* of kalpas one might attempt to do so.

31. VAJRAGARBHA BODHISATTVA'S SUMMARIZING VERSES

At that time, Vajragarbha Bodhisattva, wishing to once again make clear these meanings, thereupon uttered verses, saying:

The bodhisattva dwelling on the seventh ground
who has already acquired skillful means and wisdom,
who has thoroughly gathered the dharmas assisting the path,
who is bound by great vows,

who is under the protection of all buddhas' spiritual powers,
and whose roots of goodness have all become completely developed,
because he seeks to acquire the supreme knowledge,
he then becomes able to enter the eighth ground. (12)

He skillfully accumulates merit and knowledge²⁴⁶
while also being possessed of deep kindness and compassion.
He transcends entirely the range of merely measurable thought
through the possession of a mind like empty space.

His mind reaches decisive and resolute power
accordant with the Dharma as it was actually proclaimed.
Thus he achieves realization of the quiescent
and sublime unproduced-dharmas patience. (13)

He knows that all dharmas, from their very origin onward,
are neither produced nor destroyed,
are signless and uncreated,
and are neither lost nor continuing onward.

He knows all dharmas as, in the beginning, middle, and end,
indistinguishable from suchness.

He is free of any activity of the intellectual mind
and, in this, he is like empty space. (14)

Having perfected patience such as this,
he becomes free of any sort of frivolous theoretical ideation
and acquires this Ground of Immovability
and the practice of its extremely deep quiescence

that no one in the entire world
could ever fathom,
for he has already utterly destroyed
all characteristic features of thought. (15)

The bodhisattva abiding on this ground
is free of the mind consciousness's discriminations and in this is
just like one who has entered the complete cessation absorption
who thereby becomes free of recollective thought's discriminations.

He is like someone immersed in a dream wherein,
with fearful urgency, he is striving to finish fording a river.
When awakened from this, his mind experiences immense relief,
realizing then that there is really nothing at all that needs be done.

Once he has acquired this profoundly deep patience,
all thinking then becomes extinguished in him.
With this, he then becomes comparable to a Brahma Heaven king
who has become entirely free of the desire realm's afflictions. (16)

From the very beginning, he is protected by the power of his vows.
The Buddhas now manifest to him and encourage him, saying:
"It is this very patience, the foremost among them all,
that is a position assumed by all buddhas.

Our deep knowledge and powers,
our fearlessnesses, and our dharmas exclusive to the Buddhas—
given that you do not yet possess these yourself,
you must bring forth diligence and vigor to acquire them. (17)

Although you have now succeeded in extinguishing
all fires originating with the afflictions,
you should nonetheless contemplate that, in all worlds,
the fires of the afflictions still always blaze on fiercely.

You should call to mind the vows you originally brought forth
in which you aspired to serve the benefit of all beings,
vowed to acquire the universal knowing of all dharmas,
and vowed to engage then in the vast work of liberating everyone. (18)

The actual character of the nature of dharmas
is that it is eternally abiding and unchanging.
Even followers of the Two Vehicles succeed in realizing this.
Thus being known as a buddha is not due merely to achieving this.

It is solely due to having acquired their unimpeded,
extremely profound, and sublime knowledge along with their
utterly penetrating comprehension of the three periods of time
that one can then be known as a buddha. (19)

It is these eminences who are the equal of even the unequaled
and who are those revered by both devas and humans
who have opened these many gateways to knowledge,
thereby allowing them to enter the Dharma of the Buddhas
and completely develop the boundless, bottomless,
immeasurable, and sublime wisdom.

With this, the entirety of all of his earlier practice of dharmas
cannot match a single instant of that in which he now courses. (20)

It is in this way that the bodhisattvas
succeed in reaching the ground of sublime wisdom
and become able in but a single instant,
to send forth their bodies everywhere throughout the ten directions.

They thereby enter the gate of wisdom
and progress on the path with unimpeded swiftness
just as when, as one sails along across the great sea,
the power of the wind causes one to move forth rapidly. (21)

He then entirely abandons all deliberately effortful thought,
resides solely within karmic works guided by knowledge,
and contemplates the worlds of the ten directions,
observing their creation, their destruction, and their abiding.

He is able to know the unity of the four elements
while also knowing all of the differences therein,
their characteristics when small, when large, and when measureless,
as well as all their different sorts of differentiating aspects. (22)

He is able even to calculate all of the atoms comprising
the worlds within a great trichiliocosm
while also being able to know of all of those beings' bodies
and, of the four great elements, the number of atoms therein.

The bodies of all devas, the many jewels,
and the varying number of atoms comprising each type—
He entirely and everywhere illuminates all of these factors,
and also knows all other such factors as well. {23}

Due to the causes and conditions associated with wisdom,
his mind becomes ever more subdued and pliant.
In order to serve the benefit of all beings,
he everywhere manifests bodies in all worlds.

He is able to appear in the body of a being
and thereby make it into his own body,
doing so as well in the lands of all buddhas
in which he manifests all of the other different sorts of bodies. {24}

Just as the sun and moon, following the cosmic winds,
display their reflections on the surface of all waters,
so too the bodhisattva,
following the breeze of wisdom,
always abides in the Dharma realm,
completely clear and motionless,
and, for beings with pure minds,
manifests for each of them the appearance of his body. {25}

Adapting to their minds' predilections,²⁴⁷
he thus presents the appearance of taking on births
and, within all congregations of men and devas,
he manifests his bodies there.

The bodhisattva exercises sovereign mastery in this
wherever the causes and conditions come together,
even to the point of being able, in accordance with his wishes,
to manifest the body of a buddha for them. {26}

He manifests bodies of beings, physical bodies of lands,
karmic retribution bodies, bodies of worthies and *āryas*,
the knowledge body, and the Dharma body, doing so
while knowing that they are all of the same uniform equality.

Availing himself of these causes and conditions,
he is able at will to implement spiritual superknowledges
to inspire joyous delight among the inhabitants of the world
by thus manifesting for them many different sorts of bodies. {27}

He is able to acquire ten varieties
of sublime and great sovereign mastery of knowledge.
Whatever he does is carried forth in accordance with knowledge
and in compliance with the minds of kindness and compassion.

He is able to skillfully cultivate and implement
all dharmas of all buddhas
as he abides within the three types of pure karmic actions,
remaining as unmoving in doing so as Mount Sumeru itself. (28)

He is able to acquire all ten of the powers
possessed by the great bodhisattvas
and becomes one whom none of Māra's hordes
could ever cause to turn back in retreat.

He is always protected by all buddhas,
receives the reverential obeisance of Śakra and Brahmā,
and is always followed, served, and guarded
by traceless vajra-wielding spirits. (29)

The bodhisattva who has reached this ground
acquires so countless many meritorious qualities that,
even in hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭis* of kalpas,
one could never finish describing them.

He becomes able to draw close to countless buddhas,
and so increase his roots of goodness that their radiance
becomes like that of the real gold inlaid with various jewels
that adorns the neck of a king. (30)

The bodhisattva dwelling on this ground
often becomes a king of the Great Brahma Heaven
who rules over a thousand lands,
one who is possessed of immeasurably vast merit and wealth
and who is able to deploy the teachings of the Three Vehicles,
doing so with an inexhaustible capacity to explain their meanings.
The light from his mind of kindness everywhere illuminates
and dispels the fever of all beings' afflictions. (31)

Should he wish to do so, he is able,
in but a single moment, to acquire samādhis
as numerous as the atoms contained in
the worlds within a hundred great trichiliocosms.

He is also able to see buddhas throughout the ten directions
in equally great numbers as this, and,
should he wish to avail himself of the power of his vows,
the numbers would extend beyond this, becoming immeasurable. (32)

We have now come to the conclusion of this summary explanation
of the eighth ground's marvelous aspects.

Were one to carry forth with a vast proclamation of this,
one could never finish it even in a thousand *koṭis* of kalpas. (33)