



The Lankavatara Sutra

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Lankavatara Sutra

The Heart of Buddhism

**Translated from the original Sanskrit
By Thomas Cleary**

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Translator's Introduction

The *Lankavatara sutra* is one of the most significant and most sophisticated of the surviving scriptures of the Sanskrit Buddhist canon. Its full title is *Saddharma-Lankavatara-sutra*, meaning scripture on the entry of true teaching into Sri Lanka. Of comparatively late composition, it provides keys to contextualization and interpretation of different doctrines and practices of pan-Buddhism, particularly in distinguishing dogmatism from design:

“This scripture has multiple meanings to guide recipients of all dispositions, not disputation that is actually contradictory.”

“The teachings indicated in all the scriptures are appeasements for subjective imaginations of ignorant people, not disputation intended to establish ultimate knowledge as it is in reality. Therefore one should follow meaning, not adherence to the expression of teachings.”

“The word of the Buddha has no statement.”

“Ultimate truth is not a statement, nor is ultimate truth what is expressed by a statement.”

“The leading principle of the goal is distinguished by first-hand experience, beyond speech, imagination, and words, reaching the realm where there is no impulse, the inherent characteristic of arrival at the stage of first-hand realization, excluding all the destructive forces of speculation and dogmatism.”

“The leading principle of instruction is discerning accommodation to people’s conditions.”

“The teachings are not literal, and yet Buddhas do not present them for no reason. They present them in consideration of mental construction. Without material to use, instruction in all the teachings would disappear. The great bodhisattvas should be free of obsession with the articulation of the recital of teaching. The recital of teaching has different meanings on account of the engagement of people’s mentalities.”

“Just as if someone points out something to someone with a finger, and the latter looks only at the fingertip, in the same way ignorant ordinary people, as if of infantile disposition, will go to their death adhering to the fingertip of meaning as articulated, and will not arrive at the ultimate meaning beyond the fingertip of expression. Just as the ignorant one fixated on the pointing fingertip does not apprehend the moon, so does one attached to the letter not know my truth.”

“As a physician prescribes the type of treatment according to the illness, and there is no division in the science but treatment is distinguished by the type of illness, so do I teach the family of beings according to the afflictions with which they are troubled, after having ascertained the powers of beings’ capacities.”

In general, this scripture emphasizes emancipation from deception by understanding of the non-objective character of conditioned subjectivity immersed in acquired habits of thought mistaking cognitive interpretation for external reality:

“The occurrence of thought is bound by impressions of imagination; for what is attributed to the world is only mental but appears external to people.”

“One imagines falsely when thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness are immersed in the appearance of self-existence of external things.”

“Cognition with mind tied to objects takes place in thought. Insight, though, operates in the domain of essence without image. Imagined identity imposed on the relative is not really there; the imagined is grasped by confusion; the relative is not imagined.”

Taken in fragments, this teaching has historically been confused with subjective idealism, or interpreted to deny the reality of the external world, or to say that nothing exists. Chan Buddhist classics make a particular point of demonstrating the error of this type of exaggeration, in part because Chinese translations of the *Lankavatara* do not distinguish certain critical Sanskrit terms and thus are more prone to misinterpretation. The original scripture

rigorously rejects nihilism and does not ultimately deny either self or world:

“A square is established; how could it be, if there is no form? If there is no inside and outside, consciousness does not operate.”

“Beans don’t sprout from sesame seed, rice does not produce barley, wheat and corn are of different kinds.”

“A totality of conditions starts and stops; no separate existent is born or passes away from the totality. There is no separate existence at all relative to the totality as a unity, singly, as imagined by philosophers.”

“Though form is there, there is no vision in the formless realm. Its absence is not the aim, nor the vehicle, nor the journey.”

“The inherent formation of matter is due to conditions, without a true state; the supreme ultimate existence, Brahma, I say is this matter.”

“Confused thinkers without guidance are in a cave of consciousness running hither and thither seeking to explain the self. The pure self has to be realized first hand; that is the matrix of realization, inaccessible to speculative thinkers.”

“If there is no self, how can phenomena such as illusion be or not be?”

“The mind is naturally shining; intellect and so on are otherwise—the actions accumulated by them are why they both are afflicted. The shining self is defiled by adventitious afflictions without beginning, and when in that condition is cleaned like a garment. Just as clothing, or gold, freed of defect by absence of impurity, does not disappear but remains, likewise the self without faults.”

“This explanation of self, standing out like the blaze at the end of an eon, outshines the forest-fire of selflessness, freed from the faults of dogma.”

The *Lankavatara sutra* was composed in a time known for developments in mathematics, astronomy, logic, philosophy, religion,

and law. Conscious of this, the scripture uses associated categories of thought to turn human consciousness on itself. Early on in the discourse the scripture indirectly illustrates its central concern by posing unanswered questions designed to draw attention to relativity and context in definitions, structures, measures, and measurement. The scripture also plays with a complex multiplicity of meanings for one and zero to show the many roles that underlying attitudes of affirmation and denial may play in the formation of consciousness, social organization, cultural development, and their relation to each other and the material world.

The scripture applies the same analysis to mental states and phenomena associated with meditation and mysticism. This is often addressed to yogis and Buddhist “hearers,” or followers of the lesser path leading to individual nirvana: “Extinction of perception and sense is not suitable for transcending the conditions of subjective mental objects, because of being mental content.” To yogis, the scripture describes those who “elicit super-knowledges seeking godhood,” as “ignorant,” and for Buddhists it differentiates practitioners of Mahayana or Great Vehicle Buddhism from the hearers who are “seekers of nirvana for their own pleasure.” Buddha

declares, “I do not attain nirvana by a thing, an act, or a form; I attain nirvana when consciousness grounded in false imagination ceases. On its account, having seized on it, connected to the course of the intellect, it gives rise to thought and fixated consciousness.”

The habit of propitiating deities for personal or political profit, resurgent in the era of the scripture’s composition, is also attributed by this analysis to exploitation of the influence of suggestion: “The materialist inspiration of various formulas deludes the unenlightened by various expressions of purpose. It is not reasonable, or beneficial, yet he teaches any nonsensical prattle whatever; for this reason it is called the inspiration of sundry spells of the materialist.”

The primarily pragmatic nature of the Buddha’s renunciation of hallowed dogma, emphasized in this *Lankavatara* scripture, is illustrated with concrete examples in a story told in the Buddhist scripture *Mahaparinirvana-sutra*, which was composed in the same historical era. This story lampoons the ad hoc usage of philosophical and religious constructs to rationalize or justify destructive human actions.

The scripture tells of a “corrupt and evil king who liked killing, who violated all precepts of speech, whose mind was inflamed with greed, anger, and folly, who only saw the present and didn’t see the future, only associated with bad people, and was fixated on the pleasures of the present world.” He was so bad he “murdered his innocent father,” but afterwards he was “consumed by guilt” and stopped consorting with his courtesans.

This spontaneous revolution of conscience represents a glimpse of the enlightened nature believed to be inherent in all beings. Losing his ability to enjoy ordinary pleasures, the guilt-ridden king also broke out in sores all over his body, sores so foul smelling that no one could get near him. The king’s mother applied a variety of medicaments, but the sores only got worse. The king told her that his disease was mental in origin, not physical, so he couldn’t be cured.

Then a minister of state came to the king and asked why he was so worn out with sadness and looked so unhappy—was it physical pain or mental pain?

How could he not be in both physical and mental pain, replied the king, when he had killed his own father? A wise man had told him, the king explained further, that killing one's father is a sin that condemns the killer to hell with no way out.

The minister urges the king not to be so sad and so miserable, lest his condition worsen.

He recommends a "great healer" who is "omniscient, has attained mastery of meditation, is perfectly pure in conduct, and expounds the path to supreme nirvana." According to the minister, the doctrine of this healer is that there are no evil actions, and no consequences of evil actions; no good actions and no consequences of good actions; no actions both good and bad, and no good and bad consequences of actions; and likewise no higher action or lower action.

Another minister of state comes forward and says that there are two laws, the law of renunciants and the law of kings; and in the law of kings it is no sin to kill your father, because then you get to be king. This minister recommends a "great teacher" who is "omniscient, as compassionate toward all beings as toward an infant, beyond psychological afflictions himself, able to remove the arrows of greed,

animosity, and folly for others, uniquely perceptive of what no one else perceives.” His doctrine is that all beings’ bodies are composed of seven parts: earth, water, fire, air, pain, pleasure, and life. These are neither evolved nor produced, and cannot be destroyed. Like all the other parts, life cannot be destroyed, because there is no one who kills and no one who dies. So there is no perpetrator or victim, no persuasion or argument, no one with the intent, and no one who incites. According to the minister recommending this sage, “Expounding this doctrine, he enables people to totally annihilate countless grave sins.”

Another minister of state comes forward and urges the king not to grieve, rephrasing the idea of two distinct domains of law, worldly and transcendental. “If your father the king were cultivating liberation, then it would have been a sin to kill him; but if he was administering secular law, then it is no sin to kill him.” He also invokes a deterministic idea of *karma*, assuring the king, “All people have residual karma, and because of the conditions of karma they repeatedly undergo birth and death. If the late king had residual karma, and Your Majesty now has killed him, after all what sin is there in that?”

This minister recommends a philosopher “whose knowledge is as deep and wide as an ocean,” who has great charisma and miraculous powers, who is “able to free people from the web of doubt,” and who “knows, sees, and realizes what no one else does.” This philosopher’s doctrine is represented in these terms: “A king is free to do as he will, good or bad. Whatever evils he may perpetrate, he is completely sinless. A king is like fire, burning things without question of purity or impurity. A king is like earth, which carries everything, clean or dirty, without anger or joy. A king is like water, washing everything clean or dirty, without sorrow or joy. A king is like the wind, blowing equally on the pure and polluted without sorrow or joy. Just as autumn denudes trees, then they regrow in spring, so it is really no sin to denude or cut them down, so it is with all beings: when their life ends here, they are reborn here. What sin is involved?”

Now another minister comes forward and reels off a list of other kings who assumed their thrones by killing their fathers, and says that none of them were troubled in mind by what they had done. “Even if you speak of hells, ghosts, and heavens,” he notes, “who

has ever seen them?” There are only two kinds of beings, the minister goes on, human and animal; and they are not born for any reason and do not die for any reason—so what good and evil are there?

This minister recommends another supposedly omniscient philosopher, who “looks upon gold and earth as equal.” If someone cut off his right arm and someone else anointed his left arm with sandalwood perfume, according to the minister, the philosopher’s attitude toward the two would be no different; he looks upon enemy and friend as equal, with no difference in his mind. He is always in a state of concentration, whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down; his mind is never distracted.

This philosopher’s doctrine is summarized as the nonexistence of any sin or virtue at all. To injure or kill, or get others to injure or kill; to steal or get others to steal; to rape or let others rape; to lie or have others lie; to drink alcohol or get others to drink; to slaughter a whole village, a whole city, a whole country, even to kill all people, or to give charity to everyone south of the Ganges River and kill everyone north of the Ganges, is all entirely without either sin or virtue,

according to this philosophy; there is no use for morality or meditation.

Then another minister comes forth and declares, “Who said there are hells? Who created anything? As water is naturally wet, stone is naturally hard, wind is naturally in movement, and fire is naturally hot, so all beings are born and die spontaneously, of themselves—who creates them? There really is no killing. If there is a soul, it really can’t be hurt; and if there is no soul, there’s nothing to be hurt. If there is a soul, it is constant, unchanging, and eternal, so it cannot be killed. It is indestructible, unbound, and unemotional, like space—how could there be any sin of killing?”

This minister goes on to say that if there is no self or soul, then everything is impermanent and passes away moment to moment. Therefore killer and killed both pass away moment to moment—so who can have any sin? It is like fire burning wood, he tells the king—the fire is blameless. It is like a sickle cutting grass—the sickle is blameless. When a sword kills a man, the sword has no sin, so how could a person? When poison kills a man, the poison has no sin, so how could a person? So in this view there really is no killing, no sin.

This minister recommends yet another supposedly omniscient guru, who “comprehends past, present, and future,” can “see infinite worlds in an instant,” and can “purify people of all sins.” This guru’s teaching is that even if someone kills all living beings, if he has no regret or shame he never falls into evil states, just as space is not affected by dust or water. If he has regret and shame, then he will fall into hell, like a river flooding the land.

According to this philosopher, people are all created by God. When God is pleased, people are happy; and when God is angry, people are miserable. Condemnation and blessing are works of God; how can it be said that people are sinful or virtuous? When a craftsman makes puppets, they can walk, sit, stand, and recline, but they cannot speak. God is like the craftsman, people are like the puppets. Created like this, who could have any sin?

Now another minister steps up and says to the king, “There are foolish people in the world who go through a hundred joys and a hundred sorrows in the space of a single day, who doze a hundred times and wake up a hundred times, are startled a hundred times

and lament a hundred times. People of wisdom have no such things —so why are you so sad?”

“Don’t burden yourself with grief,” the minister tells the king:

“*Ksatriya* means the governing caste. If it is done for the country, for the ascetics and priests, for the peace of the populace, then even killing is not sinful. The former king may have respected Buddhist ascetics, but he could not attend the Brahmins; his heart was not egalitarian, so he was not a *ksatriya*. Since you killed your father out of desire to support the Brahmins, what sin is there in that? There really is no such thing as killing. Killing means killing life, and life is air. The nature of air cannot be slain, so how can there be the sin of destroying life?”

This minister then recommends his own favorite sage, also alleged to be omniscient, who “pities all people, discerns all people’s potentials, knows all expedients, is unaffected by mundane phenomena, is serene and chaste.” This philosopher’s doctrine is that there is no charity, no virtue, no father, no mother, no present world, no future world, no sainthood, no practice, no path. All beings naturally gain liberation after eighty thousand eons in the cycle of

birth and death, whether or not they are sinful, just like rivers merging in the ocean.

The common flaw in all of these rationalizations, the Buddhist sutra concludes, is that they only aim to quiet the conscience, and do not lead to conscientiousness through understanding of consequences. This story is meant to illustrate the manner in which religious and philosophical concepts can become facilitators of personal and social pathology when applied solely to the purpose of self-justification. The ancient idea of divinity of kings, for example, which lingered in Europe even through the Renaissance under the rubric of the divine right of kings, is also explicitly stated in traditional Hindu law. This imaginary right, egomania personified, institutionalized, and armed, is precisely what prince Siddhartha renounced when he gave up his royal heritage to seek enlightenment, eventually to become Buddha. Buddhism as elucidated in the *Lankavatara-sutra* does not recognize any constructed religious or philosophical dogma or description of social or metaphysical reality as divine or absolute, not only in retrospective realization of the perils of unwitting ignorance through total immersion, but by acknowledging the

relativity of subject and object in the processes of perception and cognition that inform thought and action.

The understanding that imaginary and relative realities are not absolute does not cause them to disappear from individual and common experience, nonetheless, so while the *Lankavatara sutra* is essentially trans-historical and addressed to the greater community, including Hindu priests, philosophers, and yogis as well as lay people of unspecified religious affiliation, some historically conditioned material is included to respond to Brahmin criticisms and to reform certain habits of Buddhist beggars.

Buddhist methodology associates the *sutra* class of literature with meditation and concentration. In practice sutras are designed to be read right through so as to produce the phenomenon of concentration preparatory to practicing contemplative exercises. The complementary function of this preliminary exercise is to collect an adequate range of information from a nonlinear array for the concentrated mind to crystallize efficiently in the structures set up by the contents of the sutras, thereby to acquire active access to these perspectives as available media of meditation and observation.

This is particularly important in the utilization of the *Lankavatara-sutra*, which defines its own terms and uses the device of pressure and release, building up doubts gradually for sudden resolution

Lankavatara Sutra

AUM: Respect to the Three Jewels

AUM: Respect to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

I. Ravana's Request for Instruction

Thus have I heard: At one time the Blessed One sojourned at the stronghold of Lanka atop the Malaya mountains in the ocean, adorned with flowers of various kinds of jewels, together with a large group of mendicants, and a large number of bodhisattvas led by Mahamati, bodhisattvas who had assembled from various fields of enlightenment, who made playthings of numerous absorptions, masteries, powers, and superknowledges, who were consecrated by direct anointment by all Buddhas, conversant with the meaning of perception of objects as what is seen by one's own mind, holders of guidance and discipline indicated for the minds and habits of various beings, who had gotten the point of the five phenomena, the natures, the consciousnesses, and two-fold selflessness.

At that time, furthermore, the Blessed One had come from seven days at the palace of the king of sea dragons. With tens of millions

of Indras, Brahmas, and dragon maidens going forth to meet him, he beheld Lanka in Malaya and smiled. “Earlier Realized Ones too, worthies who arrived at reality, truly and completely enlightened, taught the principle of innate first-hand ultimate knowledge made accessible to wise logicians, listeners, and solitary illuminates, which I too intend to teach here, in recognition of Ravana, overlord of the Rakshasas, revealing it in the same way.”

Ravana, overlord of Rakshasas, heard through the empowerment of Buddha. “The Blessed One, indeed, having emerged from the palace of the king of the city of the sea, surrounded and attended by tens of millions of Indras, Brahmas, and dragon maidens, looking over the waves of the ocean, stood there and inspired those assembled, after having observed their thoughts, which were impelled into the range of waves of active consciousness on the water of the receptacle consciousness. Let me go invite the Blessed One into Lanka. That will redound to my benefit, advantage, and happiness in the long night, as well as those of deities and humans.”

Then Ravana, overlord of Rakshasas, mounted a flowery chariot with his attendants and went to where the Blessed One was. When

they arrived, he and his attendants dismounted from the chariot, circled the Blessed One three times to the right, and sang verses gracefully accompanied by music, a lute studded with coral and cat's eye, slung at the side by means of priceless perfumed pale cloth and played with a sapphire plectrum, producing a melody ranging through all the notes of the scale:

The formula of the guiding principle of the nature of mind, selflessness, beyond views, undefiled, indicating the attainment to be known first-hand: teach the formula of the principle, O Guide, here and now.

The Blissful One is the embodiment of amassed pure qualities, teaching by having created constructions while rapt in the reality of attainment that has to be known first-hand; now is the time to go to Lanka, O Sage.

Previous Victors lived in this Lanka, with their successors of many forms. Teach the supreme principle here, O Protector; the spirits of many forms will listen.

Then Ravana, overlord of Lanka, following up in a metre of four by twelve syllables, also sang in verse,

Having crossed the ocean in seven nights, the abode of sea monsters, the palace of the lord of the ocean, the Blessed One stands on the shore:

As the Buddha stands there, Ravana, together with apsaras, yakshas, and various savants such as Shuka and Sarana, goes magically to where the Guide stands; dismounting from their flowery vehicle, after bowing and making offerings to the Realized One, he is directed by the Lord of Victors to declare his name:

I here am Ravana, ten-headed Lord of rakshasas: favor me, and the inhabitants of Lanka here:

The realm of first-hand attainment has also been elucidated by perfectly enlightened ones of the past in the city on the jewel-studded summit:

Let the Blessed One too, there on the same bejeweled peak, teach the pure truth, surrounded by offspring of the Victor; now we too, and

the inhabitants of Lanka, wish to hear.

*The domain of first-hand attainment is free of doctrine and dogma:
the Lankavatara Sutra, indeed, has been praised by past Buddhas.*

*I remember this sutra being uttered by past Buddhas in the presence
of offspring of the Victors; let the Blessed One also enunciate it.*

*There will also be Buddhas and heirs of Buddhas in the future,
Guides who will teach this same sacred principle on the jeweled
peak, out of compassion for the Yakshas.*

*The wonderful city of Lanka is pleasant, adorned with multitudes of
various jewels, cooling, pleasant, making a network of jewels.*

*There are here, Blessed One, Yakshas free from the morbid element
of passion who contemplate the scope of first hand attainment, who
have provided for previous Buddhas, believe in the guidance of the
Great Vehicle, and discipline each other.*

The Yaksha girls and boys want to understand the Great Vehicle: let the Blessed One, the Teacher, come to Mount Malaya in Lanka.

The Rakshasas living in the city, headed by Kumbhakarna, want to hear of first-hand attainment, the Great Vehicle their ultimate resort.

Having acknowledged the authority of Buddhas, they will do so now too, for the sake of compassion for me; go to Lanka with your successors.

Accept, Great Sage, my home, and parties of nymphs, and assorted necklaces of pearls, and the pleasant Sorrowless grove.

I am a servant of the Buddhas and their successors; there is nothing I wouldn't give. Have compassion for me, O Great Sage."

Having heard this statement of his, the lord of the three realms of being said, "By past Guides too, O Lord of Yakshas, has first-hand truth been enunciated on the jeweled mountain, and you too are treated thus with compassion; those of the future too will speak on the jewel-adorned mountain. For this is the sanctuary of yogis who

experience evident truth. You deserve the compassion of the Blissful Ones, O Lord of Yakshas, and mine as well.”

Silently, calmly, the Blessed One mounted the flowery vehicle presented by Ravana. Thereupon Ravana, and the other fearless successors of the Victor, went to the city, feted by nymphs with amusing dances.

Having gone there to the pleasant city, again he received respect, honored by Ravana, and families of Yakshas, including the Yaksha women, and was honored with a net of jewels by Yaksha boys and girls. Ravana also placed pearl necklaces adorned with jewels on the necks of the Buddha, the Victorious One, and the successors of the Victorious One.

Having accepted the offering, the Blessed One and his wise successors contemplated the truth, the domain of first-hand attainment.

Ravana and the Yaksha families, having honored the best of speakers, paid respects to Mahamati and entreated him repeatedly,

“You are the one who asks all Buddhas about the realm of first-hand attainment. I am here listening, and the Yakshas and the successors of the Victorious One too; I entreat you, as do the Yakshas, and the wise successors of the Victorious One. You are the great speaker among speakers, motivator of the effort of yogis. I entreat you with devotion; inquire about the teaching, fearless one: Free of the fallacies of dogmatists, beyond solitary victors and listeners, individual purity of nature is what fosters the supreme stage of the enlightened.”

Then the Blessed One projected other wonderful jeweled mountains, adorned with tens of millions of jewels, showing himself individually on each mountain peak, with Ravana the Yaksha standing there on each one too.

At this, all those assemblies were seen in each place, all realms right there, and the leaders therein.

The like of Lanka was projected by the Victorious One; the lord of Rakshasas, and the residents of Lanka there, and others too, and the Sorrowless Grove that was there, beautiful for its woods. On

each mountain the Protector, urged by Mahamati, taught the Yaksha the teaching pointing to first-hand attainment; he taught the whole sutra, a hundred thousand lines, on the mountain.

Then the Teacher and his successors there disappeared, and Ravana the yaksha saw himself at home. He thought, "What is this? Who said this? By whom was it heard? What was seen, and by whom was it seen? Where is the blessed city? Where are those realms, those blessed Buddhas, brilliant as jewels? Was this a dream, or an illusion, a city conjured by sirens? A visual distortion, or a mirage? A dream, a fantasy? Or was it the smoke of a fire-wheel that I have seen here?"

"Or is this the nature of things in the domain of thought, not understood by the ignorant, who are deluded by pervasive imagination?"

"There is no seer and no seen, nothing said and no speaker, except this imagination, an acting out of the appearance of the qualities of Buddha; those who see as seen do not see the Guide."

“If one has the notion of inertia, one does not see Buddha either. When one sees in a state without excitement, Buddha is perfectly enlightened.”

Awakening with his assumption reversed to realization it was only objects of his own mind, the overlord of Lanka, determined to act without false imagination, impelled by previous roots of good, his intellect having consumed all sciences, perceiving accurately, not needing another’s guidance, skilled at consideration with his own intelligence, with vision beyond thought and opinion, not needing guidance from others, practitioner of great discipline, able to assume very many forms, having attained skill in expedient means, skilled in understanding the specific characteristics of the ascending continuum of all the stages of enlightenment, enjoying investigation of the nature of thought, intellect, and consciousness, with vision cutting through the three continuities [of the world, people, and actions], with an intellect beyond all dogmas of creation, having found within himself the stage of the enlightened that is the matrix of realization of verity, intelligence permanently awakened, heard from the sky a voice perceptible within himself:

“Congratulations, Overlord of Lanka; good for you! This is how a yogi is to learn, as you learn. This is how those who have reached reality are to be seen, and the teachings too, as seen by you. Being otherwise viewed assumes annihilation. You should contemplate all things detached from thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness, introspectively, not by immersion in the notion of external phenomena. And you should not become absorbed in views fallen within the range of the stated aims of listeners, solitary illuminates, and dogmatists. You should not become enamored of legends and myths, nor entertain the idea of inherent nature, not become intoxicated by rulership as king, as one who meditates the six meditations and beyond. This, Overlord of Lanka, is the clear understanding of yogis who refute the arguments of others, demolishing unsound opinions, skilled in excluding the idea of soul, skilled in subtly reversing perception, successors of the Victorious One, who have gone on the great journey. You should make effort to attain entry into the stage realized spontaneously first hand by those who arrive at reality.

“As you are doing so, Overlord of Lanka, this path you have taken will become more and more purifying, by attainment of skill in

concentration. It is not within the range of the bliss accessible to listeners, solitary illuminates, or dogmatists, as imagined by practitioners of yoga as taught by the ignorant, who are absorbed in self-serving definition of what is perceived, followers of elements, qualities, and substances, who are totally immersed in attachment to views based on ignorant assumptions, who dissociate emptiness and occurrence, who are immersed in imagination, whose interest is limited to description of what can be described.

“This leads to all forms of success, Lord of Lanka; this mastery of the Great Vehicle awakens one’s own first-hand attainment. It also makes for attainment of a better state of being as a result. This engagement of the Great Vehicle, O Lord of Lanka, disperses the various waves of consciousness like masses of clouds, not falling into the assumptions used by dogmatists. For the practice of dogmatists, O Lord of Lanka, proceeds from the self-attachment of dogmatists, from the tenacious opinion of dogmatists performing unsound practices on the assumption that consciousness and nature are two things. Very well, Lord of Lanka; you should reflect on the meaning of this. As you perceived from the vision of the Realized One, this is indeed the vision of the Realized.”

Now it occurred to Ravana, “May I again meet the Realized One, master of all methods, who refuses the disciplines of dogmatists, who manifests the range of first-hand attainment, who is detached from creations and creation, whose attainment of understanding is the attainment realized by yogis who master concentration methods when they practice. It is from his realization that the yogis’ word ‘yoga’ is adapted to imply attainment. So I want to see the Compassionate One, who extinguishes imaginings fueled by psychological afflictions; I want to see him by his magical power, surrounded by successors of the Victorious, penetrating the mental dispositions of all beings, everywhere, all-knowing, in whom all signs of ritual action have ceased. By seeing him, may I realize what I have not realized, and increase what I have realized, acting without vain imagination, enjoying attainment of blissful concentration leading to the stage of arrival at reality.”

Then, at that juncture, the Blessed One, knowing the lord of Lanka had attained acceptance of reality as not produced, again showed himself by means of his radiance, out of compassion for the ten-

headed one, on the mountain studded with very many jewels and spread with a net of jewels.

The ten-headed lord of Lanka saw, once again, brilliance become visible on the mountain: the Realized One, the Able, the Completely Enlightened, his body adorned with the thirty-two signs of excellence. And he saw himself too, on each and every mountain, in front of the Realized Ones, the perfectly enlightened ones, along with Mahamati, talking about the range of first-hand attainment of those who arrive at reality, surrounded by Yakshas, relating a recital of that teaching; and those realms included their leaders.

Then the Blessed One again looked upon the assembly—mentally, not with the physical eye—stretched like a lion king, laughed a great laugh, and, emitting a ray of light from the circle of hair between his brows, and from his blessed sides, thighs, hips, and body, glowing like the fire ending an eon, from every pore, a rainbow of fiery energy, blazing with a sphere of light like the rising sun, observed by the gods Indra, Brahma, and the guardians of the world in the sky, sat on the summit of the mountain, which resembled the peak of Mount Sumeru, and laughed a great laugh.

Then it occurred to those groups of bodhisattvas, and the gods Indra and Brahma, and the rest, “What is the cause, what is the reason, for the Blessed One, master of all truths, to smile and laugh a great laugh, and emanate a ray of light from his own body? Having radiated light, he became silent, his mind engrossed in absorption in the realm of his own first-hand ultimate knowledge, without being proud, contemplating Ravana’s discipline, attainment, and conduct, having surveyed the region with a lion’s gaze.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, previously entreated by Ravana, out of compassion, having acknowledged the mental disposition and thought process of the groups of people living for enlightenment, and considered the society of the future, as people attached to recitation of doctrine, engrossed in literal meaning, obsessed with all the disciplines and powers of listeners, solitary illuminates, and religious leaders, would become confused in mind, even the Buddhas in a state of inactive cognition laugh a great laugh; therefore in order to allay their curiosity he asked the Blessed One, “What is the cause, what is the reason, for the appearance of a smile?”

The Blessed One said, “Excellent, Mahamati, and well done! Having observed the nature of the world, you have undertaken to question me to enlighten the past, present, and future minds of people fallen into false views. This is how savants of my kind should question for their own and others’ sakes.

“Mahamati, this Ravana, Lord of Lanka, also asked past Buddhas two questions. Now wishing to ask me too, he should consider the description of the state defined by the two questions, which has not been tasted by any listeners, self-enlightened ones, or dogmatic practitioners of yoga. This ten-headed one who wants to ask will also ask Buddhas of the future.”

Knowing this, the Blessed One said to the lord of Lanka, “Ask, Lord of Lanka; you have my permission. Don’t hesitate, dominated by perplexity. Whatever you want, I will satisfy you with an explanation in answer to your question.

“As you are investigating the pleasure of the bliss of absorption in the characteristics of first-hand wisdom by means of searching

intelligence expert in the countermeasures of the stages while in a state of mind in which vain imagination has ceased, surrounded by concentration Buddhas, constant in the bliss of cessation, having gone beyond the sets of concentrations of listeners and solitary illuminates, established in the stages Immovable, Good Mind, and Clouds of Teaching, familiar with the selflessness of phenomena as is, you will obtain the state of anointment by the concentration Buddhas, on a giant jewel lotus throne.

“You will see yourself sitting with similar lotuses, those lotuses supporting your body in various situations, which you will see directly facing one other.

“This is an inconceivable perception, which is produced by a single skill of production, set on the stage of practice: having produced it by bringing forth mastery of skill in expedient means, you will attain that inconceivable sphere, and the stage of arrival at verity, capacity to change in many forms. You will attain what has never been seen by listeners, solitary illuminates, religious leaders, or the gods Brahma, Indra, Shiva, Vishnu, and so on.”

Then the lord of Lanka, with the permission of the Buddha, stood up; from that jewel peak, like a jewel lotus, immaculately radiant with light, surrounded by a group of celestial nymphs, with various kinds of flower garlands, offerings of incenses, perfumes, canopies, banners, flags, necklaces, diadems, and other choice ornaments never seen or heard of before, accompanied by exceptional musical performances, beyond deities, raksasas, gandarvas, kinnaras, mahoragas, and humans, magically producing all the musical instruments in the realm of desire, and also producing whatever excellent musical instruments are seen in other Buddha-lands, draping the Blessed One and the bodhisattvas with nets of jewels, making a high canopy of assorted cloth, rising the height of seven palm trees into the sky and raining clouds of great offerings and playing the musical instruments, he descended from the sky and sat on the jewel peak, which was adorned with great jewel lotuses, accompanied by the flashing light of the sun.

Having sat down, politely smiling, given permission by the Blessed One he asked the Blessed one a pair of questions: “I also questioned past Buddhas, and it was answered by them; I now ask the blessed One too. This will certainly be recounted by the

Buddhas and by you, in the course of instruction. This pair of truths was spoken by created projections, but not spoken by silent Realized Ones. The silent Blessed Ones who have arrived at verity produce the realm of bliss of concentration but they do not construe it as an object, they show it.

“Very well then, let the Blessed One himself, master of truth, having arrived at verity, worthy, perfectly enlightened, teach the two truths; these heirs of the Victorious and I are listening.”

The Blessed One said, “Tell me the two truths, Lord of Lanka.”

The Rakshasa lord, splendid in crown, bracelets, pearl necklace, and ornaments fastened with a string of diamonds, said, “‘Even realities are to be relinquished; how much the more unrealities.’ How then, Blessed One, are these two things to be relinquished? What are unrealities and realities? How is there duality in things relinquished that are limited to the imaginary, whose imagined nature is nonexistent, whose substance is immaterial, which are undifferentiated from lack of perfect knowledge of the receptacle consciousness, which are established on an illusory nature, in the

domain of unclarified knowledge of perishability? How could there be any relinquishment of them being like this?”

The Blessed One said, “Is it not apparent, Lord of Lanka, that the particularization of inherently breakable and perishable things like a jar is in terms of the ranges of imagination of the unenlightened? Why is this not apprehended the same way—there is a distinction between reality and unreality in terms of particular imaginings of the unenlightened, but not in terms of perception based on attainment of ultimate knowledge. Existences such as jars, confined to various characteristics, may be there for the unenlightened, Lord of Lanka, but not for the realized.

“Flames of the same nature lit by a single torch appear different on houses, mansions, parks, and palaces, with differences in length and size of the flames due to the potency of the fuels. Why is this not apprehended the same way—there is a distinction between reality and unreality. Not only does the flame of fire which is but one continuity appear differentiated; even in the offspring of a single seed are distinctions of stalk, blade, joint, knot, leaf, petal, blossom, fruit or vegetable.

“Such are the expressible differences of all things in the triple world, the phenomena that produce everything, external and internal, appearing from unknowing, belonging to the constituents, elements, and senses, places of evident pleasure. Distinctions of inferior, superior, and middling are apparent in what are uniformly consciousness, resulting from grasping sense objects in terms of purity and impurity, goodness and badness. Not only is there particularized distinction of those things, Lord of Lanka; even in the yogis practicing yoga distinction is seen in the characteristics of individual attainment on the path of yoga. How then could there not be distinction between reality and unreality as a result of comparative thinking? There is indeed!

“There is, Lord of Lanka, a distinction between reality and unreality in terms of conceptual definition.

“Then what are realities? It means these things conceived by the imaginative thinking of dogmatists, listeners, individual illuminates, and the unenlightened as being for a reason, associated with elemental substance. They are to be relinquished, not to be

imagined to be as they appear. When focusing on their nature as percepts of the subjective mind, things such as jars conceived by the naive do not really exist, having no accessible solid bodies. They are relinquished by seeing them objectively with this particular insight.

“Then what are unrealities? Things inherently not found, where descriptive conceptions do not apply, which are groundless. Their nullity is evident, because of the nonexistence of their being; thus relinquishment of their reality comes about.

“And what are things that are inherently not found? Things such as the horns of rabbits, mules, camels, and horses, or the son of a barren woman. Because they are inherently not there, they should not be thought to be as described. They are elsewhere called conventional meanings, not from attachment as in the case of jars and the like. As they are to be relinquished since they are not apprehended by consciousness, so too are any imaginary things to be relinquished. Hence the relinquishment of realities and unrealities comes about. This is the answer to your question, Lord of Lanka, as to how realities and unrealities are to be relinquished.

“You also said you had asked past Buddhas, and it was divulged by them before too. This is a statement of an imagination. The past too is imagined to be the past in this way, and so too the future and present by nature. Those who arrive at verity have no vain imagination; they are beyond all notions and nonsense.

“The nature of form is not as imagined, except insofar as it is recognized for the sake of the happiness of the unknowing, by the insight of one who walks on the groundless. Hence knowledge is the self of those who arrive at verity; they are embodiments of knowledge. They do not imagine, and they are unimaginable.

“In what way do they not imagine? By thought in terms of soul, life, or person. In what way do they not imagine particulars? By cognitive consciousness based on sense objects, in terms of form, sign, shape, or appearance. So thought should become free of false imagination.

“Furthermore, Lord of Lanka, the activity of beings is like figures painted on a wall; everything in the world is inert, Lord of Lanka, not

performing any action, because of the unreality of all things. And no one is listening or hearing either. For the whole world, Lord of Lanka, is a projected semblance. But dogmatic ignorant yogis do not realize. Whoever sees thus, Lord of Lanka, sees truly. Those seeing otherwise are acting on imagination, which their own split imaginings grasp, echoes, like a reflection of one's own image in a mirror, or like reflections of one's own limbs in water, or shadows of one's own limbs in the moonlight, or in a house. So, having grasped the grasping of their own imagination as objective, they conceptually objectify reality and unreality. They do not act in accord with relinquishment of both reality and unreality. They make suppositions and enlarge upon them; they do not attain tranquility, meaning total absorption, the entry into the realm of spontaneous first-hand ultimate knowledge from which the realized issue, where paramount absorption occurs.”

II. A Collection of All 36,000 Teachings

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, together with highly intelligent bodhisattvas, a follower in all Buddha-fields, rose from his seat at a sign from the Buddha, put his upper robe over one shoulder, put his right knee on the ground, made respectful salutation to the Blessed One and presented the Blessed One with verses:

*The world is without origination or destruction, like flowers in the sky;
It is not conceived real or unreal, by your insight and compassion.*

All things are like illusions, without mind or consciousness:

*They are not apprehended as real or unreal by you, by your insight
and compassion.*

The world is not to be conceived as eternal or ending either;

*It is always like a dream, not apprehended as real or unreal by you
Due to your insight and compassion.*

*What praise is there of a body of phenomena whose nature is like
illusions and dreams?*

It is equivalent to non-origination of things with no independent existence.

*How can praise or blame be uttered, O Sage, of one whose perception is imperceptible,
Unconnected to sense objects?*

*The selflessness of phenomena and person,
What is painful and what is intelligible too,
Is always clear to you,
By your causeless insight and compassion.*

*You do not become extinct by nirvana;
Nirvana is established in you,
Apart from anyone enlightened or anything to be realized,
Beyond the extremes of being and nonbeing.*

*Those who see the Sage calm and detached from happenings
Become unattached and unaffected in this world and the next.*

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, having lauded the Blessed One with similar verses, told the Blessed One his name and lineage: “I am Mahamati, Blessed One, who has attained the goal of the great journey. I pose one hundred and eight questions to the supreme speaker.”

Having heard this statement of his, the Buddha, supreme knower of the world, having looked over the whole assembly, said to the successor of the Blissful, “Let the successors of the Victor question me; and you question too, Mahamati. I will indicate to you the range of first-hand attainment.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, given permission by the Blessed One, fell at the feet of the Blessed One and inquired of the Blessed One: “How is thought purified? Where does thought originate? How is confusion seen? Where does confusion originate? Where do lands, constructions, definition, and religious followers come from?

“How does practice have no appearance? And where do successors of the Victorious come from?

“Where does the liberated one go? Who is bound, and how is one liberated? What is the object of meditators; how can there be three vehicles there?

“What occurs dependently, what is the occasion, and what is the cause? How, or whence, does polarized extremism come about?

“How are formless attainment and extinction to be realized? And how about extinction of conception? How and from what is one liberated?

“Why does activity originate, the goings-on of those who have bodies? Whence is the perceptible, whence cause of emotion? How does one advance in the stages?

“Who can penetrate the triplex world? What place, what body, can be there? Where does what is there come from? How does one become a successor to the Victorious?

“How does one attain superknowledges, masteries, and concentrations? How is the mind to be concentrated? Tell me, O eminent Victor.

“And how and why is there a receptacle and a cognitive consciousness too? How does the perceptible originate? How does one withdraw from the perceptible?

“Whence and how are kindred and non-kindred; how can it be only thought? How can constancy and selflessness of appearance be?

“Why is essence not to be found? Why the conventional expression? How does a view of permanence or destruction not occur?

“How are other religious leaders and you not opposed in appearances? Tell me, what will become of the logicians in the future?

“How and why is emptiness? And how, to you, is there instant breakdown? How does conception begin? How is the world

indifferent?

“Why the likeness to illusions and dreams? How is the resemblance to castles in the air? Tell me, why is the world like a mirage, a reflection of the moon in water?

“How and why are the aids to enlightenment of the elements of enlightenment to be? Where does disturbance of a region by destructive influences come from? How can the notion of existence be?

“How is it unborn and not destroyed, like a flower in the sky—and how are you made aware of the world? Why do you say there are no words for it?

“How can one be free of false imagination, and how can true nature be like the sky? Of how many kinds is mind? How many ways of transcendence are there?

“How does progression through the stages take place? And what is imageless attainment? And why is selflessness two-fold? How is

the cognized clarified?

“Of how many kinds is knowledge, Leader? And conduct, and forms of beings? How did lineages get started, born of gold, jewels, and pearls?

“How is speech the producer of diverse beings and things? And how and why are the elements that are the objects of knowledge manifest?

“How many kinds of verse can there be, how many kinds of prose and poetry can there be? What is a sentence, how many kinds are there, and how many kinds of expression?

“What is the variety of food and drink? How does sexual intercourse cause birth?

“How can there be a king and a lawgiver and a ruler?

“How can sovereignty be maintained?

“How many kinds of celestial bodies are there? Why are there earth and groups of stars? How about the moon and sun?”

“What can be a subject of knowledge, and what is liberation? How many kinds of practitioners are there? How many kinds of student? How can there be a teacher?”

“How many kinds of Buddha can there be, born in how many conditions? How many kinds of destroyer can there be, and how many kinds of hypocrites?”

“Of how many kinds is nature to you, and of how many kinds can mind be? And how is there only representation? Tell me, Best of Speakers.”

“Why are there clouds and wind in the sky?”

“How can memory be a multitude?”

“Whence and why are trees and vines? Tell me, Lord of the Three Realms.”

“How do horses, elephants, and deer get caught?

“Why are there people who are foolish and of less than optimal intelligence? Tell me, Charioteer of the Mind.

“Why are there libations to six seasons?

“How does an incorrigible come to be?

“Tell me, how are females, males, and eunuchs born?

“How does one not regress from yoga? How does yoga progress?
And tell me, how are such people to be stabilized in yoga?

“What is the indicative mark, and what is the characteristic sign, of beings in the course of existence? How and why are there wealth and power? Tell me, Skylike One.

“Whence is the Shakya lineage? Why and how did the Ikshvaku originate? Why does a sage practice long austerity? How is it

mastered by him?

“Why are you seen thus as everywhere in all lands, surrounded by successors of various names and such appearances?

“Why is meat not to be eaten, why is meat prohibited? Why do those born in carnivorous races eat meat?

“Why are the forms of the moon and sun like lotuses of Mount Meru? Tell me, why are lands formed like majestic lions?

“How are the inverted and upside-down like the net of Indra? Tell me, how and why are lands made of all jewels, with forms like lutes and drums, resembling various fruits and flowers, pure as the sun and moon? Tell me how and why.

“How are Buddhas creations? How are Buddhas born of maturation? And tell me how and why they are enlightened by knowledge of true nature.

“Tell me, how and why is one not awakened in the realm of desire?
But then what is the reason you awaken in the highest heaven in the
midst of pleasant delights?

“When the Blissful One has passed away, who will cause that
teaching to continue? How long will there be a teacher? How long
will the teaching remain?

‘Of how many kinds are your aims, and how many kinds of view are
there? Tell me why and how there is discipline and mendicancy.

“Tell me, how is turning away attained, how is indifference attained,
by individual victors and listeners?

“How can worldly superknowledges come about? What about those
beyond the world? And tell me how, in what sense, are seven
stages mind?

“How diverse might your community be? How might the community
be split up? Tell me, whence and why are there medical books for
people?

“Why, Great Sage, do you say to successors of the Victorious,
'Kasyapa, Krakucchanda, Konakamuni, and me'?

“Why talk of an unreal self? When talk of eternity and annihilation?
Why do you not declare everywhere that truth is only mind?

“Why is there a multitude of male and female, a forest of yellow
myrobalan and emblic myrobalan? Why are Kailasa and Cakravala
mountains hard as diamond? Which among the mountains are
adorned with various jewels, where seers and angels commingle?
Tell me how and why.”

Having heard this, the great hero Buddha, supreme knower of the
world, (said) “This great vehicle is the mind of the Buddhas, the
heart, the power. Well done, greatly insightful one, Mahamati; you
are attentive! I will speak of what you have asked in order:

“Origination and nonorigination, empty, nirvana, transition,
essencelessness, Buddhas born of the transcendent ways,

“Hearers and successors of the Victorious, ascetics in formless trances; the central mountain Meru and oceans, mountains, continents, countries, earth,

“Stars, the sun, the moon, religions and philosophies, deities, and titans, liberations, superknowledges, powers, meditations, concentrations,

“Extinctions and bases of magical powers, elements of enlightenment and the path itself, the immeasurable meditations and the body-mind clusters in the courses of existence,

“Attainment and extinctions, rising from abstraction, pointing out the mind, thought, intellect, consciousness, selflessness, the five elements,

“Inherent nature, imagination, what is imagined, the perceptible, why two views, forms of vehicles, lineages born of gold, jewels and pearls,

“Incorrigibles, gross elements, libertines, individual buddhahood, knowledge, what is cognized, arrival, attainment, and the existence and nonexistence of beings,

“Horses, elephants, deer, why they are captured, ‘tell me how.’ How is a conclusion connecting example and reason indicated?

“How are there effect and cause, various confusions and also guidance; only thought with no object, no progression, indeed, of the stages.

“Why a hundred withdrawals beyond the senses, ‘tell me,’ and medical books and arts, as well as pursuit of skills and sciences?

“What is the size of the mountains, including the central one, and of the earth? ‘Tell me,’ what is the size of the ocean, of the moon and sun?

“How many particles are there in the body of a being, base, fine, and intermediate? How many particles would be in each land? How much sand in a desert? In a cubit, in a bow-length, in the reach of a

shout, in the distance traveled in one harnessing, in half the distance traveled in one harnessing, how many specks, mites, dots, and grains are there?

“How many points would be in an extent? And how many points in half an extent? In a basketful, and in three bushels, how many millions or trillions of grains?

“How many particles, exactly, in a mustard seed? How many mustard-seeds in a berry-weight? How many berry-weights would constitute a bean-weight? How many bean-weights is a rice-weight? And how many rice-weights is a coin-weight, and how many coin-weights is a straw-weight? By these measures, how many straw-weights would the massive central mountain be?

“Question me thus, son; why question me otherwise?

“How many particles constitute the body of solitary illuminates and listeners, Buddha and successors of the Victor? Why don't you ask me this?

“How many particles is a flame-tip? How many particles in the air?
How many in each sense organ? How many in a pore; in the
eyebrow?

“How are there rich people, and kings who rule? And how is
sovereignty to be preserved by them, and how would their liberation
come about?

“Why, pray tell, is sexual intercourse celebrated in prose and
poetry? Whence is the variety of food and drink, the groups of male
and female?

“Why are the mountains hard as diamonds, pray tell. Why are they
like illusions or dreams; how are they like mirages?

“Where is the origin of the clouds, and whence is that of the
seasons? Where does the pleasurability of pleasures come from?
Why are there female, male, and eunuch?

“And ask me, son, where are the brilliant successors of the
Victorious? And what about the mountains in the sky adorned with

seers and angels?

“Where does the liberated one go? Who is bound, and how is one liberated? What is that sphere of meditators, its creation and means?

“What is the reason for being, nonbeing, and inertia? How does the visible disappear? How is thought purified? How does thought occur?

“How does activity start? Tell me, how does it go on? How are conceptions cut off, and what is meant by concentration?

“What is the destructible triple world? What place is that, what body is there? Why is there discussion of nonexistent self? How about teaching in conventional terms?

“You ask me why there is appearance, you ask me wherefore selflessness. You ask me about the sanctuaries of logicians, O Successor of the Victorious; the notions of permanence and annihilation, how the mind is concentrated; expression and

knowledge, conduct, lineage, successors of the Victors. How about appropriate explanation, teacher and student, the variety of beings? Food and drink the sky, clouds, pestilences, what is only representation?

“You ask me the whence and wherefore of trees and vines, O Successor of the Victor, and lands, why diversity, and the long austerities of the seer as well.

“Successor of the Victor, you ask me, ‘What is your lineage, who is your teacher?’ ‘Why are people of less than optimal intelligence?’ ‘In yoga, why are you not awakened in the realm of desire?’ You ask me, ‘Why then is the aim found in the midst of the highest heavens? How does worldly superknowledge come about, and mendicancy?’

“You ask me about created Buddhas based on development, and how Buddhas of true knowledge and communities come to be.

“You ask, Successor of the Victor, about unworldly lands resembling lutes, drums and flowers, and seven of the stages as mind; these and a good many other questions you ask me, son. Addressing

each one, I will utter conclusive instruction; with illustrations, without the ills of opinion. Listen to me intently; I will make reference to the topics. Listen to me, son; there are one hundred and eight topics as expounded by Buddhas.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, said this to the Blessed One: “What are the hundred and eight topics, Blessed One?”

The Blessed One said, “The topic of origination, the topic of non-origination; the topic of permanence, the topic of impermanence; the topic of description, the topic of having no description; the topic of continuity and difference, the topic of having no continuity or difference; the topic of momentariness, the topic of non-momentariness; the topic of inherent nature, the topic of having no inherent nature; the topic of emptiness, the topic of non-emptiness; the topic of annihilation, the topic of non-annihilation; the topic of thought, the topic of no thought; the topic of the center, the topic of the uncentered; the topic of permanence, the topic of impermanence; the topic of certainty, the topic of uncertainty; the topic of reason, the topic of unreason; the topic of affliction, the topic of non-affliction; the topic of craving, the topic of non-craving; the

topic of expedients, the topic of inexpediency; the topic of skillfulness, the topic of unskillfulness; the topic of purity, the topic of impurity; the topic of suitability, the topic of unsuitability; the topic of exemplification, the topic of having no exemplification; the topic of students, the topic of non-students; the topic of teachers, the topic of non-teachers; the topic of lineages, the topic of having no lineage; the topic of three vehicles, the topic of there being no three vehicles; the topic of the imageless, the topic of what is not imageless; the topic of undertaking vows, the topic of not undertaking vows; the topic of three spheres, the topic of there being no three spheres; the topic of signs, the topic of the signless; the topic of notions of being and nonbeing, the topic of having no notions of being and nonbeing; the topic of both, the topic of neither; the topic of spontaneous first-hand ultimate knowledge, the topic of knowledge that is not spontaneous, first-hand, or ultimate; the topic of the bliss of having seen truth, the topic of bliss without having seen the truth; the topic of fields, the topic of what is not a field; the topic of particles, the topic of what is not particulate; the topic of water, the topic of no water; the topic of dry soil, the topic of no soil; the topic of elements, the topic of what has no elements; the topic of what is reckoned by numbers, the topic of what is not reckoned by numbers; the topic of

superknowledge, the topic of lack of superknowledge; the topic of distress, the topic of not being distressed; the topic of the solid, the topic of the nonsolid; the topic of skills, arts, and sciences, the topic of absence of skills, arts, and sciences; the topic of wind, the topic of no wind; the topic of earth, the topic of no earth; the topic of the conceivable, the topic of the inconceivable; the topic of representation, the topic of no representation; the topic of identity, the topic of having no identity; the topic of the constituents of body and mind, the topic of absence of constituents of body and mind; the topic of beings, the topic of no beings; the topic of comprehension, the topic of non-comprehension; the topic of nirvana, the topic of non-extinction; the topic of the knowable, the topic of the unknowable; the topic of holiness, the topic of unholiness; the topic of tumult, the topic of no tumult; the topic of illusion, the topic of no illusion; the topic of dreams, the topic of no dreaming; the topic of mirage, the topic of no mirage; the topic of reflection, the topic of no reflection; the topic of a sphere, the topic of no sphere; the topic of angels, the topic of no angels; the topic of deities, the topic of no deities; the topic of food and drink, the topic of no food and drink; the topic of sexual intercourse, the topic of no sexual intercourse; the topic of the seen, the topic of the unseen; the topic of the

transcendent, the topic of the non-transcendent; the topic of morality, the topic of amorality; the topic of moon, sun, and stars, the topic of no moon, sun, or stars; the topic of truth, the topic of untruth; the topic of result, the topic of no result; the topic of annihilation, the topic of non-annihilation; the topic of rising from annihilation, the topic of not rising from annihilation; the topic of healing, the topic of no healing; the topic of characteristics, the topic of no characteristics; the topic of components, the topic of no components; the topic of arts and sciences, the topic of having no arts or sciences; the topic of meditation, the topic of no meditation; the topic of confusion, the topic of no confusion; the topic of the perceptible, the topic of the imperceptible; the topic of what is to be preserved, the topic of what is not to be preserved; the topic of lineage, the topic of no lineage; the topic of sages, the topic of non-sages; the topic of sovereignty, the topic of non-sovereignty; the topic of grasping, the topic of non-grasping; the topic of treasure, the topic of non-treasure; the topic of explanation, the topic of non-explanation; the topic of the incorrigible, the topic of the non-incorrigible; the topic of female, male, and neuter, the topic of not female, male or neuter; the topic of flavor, the topic of no flavor; the topic of performance, the topic of nonperformance; the topic of the body, the topic of no body; the topic

of thought, the topic of no thought; the topic of movement, the topic of no movement; the topic of faculties, the topic of no faculties; the topic of the constructed, the topic of the uncreated; the topic of cause and effect, the topic of no cause and effect; the topic of the lower, the topic of the highest; the topic of order, the topic of no order; the topic of tree, bush, and creeper cover, the topic of no tree, bush, and creeper cover; the topic of variety, the topic of non-variety; the topic of descent of teaching, the topic of no descent of teaching; the topic of morality, the topic of amorality; the topic of mendicants, the topic of non-mendicants; the topic of empowerment, the topic of no empowerment; the topic of the indestructible, the topic of the non-indestructible.

“These, Mahamati, are the hundred and eight topics expounded by past Buddhas.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, went on to say to the Blessed One, “How many kinds of origination, abiding, and extinction of the consciousnesses are there?”

The Blessed One said, “There are two parts of origination, abiding, and extinction of the consciousnesses, which logicians, however, do not realize. There is the extinction of continuity and the extinction of distinctive marks. The origination of consciousness is twofold, the origination of continuity and the origination of distinctive marks. Abiding is twofold, abiding of continuity and abiding of distinctive marks.

“Consciousness is threefold: characterized by emergence, characterized by action, and characterized by production.

“There are two divisions of consciousness, Mahamati, which is described in brief as eightfold: perceptive consciousness and consciousness particularizing things.

“As a mirror reflects form, Mahamati, so will perceptive consciousness inform. This perceptive consciousness and consciousness particularizing things are an indivisible pair, causing each other.

“Therein, perceptive consciousness, Mahamati, is the cause of development of inconceivable impressions. And consciousness particularizing things, Mahamati, is the cause of notions of objects, and the cause of impressions of conceptual elaboration since beginningless time.

“Therein the extinction of consciousness in all sense organs, Mahamati, namely the extinction of the receptacle consciousness’s variety of impressions of unreal imaginations, is extinction of defining characteristics.

“As for extinction of continuity, Mahamati, and where it comes from, wherefrom means based on which and depending on what. What the basis is there is the faulty impressions made by conceptual elaborations since beginningless time; what it depends on is imaginings regarding the objects of consciousness of what is perceptible to one’s own mind.

“It is like a lump of clay compared to particles of clay; they are neither different nor not different. So is gold compared to ornaments. If the lump of clay were different from particles of clay, it

would not be composed by them. But it is composed by those particles of clay, so it is not other. Yet if it were not different, there would be no distinguishing the lump and the particles of clay. In the same way, Mahamati, if the consciousnesses of perception were other than the natural state of the receptacle consciousness, they would not be grounded in the receptacle consciousness. Then the extinction of consciousnesses of perception which are no different would be the extinction of the receptacle consciousness, but the extinction of its natural state does not happen. So, Mahamati, there is no extinction of the natural state of the consciousnesses; but rather extinction of compulsive activity.

“With the extinguishing of the natural state, moreover, the receptacle consciousness would be extinct. And with the extinction of the receptacle consciousness, this doctrine would be no different from dogmatic nihilism.

“This dogmatic doctrine, Mahamati, is that the cessation of continuity of consciousness come about through the cessation of apprehension of objects.

“From the cessation of continuity of consciousness there would be termination of the continuity of beginningless time.

“And dogmatists describe the origination of continuity as for a reason. They do not describe origination as from the combination of eye-consciousness, form, and light, but for another reason. And the reason, Mahamati, is beliefs in an originator, a soul, a god, time, or atoms.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, the nature of things is sevenfold: the nature of combination, the nature of becoming, the nature of characteristics, the nature of elements, the nature of causes, the nature of conditions, and the nature of completion.

“Ultimate meaning is also sevenfold: the scope of mind, the scope of knowledge, the scope of insight, the scope of duality of view, the range beyond duality of view, the range of progress through the stages of enlightenment, and the range of individual attainment of one who has arrived at reality.

“This, Mahamati, is the heart of the ultimate meaning of the nature of things, according to the realized ones, worthies, correctly and completely enlightened ones of past, future, and present, with which the realized ones determine mundane and transcendental laws in individual and general terms with the wise eye of insight. And they determine them in a manner that is not like the wrong views of dogmatic doctrines.

“And how do the commonalities of wrong views of dogmatic doctrines come about? Due to failure to recognize views of constructions of subjective mental objects of the consciousnesses, because of not realizing they are only objects of subjective thought, ignorant ordinary people become dualists in their views of the ultimate meaning of the nature of being and nonbeing.

“I will also tell you about extinction of the three miseries produced by imagination, cessation of the active conditions of ignorant craving, observing illusory objects as subjective mental percepts.

“Any ascetics or Brahmins, Mahamati, who expect to find a substance not previously existing whose manifestation results from a

supposed cause, abiding in time, and in conditions the origination and abiding of the clusters, elements, and media, as whatever comes into being passes away, they become nihilists denying continuity, activity, becoming and decay, the path of nirvana, the fruit of works, and truth. Why? Because of not having this primary vision of the ungraspable by direct perception.

“Just as potsherds don’t function as a pot, and burnt seed doesn’t sprout, whatever existences of the clusters, media, and elements have passed away, are passing away, and will pass away, have no uninterrupted flow, being based on vision of imagination of objects of subjective thought.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, if the supposed origination of consciousnesses took place through the combination of activities of three conditions, then even unreal turtle hair and oil from sand would occur. This implies abandonment of the original proposition and destruction of certainty, and reality and unreality are spoken of as if performance, action, and instrumentality were meaningless.

“The explanation by conjunction of activity of three combined conditions occurs to them as self-evident cause and effect; by traditional precepts of reasoning on the ground of thought, they will declare the existence of unreal appearance of the reality of past, future, and present because of their pernicious habits of subjective views.

“Thus immature people, bitten by false views, with unstable minds, will say of what is deduced by ignorance that it is all established.

“Other ascetics or priests who, by seeing the elaboration since beginning time of construction of subjective mental objects as external, of the nature of clouds, fire wheels, castles in the air, illusions that never happened, mirages, the moon in the water, and dreams, having no intrinsic being, are freed by cessation of belief in the constructions of their own minds, freed from definitions of characteristics as defined by wholly imaginary terms, and will realize detachment from the grasped and the grasper of objects of the receptacle consciousness, the equivalent of a foundation for the body and experience; a state without images, where origination, abiding, and decay are irrelevant, corresponding to the arising of

subjective thought. It will not be long before they live for enlightenment, great people who have attained equality of life experience and nirvana. By effortless application of great compassion and skill and means, by equanimity toward all beings as toward illusory images, by never becoming dependent, by freedom from internal and external objects, by not seeing anything outside mind, in accord with a groundless basis, by progressively going through the states of concentration of the steps of the stages, considering all in the world being mind, cultivating confidently they attain concentration like magic. By descent into the unmanifest depths of their own minds, having attained enjoyment of transcendent insight, detached from origination, activity, and effort, those bodhisattvas will attain a body of realization with a body of lightning-like concentration as an emanation of reality adorned with powers, superknowledges, masteries, pity, compassion, and expedients, visiting the holy sites in all Buddha-lands, detached from thought, intellect, and cognition, with their minds independent. From that, by attainment conforming to the body of those who arrive at reality, great people living for enlightenment, in accord with mind alone, shall become detached from conceptual elaboration of the clusters, elements, sense media; thought, causes, conditions,

activity, effort, origin, abiding, and decay. Seeing the three realms of existence as caused by the impressions of mistaken ideas elaborated since beginningless time, by mindfulness of the non-origination of the imageless stage of buddhahood, having attained the ultimate truth first hand, the master of one's own mind, having attained effortless practice, like a jewel of all colors, maintains certainty in the orderly combination of the steps of the stages by means of subtle created forms entering the minds of beings, through understanding mind alone. Thus, Mahamati, is a great bodhisattva to become skilled in achieving his own purpose."

Mahamati then said, "Please tell me the developed cycle of teaching describing the essence of mind, intellect, cognitive consciousness, and the five elements, followed by the enlightened and those living for enlightenment, detached from the sphere of subjective mental objects, refuting all appearances of reality connected with what can be verbalized, the heart of the instruction of all Buddhas. Beginning with the bodhisattvas abiding on Malaya, the mountain of Lanka City, expound the body of reality extolled by those who arrive at it as is, the realm of the receptacle consciousness, waves of an ocean."

Then the Blessed One told Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, “The eye consciousness operates for four reasons. What four? Because of not being aware of grasping subjective mental objects; because of immersion in valueless impressions of forms elaborated since beginningless time; because of the nature of consciousness itself; because of interest in the appearances of various forms. For these four reasons, ongoing waves of consciousness arise from the receptacle consciousness, which is like the water in a stream.

“As in the case of the eye consciousness, so do the five bodies of consciousness operate in all sense faculties, down to the minutest pores, like seeing images in a mirror of objects evolving together, like an ocean agitated by wind, the waves of the ocean of mind in the wind of objects, manifesting activity with uninterrupted cause, independent of one another, innocent of inherent existence of forms bound by characteristics of caste.

“Along with those five bodies of consciousness there operates cognitive consciousness, a body born for that reason, referred to as determining the precise scope of cause. And it does not occur to them [the five bodies of consciousness] or to it [cognitive

consciousness], ‘We are mutually caused, set in motion here by immersion the imagination of subjective mental objects.’ Thus they operate in undivided unison with one another in the definition of objects of representation.

“And while in operation thus, they operate in such a way that the operations of subtle impressions are not perceived even by accomplished yogis. And it occurs to yogis, ‘Having extinguished the consciousnesses, our attainment will be complete.’ But with consciousnesses not yet extinguished, they become—not extinct, as the seeds of impressions are not extinct—but extinct by disabling the apprehension of objects.

“Such subtle occurrence of movement in the receptacle consciousness is not easily understood or determined by disciples, solitary illuminates, yogis doing religious exercises, or any but those who arrive at reality and awakening people established in the stages, even using the powers of concentration and insight. Other than for practitioners of lower, higher, and middle practices in the depths of forests and recesses of caves who have mastered the ascertainment of distinctions of the insights, knowledges, and skills characteristics

of the stages, have accumulated endless causes of enlightened good, are detached from the elaborations of imagination of subjective mental objects, it is not possible to attain the anointment by the Buddhas in infinite lands, the masteries, the powers, the superknowledges, and the concentrations of the perceiver of the flow of what is apparent of the imagination of the subjective mind. It is those who are accompanied by good friends and Buddhas who are able to cross over thought, intellect, and consciousness, the ocean of repetitious production of imagination of objects which are essentially percepts of the subjective mind, the cause of restlessness, craving, and ignorance.

“Hence, for this reason, practice should be undertaken by a practitioner in contact with good friends and Buddhas.”

Then, at that juncture, the Blessed one spoke these verses:

*Like waves of an ocean agitated by the wind
as they go dancing ceaselessly,
so is the receptacle's stream always agitated
by the wind of objects as it goes on dancing*

with consciousness in manifold waves.

Blue, red, then salt, shell, milk and sugar,

with fragrances, fruits, flowers and so on,

shining as in the sun,

not as other nor not other,

like the waves of the ocean:

so are the consciousnesses, seven, connected with the mind.

That variety of waves is change in the ocean;

so does the receptacle operate as diverse manifestations of

consciousness.

*Mind, intellect and consciousness are invented for the purpose of
description;*

the eight are undivided, not definable and not as defined.

*Just as there is no distinction between the ocean and the waves,
transformation of consciousnesses into thoughts cannot be found.*

Action is accumulated by mind and distinguished by intellect;

what is apparent is known by consciousness, organized by five,

*for humans' consciousness tells the difference between blue and
red.*

How are waves and mind alike? Tell me, Mahamati.

The difference between blue and red is not found in the waves;

but function is described in order to characterize mind to the ignorant.

Its function is not found apart from what is apprehended by subjective thought;

being in what is apprehended, apprehension is effected with the waves.

Human's consciousness designates body, possessions, abode; thereby is its function seen, like waves.

The ocean is caused to appear dancing as waves; why is the function of the receptacle not understood thus by intelligence?

Due to lack of comprehension on the part of the ignorant, the receptacle is presented by the example of likeness to the ocean's identity with the motion of the waves.

[Mahamati rejoined]

As the sun rises equally on the low and the highest, Victorious One, so you, light of the world, teach the truth to the ignorant.

Having established a position in regard to phenomena, why not utter the truth?

If you say truth is in the mind, truth is not to be found.

[Buddha said]

*Like waves of an ocean, like in a mirror, in a dream,
they are seen simultaneously; so is mind in its own domain:
because of the confusion of objects, it proceeds gradually;
it distinguishes by consciousness and then thinks by intellect.
What is perceived by the five is known without succession, all at
once.*

*As a painter or painter's apprentice would apply colors for a picture,
so do I teach.*

*The picture is not found in the color, or the background, or the object
represented:*

*it is for the purpose of attracting people that a picture is formed with
colors.*

Instruction is off the mark; truth is apart from words.

*Having established a position in relation to phenomena,
I teach the truth to practitioners, truth realized first hand,
apart from any conceivable proposition.*

*To successors of the Victors, I teach what is to be inferred;
to the unsophisticated, guidance.*

*Just as illusion appears diverse but is not really there,
instruction is likewise taught differently without deviation;
What is instruction for one is not instruction for another.*

Just as one administers medicine for each particular illness,

So do Buddhas tell people of mind alone.

The domain attained first hand that the leaders teach

is not the realm of logicians, nor yet of listeners.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, a bodhisattva should avoid the interference of socialization and sloth in the desire to comprehend the scope of ideas of object and subject in what is perceived by the subjective mind. One should practice the effort of those who are vigilant in the beginning, middle, and end of the night, and one should be free from the characteristics of the ways of false religious sciences, storytellers, and listeners and solitary illuminates; and a great bodhisattva should understand the characteristics of the construction of subjective mental objects.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva, on the basis of the characteristics of mind, consciousness, and insight, should go on to effect the union of three characteristics of ultimate knowledge. What are the three overarching characteristics of ultimate knowledge? Having no fallacy, empowerment by the vows of all Buddhas, and first-hand attainment of ultimate knowledge. Having realized these,

a practitioner leaves behind the characteristics of thought, insight, and knowledge like a lame donkey, attains the eighth stage of successors of the Victors, and attains union with those higher three characteristics.

“The characteristic of having no fallacy proceeds from thorough consideration of the characteristics of all listeners, solitary illuminates, and philosophers and religious leaders. The characteristic of empowerment proceeds from empowerment of past Buddhas’ own vows. The characteristic of first-hand attainment of ultimate knowledge proceeds from not being engrossed in the appearances of everything, attainment of a body of concentration like magic, going forth to attainment of the stage of buddhahood.

“This is the triad of characteristics of the wise, by virtue of which triad of characteristics the wise approach the domain of their own first-hand attainment of ultimate knowledge. That is why the union of the three characteristics of ultimate knowledge is to be effected.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, perceiving the thoughts in the minds of that assembly of bodhisattvas, empowered by the support

of all Buddhas, asked the Blessed One about the cycle of teaching called thorough consideration of the content of ultimate knowledge, containing one hundred and eight subject categories, based on which those who arrive at reality, the worthies, correctly and comprehensively enlightened, teach great bodhisattvas who have fallen into particularity and commonality the sort of mode of existence of totally imagined nature, by which distinction of the mode of existence of totally imagined nature, with accurately distinguishing knowledge, having specifically purified the application of selflessness of persons and phenomena, those who have accomplished practical knowledge in the stages, having gone beyond the bliss of attainment, meditation, and concentration of all listeners, solitary illuminates, and religious leaders, will each attain the body of those who arrive at reality in the highest abode of the state of satisfaction in all Buddha-lands, the body of reality as is without resort to inherent existence of the five elements, practical access to the inconceivable realm of those who arrive at reality as is, a state in which insight and knowledge are properly connected, and illusory objects have disappeared.

The Blessed One said, “Here, Mahamati, some dogmatic views, engrossed in negation, think that the horns of a hare do not exist because of the nonexistence of inherent nature, without grounds for the discriminating intellect; and as the horns of a hare are nonexistent, so are all things.

“Then again, Mahamati, others, seeing the distinction in elements, qualities, particles, substances, configurations, and arrangements, fixated on the fixation of rabbit horns as nonexistent, think that the horns of cattle do exist.

“They have fallen into views of two extremes, with intellects that have not ascertained mind alone. They thrive on imaginings in the realm of their own thought.

“Where there is only imagination of body, possessions, residence, and situation, Mahamati, one should not conceive of the horn of a hare, where negation and affirmation are irrelevant. So of all things, Mahamati—that to which negation and affirmation are irrelevant is not to be conceived.

“Those who refrain from negation and affirmation, furthermore, do not conceive of nonexistent rabbit horn; because of mutual reference [to the possibility of its existence], it is not to be thought by them that rabbit horn does not exist. By thorough investigation of even the most minute particle, due to the ungraspability of substance, Mahamati, it is not to be thought that cattle horn exists that disappears in the realm of ultimate knowledge.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, said this to the Blessed One: “Surely, Blessed One, having seen the non-operation of imagination, we would infer that the non-operation of imagination refers to its nonexistence.”

The Blessed One said, “No, Mahamati, the non-operation of imagination does not refer to its nonexistence. Why? Because of imagination’s being the cause of the operation. The issue of the subject of the horn is imagination. Insofar as the issue of the subject of horn, Mahamati, is imagination, therefore, being the cause of the subject, neither other nor not other, the reference is not to the nonexistence of rabbit horns. If imagination were other than the rabbit horns, it would not be the cause of the rabbit horns. But if it

were not other, then being the cause, being none other than horn ungraspable by analysis into the most minute particles, it would be nonexistent. If the existence of both is nonexistent, in reference to what, pertinent to what, is there nonexistence? So there is no existence that can be related to the nonexistence of rabbit horn; rabbit horn cannot be imagined in reference to nonexistence—because of the incompatibility of their premises, the nonexistence and existence expounded by philosophers of nonexistence and existence cannot be established.

“Others with dogmatic views, immersed in the idea of an original locus of form, familiar with the indivisibility of the existence of space, seeing form separate, imagine form apart from the existence of space. But a form too, Mahamati, is also a space. Because it is everywhere form is, space is also form. The distinction of the two phenomena form and space is to be understood by definition of content and container.

“Active elements with mutually distinct characteristics are not stationed in space, yet it is not that there is no space in them. So is rabbit horn, Mahamati, compared to cow horn. The horn of cattle,

furthermore, Mahamati, being analyzed into atoms, and then the atoms being analyzed into particles, are not established in particulate form; in reference to what can its nonexistence be? The same principle applies to any thing compared to an other.”

Then the Blessed One also said this to Mahamati, the great bodhisattva: “You and other bodhisattvas should be free from views and imaginings of rabbit and cow horn, space and form; and you should contemplate the construction of subjective mental objects, and in the domains of all successors of the Victors you should teach the discipline of subjective mental objects.”

Then the Blessed One uttered these verses:

Mind is not an object of perception;

Thought proceeds from the perceived.

The receptacle is known to people

As body, property, and abode.

The Guides explain mind and intellect,

Consciousness, natures, five elements,

Two-fold selflessness, purity.

The association of long and short et cetera

Occurs by mutual relativity.

Nonexistence is the complement of existence;

The complement of nonexistence is existence.

One should not think up form, even analyzed into particles;

The state of mind alone does not become clear by false views.

It is not the domain of logicians,

Nor even of listeners either,

The realm realized first hand

That the Guides point out.

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, to purify the stream of subjective mental objects, also asked the Blessed One, “How, Blessed one, is the stream of subjective mental objects purified, all at once or gradually?”

The Blessed One said, “Gradually, Mahamati, is the stream of subjective mental objects purified, not all at once. Just as fruit ripens

gradually, not all at once, in the same way, Mahamati, people's stream of subjective mental objects is purified gradually, not all at once. Just as a potter makes vessels gradually, not all at once, so too, Mahamati, does the Realized One purify people's stream of mental objects gradually, not all at once. Just as the grasses, shrubs, herbs, and trees on the earth grow gradually, not all at once, in the same way, Mahamati, the Realized One, purifies people's stream of subjective mental objects gradually, not all at once. Just as the arts of entertainment, dance, song, music, lute playing, and writing develop gradually, not all at once, in the same way, Mahamati, the Realized one purifies all people's subjective stream of mental objects gradually, not all at once.

“Just as the appearances of all forms in a mirror are seen without distortion all at once, in the same way, Mahamati, the Realized One purifies all people's stream of subjective mental objects all at once as an undistorted realm without false images. Just as the radiance of the sphere of the moon or sun illumines the appearances of all forms at once, Mahamati, in the same way the Realized One shows the domain of inconceivable knowledge of the Victors all at once to people who are detached from valueless impressions of subjective

mental objects. Just as the receptacle consciousness conceives of subjective mental objectification of body, abode, property, and territory all at once, in the same way, Mahamati, a resulting Buddha, having perfected a realm of being all at once, brings it into practitioners' contact with the asylum of the palace of the highest abode. Just as the Buddha of the nature of reality shines all at once with rays of resulting emanations, so too, Mahamati, does the character of the reality of first-hand ultimate attainment appear all at once by ceasing false views of being and nonbeing.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, the Buddha issuing from the nature of reality teaches the ungraspability of immersion in the variety of assorted illusory scenes and persons which is not that itself as all things in particular and in general explained by definitions based on impressions of subjective mental objects are based on immersion in imagined nature.

“Moreover, Mahamati, the conventional descriptions of what is by nature merely imagined develop from immersion in what is by nature relative. Just as a combination of grass, wood, brush and vines, assembled by a person with knowledge of magic, made up in the

same form as all people, appears as a magic image of a person postured in various ways, yet even appearing so is not that itself, in the same way, Mahamati, there appears a diverse description of variously conceived thoughts in respect to relative nature, in terms of imagined nature. Forming conceptions out of impressions from immersion in descriptions of imaginations of things, Mahamati, the appearance of what is by nature merely imagined comes to be.

“This, Mahamati, is the teaching of the resulting Buddha. The Buddha of the nature of reality specifically makes a basis of the realm of first-hand ultimate attainment independent of conceived descriptions of inherent nature. The projected created Buddha, furthermore, Mahamati, establishes the practical application of distinction of characteristic outcomes of giving, discipline, meditation, concentration, distinct insight and knowledge, consciousness of liberation from the clusters, elements, and sense media; and by means of a religious view, teaches complete transcendence of form.

“The Buddha of reality, furthermore, Mahamati, is objectless, independent of objects, desisting from descriptions of assessments of all active sense organs, not within range of the ignorant, or

listeners, or solitary illuminates, or dogmatists immersed in descriptions relating to identity. Therefore, Mahamati, one should make contact with the uniqueness of first hand ultimate attainment and be able to see independently of what is seen through subjective description.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, there are two distinctions in the guidance of the vehicle of listeners, namely the special characteristic of first-hand ultimate attainment, and the characteristic of immersion in the nature of the notion of existence.

“What is listeners’ special characteristic of first-hand ultimate attainment? By the calm of dispassion toward objects, which are empty, without identity, painful, and impermanent, one concentrates on the specific and common extinction of external things, the clusters, elements, and media. Having concentrated their own minds, listeners reach the abode of bliss characterizing first-hand ultimate attainment without passing on by inconceivable transformation, due to the influence of release attained as a result of the path of meditation, liberation, and concentration.

“This, Mahamati, is a description of the first-hand ultimate attainment of listeners. Having attained the bliss of the abode of first-hand ultimate attainment of listeners, Mahamati, great bodhisattvas should not make the bliss of extinction and the bliss of fulfillment fully evident, by attention to working for people, drawn by their own previous vows.

“This, Mahamati, is the bliss characterizing the first-hand ultimate attainment of listeners, in which bliss characterizing the first-hand attainment of listeners great bodhisattvas should not train themselves.

“Now then, Mahamati, what is listeners’ immersion in the nature of the notion of existence? That is, seeing the major elements—dark, light, warm, fluid, motile, solid—as inactive, inoperative, bound to standards of understanding connected to subjective and shared definitions, imagination immersed in that nature goes on. Having attained this, Mahamati, a bodhisattva should turn away from it. By entering into the characteristic of selflessness of phenomena, avoiding the notion of selflessness of person, one is to be established in the pursuit of the steps of the stages. That,

Mahamati, is listeners' immersion in the nature of the notion of existence mentioned, and this is the answer to it.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, said this to the Blessed One: “The realm of first-hand wisdom is said by the Blessed One to be eternal and inconceivable, and the realm of ultimate truth. But don't dogmatists also say their principles are eternal and inconceivable?”

The Blessed One said, “The eternal inconceivability of a principle of dogmatists does not obtain. Why? The eternal inconceivable of dogmatists is not consistent with the very definition of its own cause and reason. If whatever 'eternal inconceivable' is applied to is inconsistent with the definition of its own cause and reason, how and why does 'eternal inconceivable' apply to it? If the doctrine of an eternal inconceivable were connected to a cause and reason per se, because of being based on a cause or reason the eternal would not be eternal or inconceivable. My eternal inconceivable of ultimate truth, however, consistent with the reason defining ultimate truth, apart from being and nonbeing due to the character of first-hand ultimate attainment, and being the cause of formal knowledge of ultimate truth, beyond caused existence and nonexistence,

consistent with the paradigms of uncreated space, nirvana, and extinction, is therefore eternal. So, Mahamati, it is not the same as dogmatists' doctrines of an eternal inconceivable. This is the eternal inconceivability, Mahamati, of those who arrive at reality, the reality of first-hand attainment of ultimate knowledge. Therefore, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva should make effort to attain eternal inconceivable ultimate knowledge.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, the eternal inconceivability of dogmatists derives from distinction from the idea of impermanence; it is not eternal recognized by reasoning of its own making. If the eternal inconceivability of dogmatists is apprehended by inference seeing impermanence deriving from the existence and nonexistence of what is created, for that very reason, Mahamati, mine too would derive from the demonstration of the baselessness of eternity in view of the impermanence due to the existence and nonexistence of the created. If, moreover, Mahamati, the eternal inconceivable of dogmatists is connected to the definition of a cause, because of the nonexistence of anything with the inherent characteristic of being a cause, the eternal inconceivable is equivalent to rabbit horn, hanging only upon the speech and imagination of the dogmatists. Why is that

so? Rabbit horn consists only of words and imagination, being devoid of inherent cause. My eternal inconceivable, however, Mahamati, is eternal by reason of the character of first-hand wisdom being beyond the existence and nonexistence of the created, not eternal by equating eternity and impermanence with existence and nonexistence of externals.

“To whatever eternity is attributed due to nonexistence of externals, inference of eternity and eternal inconceivability, an inherent cause or reason of that eternal inconceivability, is not known. The first-hand attainment characteristic of the sphere of ultimate knowledge should not be referred to by you, Mahamati, as external.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, those who are frightened by fear of suffering based on imaginations of mundane life seek nirvana. Those who know mundane life and nirvana are not disparate think of nirvana as deriving from absence of all imaginations of things, and cessation of future objects, not after disengagement of the receptacle of consciousness of first-hand realization. Thus, Mahamati, deluded people come to speak of three vehicles, not those who say the realization of mind-only has no image. Thus,

Mahamati, those who do not recognize the realm of subjective mental objects of the Realized Ones of past, present, and future are immersed in the realm of externalized subjective mental objects. They revolve, moreover, Mahamati, on the wheel of ways of mundane life.

“Also, Mahamati, the Realized Ones of past, present, and future say all things are unoriginated. Why is that? Because of the nonexistence of actuality in subjective mental objects, being dissociated from the occurrence of being and nonbeing, Mahamati, all existents are unoriginated. All things, Mahamati, are equivalent to the horns of rabbits, horses, mules, and camels. All things are unoriginated, Mahamati, as imagined to be in themselves, naïve ordinary people’s imaginations of what does not actually exist. The realm of attainment of first-hand ultimate knowledge, Mahamati, is the origination of the definition of the nature of all existence, not of the nature of the realm of duality of the imagination of ignorant folk. The receptacle consciousness, appearing as the independent existence of body, property, abode, and way of life, proceeding in terms of the grasped and the grasper, the ignorant with minds fallen into the dualism in views of origination, continued existence, and

dissolution, imagine to be the origin of the being and nonbeing of all things. Here, Mahamati, you should make effort.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, there are five classes of attainment. What are the five? The class of attainment of the vehicle of listeners, the class of attainment of the vehicle of solitary illuminates, the class of attainment of the vehicle of those who arrive at reality, the class of unfixed alternatives, and a fifth excluded class.

“How, then, Mahamati, is the class of attainment of the vehicle of listeners to be understood? Whoever is thrilled when being taught understanding of perfect consciousness of particular and common characteristics of the clusters, elements, and media, and whose intellect sets upon knowledge of analysis of characteristics, not by analysis of the non-separate cluster of interdependent origination, this one is of the class of attainment of the vehicle of listeners.

“One who, having seen the attainment of the vehicle of listeners, freed of adventitious afflictions in the sixth and fifth stages but not free from afflictions of impressions, reaching an inconceivable non-degenerating state, roars the true lion roar—‘I am finished with birth,

settled in pure conduct' and so on, having declared this, aims as far as nirvana through analysis of selflessness of personality. Others, furthermore, Mahamati, seek nirvana from awakening to the essence of self, being, life, growth, person, and personality. Others, moreover, Mahamati, aim for the state of nirvana having seen all thing based on causes. Because of lack of perception of selflessness of phenomena, Mahamati, there is no liberation. This, Mahamati, is the notion of escape that is no escape characteristic of the class of attainment of the vehicle of listeners. Here, Mahamati, you should make effort to desist from false views.

“Now then, one who belongs to the class of attainment of the vehicle of solitary illuminates is one who becomes tearful, joyful, and thrilled when being taught solitary attainment; when being guided in perception of paranormal production of many assorted manifestations of a variety of separate doubles of one's own body entering into being through deliberate dissociation, one who accepts the guidance is called a member of the class of attainment of the vehicle of solitary illuminations, who, when this is recognized, should be spoken to in conformity with the attainment of the vehicle of

solitary illuminates. This, Mahamati, is the definition of a member of the class of attainment of the vehicle of solitary illuminates.

“Now then, Mahamati, the class of attainment of the vehicle of those who’ve arrived at reality is of three kinds, namely the class of attainment of the truth that inherent nature has no existence of its own, the class of the attainment of the wise whose understanding is inherent in the individual, and the class of attainment of the nobility of external Buddha-lands.

“When being taught one of these three, one who is not frightened, terrified, or overcome with trembling while being directed to inconceivable perspective on the body, possessions, and abode as subjective objects of thought, this individual is to be known as a member of the class of attainment of the vehicle of those who have arrived at reality. This, Mahamati, is the definition of the class of attainment of the vehicle of those who arrive at reality.

“A member of the unfixed class, Mahamati, should be directed to any of these three in which the individual may be suitably guided.

“This establishment of classes, Mahamati, belongs to the preparatory stage. The establishment is made for entry into the stage where there are no images.

“The individual receptacle, however, of one purified of subjective afflictions and habits, having attained the abode of bliss of concentration from seeing the selflessness of phenomena, a listener will attain embodiment as a Victor.”

Then the Blessed One spoke these verses:

*The realization of entry into the stream,
and of the once-returner as well,
the realization of the non-returner
and even of the saint too, is a vagary of mind.*

*I speak of three vehicles, one vehicle, and no vehicle
differently for the naive, those with intoxicated intellect, and the wise.
Presentation of ultimate truth is but a door, without duality;
how can there be establishment of three vehicles
when abiding where there are no images?*

*The meditations, immeasurables, and formless concentrations,
the extinction of perception,
is all not found in mind alone.*

“Now, then, Mahamati, how does the non-nihilistic liberation of nihilists take place? By giving up all roots of good, and by virtue of undertakings for people since beginningless time.

“How does the abandonment of all roots of good come about? By rejection of the canon of bodhisattvas, making the false accusation that these scriptures are not conducive to liberation, one does not enter nirvana because of giving up all roots of good.

“Second, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva does not become perfectly calm, because of intending to perfectly calm all people who have not completely calmed down because of pursuing means of worldly undertakings. This is characteristic of those who do not enter complete calm as a rule, by which they comprehend the way of nihilism.”

Mahamati said back, “Which of these, Blessed One, ultimately never enters total calm?”

The Blessed One said, “The bodhisattva nihilist living for enlightenment, Mahamati, knowing all things to be primordially quiescent, ultimately never enters total calm. Neither does the nihilist who gives up all roots of good. For the nihilist who gives up all roots of good, Mahamati, with the support of the Realized, some time or another promotes roots of good. Why? Because no beings at all are completely abandoned by those who arrive at reality. Hence, for this reason, Mahamati, it is said bodhisattva nihilists never enter complete calm.

“Also, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva should become familiar with the three definitions of inherent nature. Among them, Mahamati, the entirely imagined nature starts from appearances. How does completely imagined nature start from appearances? Relative nature, Mahamati, is named as a descriptive expression of appearances of things.

“Now then, Mahamati, immersion in descriptions of appearances of things is also of two kinds. Those who have arrived at reality, the truly enlightened saints, establish the completely imagined nature by way of description of immersion in names, and by way of description of immersion in the appearances of things named. So then the definition of immersion in appearances of things is immersion in internal and external phenomena. And immersion in descriptions of appearances means the awareness in comprehensive knowledge of particular and common characteristics in those internal and external phenomena.

“This, Mahamati, is the two-fold character of completely imagined nature. The supporting basis from which starts is the relative.

“What, then, Mahamati, is the absolute nature? It is the realm of the knowledge of the wise attained first-hand without defining things by appearances and names, with the mind realizing the supreme knowledge of reality as such. This absolute nature, Mahamati, is the heart of the matrix of the state of arrival at reality.”

Then the Blessed One spoke this verse:

Appearance, nature, and imagination

Is a description of two natures;

true knowledge is descriptive

of the absolute nature of reality.

“This cycle of teaching called analysis of the characteristics of the five elements is the domain of first-hand attainment of ultimate knowledge, which you and other bodhisattvas should learn.

“Also, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva should become skilled in analysis of the characteristics of two-fold selflessness. So, Mahamati, what is the definition of two-fold selflessness?

“The collection of clusters, elements, and media, without self or possession, originating in ignorance, activity, and craving, communicates consciousness through all the sense faculties evolving from immersion in apprehending form by the eye and so on, the body and abode contained in objects of subjective thought as imagined by subjective mental construction. It operates proceeding like a river, seeds, lamps, wind, clouds, in unbroken succession,

moving to and fro like a monkey or a fly, impure, ranging on impure objects, unguided, insatiable as fire, retaining residual impressions of mental objects of conceptual elaboration since beginningless time, on the wheel of repetitious states of existence like the mechanical wheel of a water-wheel, assuming various physical forms, like a magical zombie or a robot; sound knowledge of these characteristics is called knowledge of selflessness of personality.

“Then what, Mahamati, is knowledge of selflessness of phenomena? It means awareness of the inherent nature of imagined characteristics of the clusters, elements, and media. As, Mahamati, the clusters, elements, and media, void of self, a mere assemblage of aggregates bound by strings of impulse, action, and craving, evolve by interrelation, indifferent, so the clusters, Mahamati, without individuality or commonality, made to appear variously by imagination of what doesn't exist, are imagined by the ignorant, not by the wise. Perceiving all things as devoid of essences of mind, intellect, cognitive consciousness, and the five elements, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva becomes familiar with the selflessness of phenomena. The great bodhisattva who is familiar with the selflessness of phenomena, moreover, Mahamati, before

long attains the first stage of awakening, examination without imagery. By perception from examination of the characteristics of the stages, having accomplished knowledge in nine stages in unbroken succession from Extremely Joyful, one will attain Great Cloud of Teaching. Established therein, sitting on a great king among lotuses, adorned with many jewels and pearls in a great jewel palace made of lotuses, accumulation of inherently illusory objects having ceased, surrounded by similar successors of Victors, one is anointed like a crown prince by the hands of Buddhas coming from all Buddha-lands. Having gone beyond the stages of a successor of the Victorious, by first-hand attainment of the goal of the teaching of the wise one will become master of the body of reality through perception of the selflessness of phenomena.

“This, Mahamati, is a description of the selflessness of all phenomena. You should learn this, and so should other great bodhisattvas.”

Then Mahamati also said to the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One teach me the definitions of attribution and denial, so that I and other bodhisattvas, with minds freed of mistaken views attributing and

denying, may quickly realize true enlightenment. Having become fully enlightened, free of views attributing continuity or destroying by denial, they will not deny your enlightened eye.”

Then the Blessed One, acknowledging the request of the great bodhisattva Mahamati, spoke this verse:

*In mind only there is no assertion or denial;
Those who don't know the appearance
of body, property, and abode is thought
Are occupied with attributions and denials, unwise.*

Then the Blessed One, illuminating the meaning of this same verse, also said, “Untrue attribution, Mahamati, is of four kinds. What are the four? Attribution of untrue characteristics, attribution of untrue notions, untrue attribution of cause, untrue attribution of existence. These, Mahamati, are the four kinds of attribution.

“And what, Mahamati, is denial? Denial comes about because of absence of examination of the failure of apprehension characteristic of this very attribution of false notions.

“This, Mahamati, is the definition of attribution and denial.

“Now then, Mahamati, what is the definition of attribution of untrue characteristics? It means immersion in untrue characterizations, particular and common, of the clusters, elements, and media—‘This is thus, this is not otherwise.’ This, Mahamati, is the definition of attribution of untrue characteristics.

“This imagination attributing untrue characteristics, Mahamati, evolves from immersion in valueless inconsistent impressions of conceptual elaboration since beginningless time. This, Mahamati, is the manifestation of attribution of untrue characteristics.

“Attribution of untrue notions, Mahamati, means attribution of notions of self, being, life, offspring, growth, person, and personality to the clusters, elements, and media. This, Mahamati is called attribution of untrue notions.

“Untrue attribution of cause, Mahamati, means after a groundless previous consciousness that occurs subsequently ceases to exist, an

illusion-like present consisting of memory of prior sight, form, and light takes place. Having take place and come to be, then it passes away. This, Mahamati, is untrue attribution of cause.

“Untrue attribution of existence, Mahamati, means attribution asserting the existence of what is uncreated—space, nirvana, and extinction. But existence or nonexistence, Mahamati, is inapplicable to them. All things, Mahamati, are perceived like the horns of rabbits, horses, donkeys, and camels, optical illusions, apart from either extreme of being or nonbeing.

“Attributions and denials are imagined by the naive whose minds have not ascertained that they are only subjective mental objects, but not by the wise.

“This, Mahamati, is the definition of attribution and denial of untrue ideas of existence. Therefore, Mahamati, one should become free from both assertive and dismissive views.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, having realized the two kinds of inherent selflessness of mind, intellect, cognitive consciousness, and the five

elements, bodhisattvas take on many physical forms for the sake of others. Like imagined natures based on relative nature, like universal wish-fulfilling gems they visit the circles assembled in all Buddha-lands and hear teaching beyond the vehicles of all listeners and solitary illuminates directly from all Buddhas, that all things are like illusions, dreams, similitudes, reflections, the moon in water—unoriginated, apart from eternity and annihilation; and they find hundreds of thousands of entrances into concentration. With as many as tens of millions of millions of hundreds of thousands of concentrations to be attained, by those concentrations they go from land to land. And, intent on serving Buddhas, referring to the Three Jewels and setting up images of Buddha in all resulting celestial abodes, surrounded by groups of listeners and groups of bodhisattvas, by way of introducing the scope of subjective perception, teach the nonexistence of external things for the purpose of relinquishment of extremes of being and nonbeing.”

Then the Blessed One spoke this verse:

*When offspring of the Victors see the world is only thought,
They attain the projection body free of ritual training,*

With its powers, superknowledges, and masteries.

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, again petitioned the Blessed One: “Let the Blessed One define the emptiness, nonorigination, nonduality, and lack of inherent existence of all things, by awareness of which emptiness, nonorigination, nonduality, and lack of inherent existence I and other great bodhisattvas may quickly realize perfect enlightenment, freed of concepts of nonexistence and existence.”

Then the Blessed one said this to Mahamati, the great bodhisattva: “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart, accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Good, Blessed One,” said Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, and listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this: “‘Emptiness is emptiness’—this, Mahamati, is a statement of imagined nature. By immersion in imagined nature, moreover, Mahamti, people become propounders of the existence of emptiness, nonorigination, nonexistence, nonduality, and absence of intrinsic nature.

“Emptiness, Mahamati, is, in sum, of seven kinds, namely emptiness of definitions, emptiness of independent existence of things, unpracticed emptiness, practiced emptiness, emptiness as the inexpressibility of all things, the great emptiness that is the master knowledge of ultimate truth, and comparative emptiness is the seventh.

“What, then, is emptiness of definitions? It means all things are empty of particular and common definition. Because of collective mutual relativity, since there are no discoverable divisions, Mahamati, hence the inefficiency of particular and common definition. And because of the nonexistence of self, other, and both, definition does not stand up. Hence it is said that all things are empty of inherent definition.

“And what, Mahamati, is the emptiness of independent existence of things? The quality of occurrence itself without independent existence, Mahamati, is the emptiness of independent existence of all things. Therefore it is called emptiness of the independent existence of things.

“What is unpracticed emptiness? It means nirvana in the clusters not previously practiced. Therefore it is called unpracticed emptiness.

“What is practiced emptiness? It means the clusters operate proceeding by combinations of reasons and practical actions without self or possession. Therefore it is called practiced emptiness.

“What is the emptiness of all things as inexpressible? It means all things are empty as inexpressible because of inexpressibility by imagined nature. Therefore it is called emptiness as inexpressible.

“What is the great emptiness that is the master knowledge of ultimate truth? It means first-hand attainment of ultimate knowledge is empty of all the faulty impressions of opinionated views. Therefore it is called the great emptiness of master knowledge of ultimate truth.

“And what, Mahamati, is comparative emptiness? Whatever is not in a certain place is therefore called absent. For example, elephants,

cattle, goats, and so on are not in this palace, but I've said it's not empty of mendicants while it is called empty of those others. It is not that the palace is nonexistent as a palace, nor that the mendicants are not there as mendicants, and it's not that the existences of elephants, cattle, goats, and so on cannot be established somewhere else. This, Mahamati, is particular and common to all things; one is not found where another is, so it is called comparative emptiness.

“These, Mahamati, are the seven kinds of emptiness; and this comparative emptiness is lowest of all, and should be completely rejected by you.

“It does not occur of itself; nor do they not occur, except in a state of concentration. Therefore they are called unoriginated, void of inherent existence. To sum up nonorigination, Mahamati, all things are void of inherent existence. Because there is no uninterrupted succession of moments, and because of evident change, Mahamati, all things are void of inherent existence. That is why it is said all things are empty of intrinsic nature.

“What, then, Mahamati, is the definition of nonduality? It means in the way cool and heat, in the way long and short, black and white, are manifested in pairs, not singly, in this sense all things are nondual, like mundanity and nirvana. There is no mundanity where there is nirvana, and no nirvana where there is mundanity, because of the reality of actual existence of disparate characteristics. Therefore it is said that all things are nondual, like mundanity and complete nirvana.

“Hence, Mahamati, you should focus on the characteristics of emptiness, nonorigination, nonduality, and absence of inherent existence.”

Then the Blessed One uttered these verses:

I point out emptiness ever apart from permanence and annihilation.

Mundane existence is the appearance of dreams, illusions, yet action does not cease.

Space, nirvana, and two kinds of extinction too,

the ignorant construe as uncreated, the wise as apart from nonbeing and being.

Then the Blessed One also said this to Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, “This, Mahamati, is the definition of emptiness, nonorigination, nonduality, and lack of independent existence which is the aim of all the scriptures of all Buddhas. This meaning is to be perceived in any of the scriptures.

“This scripture, Mahamati, has multiple meanings to guide recipients of all dispositions, not disputation that is actually contradictory.

“Just as a mirage that entices wild animals is fascinating because of the impression that there is water even though there is no water there, in the same way, Mahamati, the teachings indicated in all the scriptures are appeasement for subjective imaginations of ignorant people, not dispute to establish ultimate knowledge as it is in reality.

“Therefore, Mahamati, one should follow meaning, not adherence to the expression of teachings.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, said to the Blessed One, “The matrix of realization of reality is also described by the Blessed

One in the text of scripture, and the bearer of the thirty-two marks of distinction is described by you as primally pure, naturally radiant clarity entirely within the body of all people. It has been described by the Blessed One as permanent, stable, peaceful, eternal, like a jewel of great value wrapped in something stained, wrapped in the contents of the clusters, elements, and media, stained by the dirt of greed, animosity, and delusion, and imaginations of what doesn't exist. Then how is the doctrine of the matrix of realization of reality not equivalent to the religious doctrine of a soul? Religious dogmatists also teach the doctrine of soul, speaking of an eternal creator, an unqualified lord that cannot pass away.”

The Blessed One said, “My teaching of the matrix of realization of reality is not equivalent to the religious doctrine of a soul. However, Mahamati, the Realized Ones having made an explanation of the matrix of realization of reality, of the meanings of emptiness, the limit of existence, nirvana, unoriginated, groundless, undiscovered, and so on, the Realized Ones, the able, the completely enlightened, in order to relieve ignorant people of the fear of selflessness, teach them the imageless realm without thought as an introduction to the

matrix of realization of reality. But here, Mahati, great bodhisattvas future and present must not adhere to a soul.

“Just as a potter, Mahamati, makes various vessels from a single mass of clay particles, by the combined application of hands and skills, stick and string, in the same way the Realized Ones teach that same selflessness of phenomena, without any imagined characteristics, by means of various applications of insight and skill in means, whether by the teaching of the matrix or by the teaching of selflessness, like a potter, using various alternative formulas of expression. For this reason, Mahamati, the teaching of the matrix of realization of reality is not equivalent to the religious doctrine of a soul. Even so, they expound the teaching of the matrix of realization of reality to attract the religious who are immersed in the doctrine of a soul. How, alas, could those whose minds have alighted upon the imaginary notion of a soul that doesn't exist, whose intention is set upon the realm of triple liberation, quickly attain supreme perfect enlightenment? For this purpose, Mahamati, the Realized Ones, the able, the completely enlightened teach the matrix of realization of reality. Hence this is not equivalent to the religious doctrine of a

soul. Therefore, Mahamati, in order to stop the religious notion, you should follow the matrix of selflessness arriving at reality.”

The Blessed One then uttered these verses:

*Personality, continuity, clusters and particles too,
Originator, Lord, Creator, the matter of mind is imagined.*

Then the Mahamati, regarding the people of the future, also petitioned the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One teach me the manner of understanding of discipline by which great bodhisattvas can become imbued with great discipline.”

The Blessed One said, “Bodhisattvas become imbued with great discipline when equipped with four practices. What four? By detached observation of what is perceived by their own minds; by abstention from notions of originating, abiding, and dissolution; by observing the nonexistence of external things; and pinpointing their own first-hand realization of ultimate knowledge. Great bodhisattvas equipped with these four practices, Mahamati, become imbued with great discipline.

“How, then, Mahamati, does a great bodhisattva become skilled in detached observation of what is perceived by one’s own mind? One observes, ‘This triple world is the contents of my own mind, without soul or belongings, without wishes, not coming or going, fixated in immersion in faulty impressions of conceptual elaboration since beginningless time, bound to the various forms and usages of the triple world, imagined and perceived according to imaginations of body, possession, abode, and way of life.’ Thus, Mahamati, does a great bodhisattva become skilled in detached observation of what is perceived by one’s own mind.

“How, then, Mahamati, does a great bodhisattva become free of notions of origination, abiding, and dissolution? It means all existences seem like form and life in illusions and dreams; because of the nonexistence of self and other and both, they do not originate. Having seen the non-excitation of consciousnesses through perception of the nonexistence of external things consistent with their nature as subjective mental content, and the non-cumulative nature of conditions, observing the triple world as arising from believing in mental constructions, with the notion of origination

having ceased by perception of absence of independent existence with all things inner and outer not being apprehended, by understanding the nature of things as illusion and the like they attain acceptance of things as unoriginated. Established in the eighth stage, by attainment of withdrawal from the dualism of specific nature and selflessness of mind, intellect, cognitive consciousness, and the five elements, they acquire the mental body.”

Mahamati said, “Why, Blessed One, is it called the mental body?”

The Blessed One said, “It is called mental, Mahamati, because of its mind-like travel with unimpeded speed. Just as the mind, remembering without impediment previously seen objects perceived over many hundreds and thousands of miles, through mountains, walls, rivers, forests, and so on, a body continuously connected to the mind proceeds on an unimpeded course; in the same way, Mahamati, by illusion-like concentration attained together with the mental body, just so the intellect born in association with ultimate attainment, in which the characteristics of the powers, masteries and superknowledges have blossomed, proceeds unimpeded on its

course, remembering objects of past vows for the sake of developing people to complete maturity.

“Thus, Mahamati, does a great bodhisattva become free from notions of origination, abiding, and dissolution.

“How, then, Mahamati, does a great bodhisattva become skilled in observing the nonexistence of external things? It means all things are like mirages, dreams, optical illusions. Observing that the identities attributed to all things are founded on immersion in wrong impressions of imagination variously developed from projection of conceptual fictions since beginningless time, one seeks the domain of first-hand attainment of ultimate knowledge.

“Equipped with these four practices, Mahamati, great bodhisattvas become imbued with great discipline. You should work on this, Mahamati.”

Then Mahamati also petitioned the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One teach me the defining of all things by causes and conditions, by knowledge of which definition by causes and conditions I and other

great bodhisattvas, free from imaginations based on notions of reality and unreality, may not imagine all becoming as gradual or occurring at once.”

The Blessed One said, “The definition of cause of dependent origination of all things, Mahamati, is of two kinds, namely external and internal.

“As for external dependent origination, Mahamati, a jug originates from conditions including a mass of clay, a stick and wheel, water, a person, and effort. And as a jug comes from a mass of clay, Mahamati, so does cloth from fiber, mats from fragrant grasses, sprouts from seed, and fresh butter from a combination of human efforts such as churning. In this way, Mahamati, external dependent origination is evident in succession.

“As for internal dependent origination, this means that phenomena beginning with ignorance, craving, and action get the name dependent origination. The phenomena that thereby occur as the clusters, elements, and media get the name dependent origination,

and they are not distinct, but are distinguished by the unsophisticated.

“As for cause, Mahamati, it is of six kinds, namely the cause of future becoming, the cause of binding, the cause of definition, the cause of motivation, the cause of expression, and the cause of indifference.

“Now, then, Mahamati, the cause of future becoming performs the function of cause in the internal and external occurrence of phenomena.

“The cause of binding, Mahamati, performs the function of supporting the internal and external occurrence of the seeds of the clusters and so on.

“The cause of definition, Mahamati, produces referential association of description to activity without interruption.

“The cause of motivation performs the function of domination, like a lawgiving monarch.

“The cause of expression performs the function of revealing the characteristics of present imagined things, as a lamp does to forms.

“The cause of indifference performs the function of cutting off attached activities at the time of withdrawal, when no imagination occurs.

“These, Mahamati, construed by subjective imagination by immature ordinary people, do not take place successively or happen at once. Why is that? If they occurred all at once, there would be no distinction between an effect and a cause, as the definition of cause could not apply. But then if they occurred successively, because what is not apprehended is by nature a definition, gradual succession wouldn't proceed; like the word 'father' for someone who has no children, Mahamati, the binding connections of successive occurrence do not come together. Because the causal, supporting, continuous, and dominant conditions and so on of logicians function as both produced and producer, they do not occur successively. Because they are defined in the context of imagined nature, they do not occur all at once. Because of being body, possession, and abode perceived subjectively, without the presence of external things

with particular or common characteristics, they do not occur gradually or all at once, apart from consciousness that takes place through imagining of a diversity of subjective mental objects.

Therefore, Mahamati, you should be free from notions of succession and simultaneity defining the combination of functions of causes and conditions.

“Hence it is said that nothing occurs in this world by conditions, nor passes away; conditions are imagined occurring and passing away. The affliction of dissolution and origination of conditions is not stopped; where the immature imagine based on convictions, that is to be stopped. There is no becoming in the conditions of phenomena that don't really exist, wherefore thought confused by impressions is known in the triple world. Nothing that doesn't exist is produced by conditions, or passes away. When people see what is created as like the son of a barren woman or a flower in the sky, then, having seen grasped and grasped as confusion, it stops. There is nothing to be produced, nothing that has come about, and no conditions either; whatever is recognized by anyone is known as convention.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said to the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One instruct me in the cycle of teaching called Heart of Description of Distinction in Speech, by which heart of description of distinction in speech, made certain by correct analysis, I and other bodhisattvas, having understood the two meanings of speech and what is spoken of, quickly realizing supreme perfect enlightenment, may clarify to all people the point of the two meanings of speech and what is spoken of.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart, accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Good, Blessed One,” said Mahamati, and listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One told him, “There are four different kinds of speech: descriptive speech, dream talk, talk immersed in degrading imagination, and talk of beginningless imagination.

“Now, then, Mahamati, descriptive speech comes from immersion in forms and features of one’s own imagination.

“Dream talk, Mahamati, comes from memory of objects perceived in the past, and the absence of objects of waking awareness.

“Talk immersed in degrading imagination, Mahamati, evolves from memory of deeds done in the past by enemies.

“Talk of beginningless imagination, Mahamati, comes from worthless self-seeding impressions from immersion in conceptual elaboration since beginningless time.

“This, Mahamati, is the answer to the four kinds of distinction in speech I mentioned.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, further asked the Blessed One the meaning of this: “Let the Blessed One also indicate to me the range of expression of verbal contrivance: where, whence, why, and how, Blessed One, does humans’ contrivance of verbal representation take place?”

The Blessed One said, “Speech arises from a combination of the head, chest, nose, throat, palate, lips, tongue, and teeth, coming forth accordingly.”

Mahamati said, “Then, Blessed one, is speech different from imagination, or not different?”

The Blessed one said, “Speech is neither different from imagination nor not different. Why is that? Verbalized imagination comes from description of the occurrence of its reason. If speech were different from imagination, it would be caused without mental construction; yet if it were not different, speech would not be made as expression of meaning, but it does that. Therefore they are neither different nor not different.”

Mahamati also said, “Is ultimate truth then a statement as such, or is ultimate truth what is expressed by a statement?”

The Blessed One said, “Ultimate truth is not a statement, nor is ultimate truth what is expressed by a statement. Why is that? A statement of ultimate truth as a verbal introduction to the spiritual

bliss of ultimate truth is not ultimate truth. Ultimate truth, Mahamati, is to be attained first-hand by ultimate knowledge; it is not within range of the intelligence of verbalization and imagination. Therefore imagination does not reveal ultimate truth.

“Speech, moreover, Mahamati, occurs and disappears, is momentary, arising from reciprocal conditions and causes. And whatever arises from reciprocal conditions and causes, Mahamati, does not reveal ultimate truth. Because there is no defining self and other, Mahamati, it does not produce external appearances.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, consistent with content of subjective mental objects, because of the lack of external existence of various different descriptions, verbal imaging does not imagine ultimate truth.

“Therefore, Mahamati, you should become detached from the various constructions of speech. So it is said

All things are void of inherent existence, so even a statement of truth is not true.

The immature, not seeing the meaning of the emptiness of emptiness, run away.

The identities of all things, and human speech as well, are imagination,

and that does not exist; nirvana is like a dream.

Being is not proved either in mundane life or by withdrawal.

As an eminent king has his children play

with various animals made of clay

in order to interest them,

then after that will give them real animals,

so do I, by means of various descriptive images of things,

tell successors the limit of existence is to be known first hand.

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, said to the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One indicate to me the characteristics of all things apart from nothingness and being, oneness and otherness, both and neither, neither existing nor not existing, neither permanent nor impermanent, not attained or practiced by any dogmatists, accessed by first-hand ultimate knowledge, without the imposition of imagined characteristics, peculiar or common, the manifestation of the actuality of ultimate truth, marked by progressive purification through

investigation of the stages, defining entry into the stage of those who reach reality, effortlessly carrying out past vows in endless forms like a wish-fulfilling gem, manifesting distinction of ways in the range of subjective mental objects, such that I and other great bodhisattvas without views of peculiarity or commonality of imagined natures in such matters as these, having quickly realized perfect enlightenment, may enable all people to fulfill all virtues.”

The Blessed One said, “Good, good, Mahamati; it is good of you indeed that you think this should be asked. You have undertaken to benefit many people, Mahamati, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the welfare, benefit, and happiness of the great body of the living, of celestials and humans. So listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very good, Blessed One,” said Mahamati, and listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said to him, “Because of failure to understand the content of their own objects of thought, Mahamati, and through

immersion in various external things, immature people construct imaginations through immersion in imagination caused by residual impressions of ideas of inherent nature as nonexistent or existent, oneness or otherness or both, neither existing nor not existing, permanent or impermanent.

“That is like the way wild animals, imagining there to be water in a mirage, burning in the summer heat, run for it in a desire to drink, not knowing there is no water here because they don’t realize it is a false impression of a notion in their own minds. In the same way, Mahamati, immature ordinary people, their minds under the influence of beginningless imagination of various projected fictions, intellects burned by the fires of desire, animosity, and delusion, desirous of various material objects, based on views of origin, abiding, and dissolution, unfamiliar with the nullity of internal and external things, fall into grasping oneness and otherness, nonexistence and existence.

“That is like the way the conception of a city in reference to a sirens’ city that is not a city occurs to the unenlightened, and the form of a city is a view that comes from immersion in the seminal idea of a city

impressed on the mind since beginningless time; and that city is neither a city nor not a city. In the same way, Mahamati, those who have always been immersed in impressions of doctrines consisting of conceptual fictions projected by religion and philosophy become engrossed in doctrines of oneness or otherness, existence or nonexistence, their minds not having ascertained that these are only objects of subjective thought.

“That, Mahamati, is like someone asleep who in a dream goes into the king’s palace in a country graced with women, men, elephants, horses, carriages, pedestrians, villages, cities, towns, cattle and buffalo, woods, parks, various mountains, rivers, and ponds, and then wakes up. Even when awake, he may remember the king’s palace of that country. What do you think of that, Mahamati —would that person be a savant for recalling that variety in the dream, which doesn’t actually exist?”

He said, “No, Blessed One.”

The Blessed One said, “In the same way, Mahamati, immature people, bitten by false notions, with dogmatic mentalities, do not

realize it is because of the existence of subjective mental objects equivalent to dreams that they have recourse to notions of oneness and otherness, nonexistence and existence.

“Just as places neither low nor high depicted by an artist are imagined low and high by children, in the same way, Mahamati, in the future they will be filled with specific imaginations based on residual impressions of hallowed views. Those who are engrossed in doctrines of oneness, otherness, both, or neither, are themselves lost, and others who speak of nonorigination apart from extremes of being and nonbeing they will call nihilists. They will call them deniers of cause and effect, who have eliminated the good side of cause by a bad view; they will say that those who seek higher meaning should keep far away from them. And, with minds lit upon notions of self, other, and both, minds lit upon wrong notions of attribution and denial imagining existence and nonexistence, they will wind up in hell.

“That, Mahamati, is like the case of people with dim vision who, having seen an optical illusion, tell each other, ‘This is wonderful, this is wonderful—you all should look!’ The optical illusion is not existent

or nonexistent, because of neither of these occurring, as it is perception without vision. In the same way, Mahamati, those whose minds are immersed in the constructions of hallowed false notions, immersed in doctrines of oneness or otherness, or both or neither, of the extremes of being and nonbeing, who repudiate true teaching, will cause themselves and others to fall into ruin.

“That, Mahamati, is like the fact that a circle made by a torch is not a circle, yet is imagined as a circle by the ignorant, not by savants. In the same way, Mahamati, those who have fallen into a way of thinking in which erroneous notions are hallowed will imagine the origination of all things in terms of oneness or otherness, both or neither.

“It is like the fact that when it rains the drops of water appear like crystal gems, and then children run to it, convinced there are crystal jewels there. Those drops of water, Mahamati, are not jewels, yet not not jewels, due to apprehension without apprehending. In the same way, Mahamati, those whose minds are under the influence of impressions of imagination based on hallowed opinions will describe

origination of the nonexistent by conditions, as well as the annihilation of the existent.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, having made objections to the three components of proof, they will imagine the object of first-hand attainment by ultimate knowledge, free from two natures, is a thing recognized by its own nature. But the concept of existence and nonexistence, Mahamati, does not occur to practitioners who have recourse to a mental revolution of thought, intellect, and consciousness, who no longer imagine subjective mental objects as apprehended or apprehending, who have reached first-hand ultimate knowledge in the stage of those who arrive at reality. If, Mahamati, grasping of existence or nonexistence of such objects occurred to practitioners, that would be attributing identity, development, person, and personality to them.

“Any instruction, moreover, Mahamati, defining particular and common natures of things is instruction by projected Buddhas, not instruction of the Buddha of reality.

“Instruction, moreover, Mahamati, is aimed at what the unenlightened see in their sleep; it does not reveal the abode of bliss of concentration of first-hand understanding of ultimate knowledge of the principle of inherent nature to which objection is made.

“It is like the reflection of a tree appearing in water: it is neither a reflection nor not a reflection, because it is not shaped exactly like the shape of the tree. In the same way, Mahamati, those with hallowed notions ingrained in their imagination, not having ascertained that they are only objects of their own minds, will imagine oneness or otherness, both or neither, nonexistence or existence.

“It is like the reflections of all forms in a mirror appear like their counterparts, defined by their own distinction; they are not the forms reflected, but not not the forms, because of the perception of forms where there are no forms. Thus too, Mahamati, those imaginations of subjective mental objects appear to the unenlightened as reflected forms. Just so, Mahamati, the reflections of subjective thought appear in the form of notions of oneness, otherness, both, and neither.

“Just as an echo is heard as it occurs through a combination of a person calling and the wind, and it neither exists nor does not exist because it comes from hearing a voice without the presence of a voice, in the same way, Mahamati, there appear imaginations constructed of impressions of subjective thought, notions of nonexistence and existence, oneness and otherness, both and neither.

“It is like waves of a mirage, shimmering in the sun in a place devoid of grasses, shrubbery, vines, and woods; the waves of the mirage are not existent, but they are not nonexistent either, considering the capacity of their allure to confuse. In the same way, Mahamati, the imaginative consciousness of the unenlightened stymied by distorted impressions of conceptual elaboration since beginningless time, is made to move to and fro like a mirage, as if origination, abiding, dissolution, oneness, otherness, both, neither, nonexistence, and existence were the content of first hand ultimate knowledge.

“Just as a zombie may make movements even though it is not a living being, through connection with a demon, and the

unenlightened get engrossed in untrue imagination on account of the coming and going, in the same way, Mahamati, unenlightened people fallen into hallowed modes of thinking based on erroneous notions adhere to doctrines of oneness and otherness. That is attribution of unreal existence. Therefore, Mahamati, one should abandon the notions of origination, abiding, dissolution, oneness, otherness, both, neither, nonexistence, and existence as actual first-hand ultimate understanding.

“So it is said,

Like reflections of trees in water are the clusters, consciousness the fifth.

Being like illusions, dreams, objects of perception are not to be imagined by representation.

This is like a visual illusion, mistaking a mirage for water: contemplating the triple world as like dream illusion, one become free.

Like a mirage shimmering in summer, fooling the mind,

*which animals take to be drinkable water though no actual substance is found here,
in the same way a seed of consciousness stirs in the field of ideas;
the unenlightened take it to be growing, like the dim-sighted do the dark.*

*The cover of grasping things in beginningless repetition
the unenlightened one should remove
like taking a wedge to a wedge.*

Like magic, a zombie, a robot, a dream, a lightning strike, always moving quickly—seeing the world with the three continuities cut off, one is liberated.

For here there is no representation at all, as of mirages in the sky; discerning things thus, one does not assert anything at all.

Representation is only names; this is not there as described.

The clusters are illusory appearances, wherein, however, that is imagined;

thought, illusion, magic, a dream, and a castle in the air,

a fire wheel and a mirage—the nonexistent appears to humans.

*Eternal or impermanent, and oneness, or both, or neither, as well—
from beginningless harmful attachments the unenlightened conceive,
deluded.*

*In a mirror, in water, in the eye, and in ornaments and jewels,
an object is seen though there is no such object anywhere in them.*

*The appearance of things, likewise, is thought,
like a mirage in the sky seen in various forms,
like the son of a barren woman in a dream.*

“Furthermore, Mahamati, the teaching of those who arrive at reality is free in four ways. It is beyond extremes of oneness, otherness, both, and neither; it is free from attribution and denial in terms of nonexistence and existence. The teaching of those who arrive at reality, Mahamati, follows the process of liberation by the path of extinction of unreal conditional origination; the teaching of those who arrive at reality is not connected to the inherent existence of Nature or God, causality or spontaneity, atoms or time.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, in order to clear the two obstacles of afflictions and objects of knowledge, they set people in a hundred

and eight states without images, like the procession of a caravan leader, and in accurate distinction of the vehicles, stages, and branches of enlightenment.

“Also, Mahamati, meditation is of four kinds. What are the four kinds? They are meditation practiced by the unenlightened, meditation examining meaning, meditation focused on reality as such, and the fourth is meditation arrived at reality as such.

“What is meditation practiced by the unenlightened? It is that of practitioners of the disciplines of listeners and solitary illuminates, following immersion in the selflessness of personality, the characteristics of impermanence, misery, and impurity of accumulation of images of particularity and commonality of things. Seeing this as such and not otherwise, proceeding gradually to the extinction of cognition, hence it belongs to the unenlightened.

“Then what, Mahamati, is meditation examining meaning? Having negated particularity and commonality in selflessness of personality, the self, other, and both of those who hallow externals, meditation examining meaning pursues examination of the meaning of the

selflessness of phenomena and the characteristics of the stages of enlightenment.

“What is meditation focused on reality as such? Based on the truth of the distinction of the two-fold selflessness of the imaginary, abstention from imagination I call focus on reality as such.

“What is meditation arrived at reality as such? Entrance into the forms of the stage of those who arrive at reality; because of the nature of the triply blissful abode of first-hand ultimate knowledge inconceivably doing what people do, I call it meditation that has arrived at reality as such.

“So it is said,

*Meditation examining meaning,
meditation practiced by unsophisticates,
meditation focused on reality as such,
pure meditation arrived at reality as such:*

The form of the moon or sun, resembling the lotus hell,

*bright like fire in the sky, the yogi practicing observes,
and various signs as well; they lead to a cultic path
causing a fall into the state of a listener
in the realm of a solitary victor.*

*Having cleared all these away, when free of images
then the suns of multitudes of Buddhas of all lands,
assembled, will rub one's head,
a sign of arrival at reality as such.*

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said to the Blessed One,
“It is said by the Blessed One ‘nirvana is nirvana.’ To what, Blessed
One, does ‘nirvana’ refer?”

The Blessed One said, “When the influences of notions of thought,
intellect, and cognitive consciousness storing impressions of
independent existence from all consciousnesses do not take effect,
that is called nirvana by all Buddhas, and by me as well, the actual
realm of emptiness of inherent existence realized in nirvana.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, nirvana is a realm attained first hand by ultimate knowledge, apart from existence and nonexistence in the sense of eternity or annihilation. Why is it not eternal? It is void of imagination of particular and common characteristics, so it is not eternal. But then it is not annihilation, in that all the wise, past, future, and present, attain it first-hand; so it is not annihilation.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, great ultimate nirvana is not destruction or death. If great ultimate nirvana were death, Mahamati, it would still be linked to birth. And if it were destruction, it would fall within the definition of the created. Hence, for this reason, Mahamati, great ultimate nirvana is not destruction, not death. Practitioners understand death has no escape.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, great ultimate nirvana is called nirvana because of involving no loss or gain, neither annihilation nor eternity, neither for one meaning nor for no meaning.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, the nirvana of listeners and solitary illuminates is from an unconventional understanding of particular and common characteristics; because of undistorted perception of

objects, errant imagination does not go on. Hence their understanding of nirvana is therein.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, the characteristic of two-fold nature is of two kinds. What are the two kinds? Due to immersion in verbal nature, and due to immersion in concrete nature. Of these, Mahamati, immersion in verbal nature proceeds from immersion in impressions of conceptual elaboration verbally projected over beginningless time. Immersion in concrete nature, then, Mahamati, proceeds from not realizing it is the content of what is perceived by one’s own mind.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, bodhisattvas supported by two empowerments fall at the feet of the perfectly enlightened ones, the able ones who have arrived at reality as such, to ask questions. By what two empowerments are they supported? By the empowerment of complete attainment of concentration, and the empowerment of direct consecration in the presence of all bodies.

“In the first stage, Mahamati, great bodhisattvas supported by enlightened power attain a concentration of the essence of

enlightenment called Splendor of the Great Vehicle. As soon as they have attained the concentration of the essence of enlightenment called Splendor of the Great Vehicle, the saints who have arrived at reality, the perfectly enlightened ones in the worlds of the ten directions, appear before them and empower them by a demonstration of speech from the mouths of all bodies.

“As of the great awakening being Vajrasattva, Mahamati, and of other great awakening beings endowed with similar qualities, in the same way do great bodhisattvas acquire the empowerment of complete attainment of concentration in this stage.

“When the great bodhisattva is in the Clouds of Teaching stage of awakening, following upon a foundation of good accumulated over a hundred thousand eons, sitting in a seat enshrined in a huge lotus, surrounded by similar great bodhisattvas, wearing a crown adorned with all kinds of jewels, then multitudes of the Victorious, like lotuses in golden moonbeams, come from the worlds of the ten directions and with a hand from every body anoint the head of the great bodhisattva, sitting in the seat enshrined in the lotus, like a ruling

emperor. That bodhisattva, and those bodhisattvas, are said to be supported by the empowerment of consecration by hand.

“These are the two empowerments of great people living for enlightenment, supported by which empowerments great bodhisattvas look upon the faces of all Buddhas. The able ones who arrive at reality as such, the perfectly enlightened ones, are not to be seen elsewhere.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, whatever becomes clear to great bodhisattvas by forms of instruction in the mystic powers of concentration, that occurs to those supported by the two empowerments of all Buddhas. If, Mahamati, intelligence became clear to great bodhisattvas without empowerment, then intelligence would become clear even to ignorant people. Why? Because they are not supported by empowerment. Even grasses, shrubs, trees, and mountains, Mahamati, as well as the various musical instruments, and cities, dwellings, houses, mansions, chairs, and public squares are made to speak out by empowerment through the intervention of those who have reached reality as such; how much more, Mahamati, animate beings! Even the mute, blind, and deaf

are freed from their problems. Such, Mahamati, is the sort of great virtue in the empowerment of those who reach reality as such.”

Mahamati then said, “Why, Blessed One, do the able who have reached reality as such, the perfectly enlightened, perform consecration empowerment in another stage, as well as at the time of the empowerment of great bodhisattvas by complete attainment of concentration?”

The Blessed One said, “For deliverance from the afflictions of destructive doings by not falling into the stage of listeners’ meditation and by first-hand understanding of the stage of those who arrive at reality as such, and for increasing understanding of principles attained. For this reason, Mahamati, the able who arrive at reality as such, the perfectly enlightened, support great bodhisattvas with empowerment. Great bodhisattvas who have not been empowered, Mahamati, fallen into the destructive mentality of followers of false cults, won’t realize perfect enlightenment. Hence, for that reason, great bodhisattvas are supported by the able who have arrived at reality as such, the perfectly enlightened Buddhas. So it is said,

*“The empowerment of the lords of humans is purified by vows,
Beginning with consecration and concentration from the first to the
tenth.”*

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Blessed One: “Conditional origination taught by the Blessed One is a statement made for a reason, not an argument to establish the nature of your own doctrine. Religious leaders and philosophers too, Blessed One, describe origination for a reason, namely the origins of things depend upon a Creator, God, Supreme Being, Time, or atoms. Though the origin of things is described by the Blessed One in a different analysis of conditions, this does not come to a different conclusion. For the Blessed One and religious leaders and philosophers too describe origination as real and unreal, the destruction of all things after having come to be, due to conditions. Even in what has been said by the Blessed One, that psychological complexes are conditioned by ignorance and so on, up to old age and death—this is a statement of a doctrine of no cause described by the Blessed One, not a doctrine of cause. ‘If this is, so is this’ applies to phenomena that are established simultaneously, not to phenomena established in relative succession. But the statement of

the religious is superior, not this one of yours. Why? Because the 'cause' of the religious produces effect that does not occur conditionally, whereas your 'cause,' Blessed One, is relative to effect, and 'effect' is relative to 'cause.' The confusion of 'cause and 'condition' thus results in mutual failure to establish one another. It is causelessness of the world, Blessed One, that is expressed by saying, 'If this is, so is this.'"

The Blessed One said, "Mine is not a doctrine of no cause, nor does it imply confusion of cause and condition by saying 'If this is, so is this,' because of the nonexistence of grasped and grasper, due to the realization that they are contents of what is perceived by the subjective mind. Those who are engrossed in the grasped and the grasper do not realize they are only percepts of the subjective mind in terms of absence of existence of external independent objects; this fault results for them, but not for me in making the statement of conditional causality."

Mahamati also said, "Surely, Blessed One, since speech actually exists, all things exist. If, Blessed One, there were no things, there

would be no talk. But talk does take place. So because of the actual existence of speech, all things exist.”

The Blessed One said, “Talk is made, Mahamati, even of things that don’t really exist—talk of rabbit horn, turtle hair, children of a barren women, and so on, is seen in the world. They are neither existent nor nonexistent, yet they are spoken of. What you said, Mahamati, that all things exist because of the actual existence of speech, that doctrine fails.

“Speech is not practiced in all Buddha-lands, either, Mahamati.

Speech, Mahamati, is something created. In a certain Buddha-land, Mahamati, the teaching is expounded by a steady gaze; in another, by gestures; in another, by frowning; in another, by movement of the eyes; in another, by the mouth; in another, by yawning; in another, by the sound of a cough; in another, by remembrance of lands; in another, by trembling.

“As in the sleepless world Scented with Perfume, the Buddha-land of Samantabhadra, the able one who reached reality as such, the perfectly enlightened Buddha, the great bodhisattvas attain

acceptance of things as unoriginated, and other kinds of concentration, by gazing with unblinking eyes. Hence, for this reason, Mahamati, all things do not exist because of the actual existence of speech. And it is apparent, Mahamati, in this world, different species of beings such as worms and bees perform their own activities without speech.

“So it is said,

*Space, rabbit horn, and the son of a barren woman too
are not existent, yet spoken of; such is imagination regarding things.
A combination of causes and conditions, the ignorant conceive as
production;
not knowing this principle, they wander in the storehouse of the triple
world.*

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Blessed One: “To what, Blessed One, does the word ‘permanent’ refer?”

The Blessed One said, “To confusion, Mahamati; insofar as it is confusion, it appears even to the wise, as misconceived. It is like a

mirage, a fire wheel, an optical illusion, a castle in the air, magic tricks, dreams, reflections, and the pupil of the eye are misconceived in the world by those without knowledge, not by those with knowledge, and yet it is not that they do not appear.

“That confusion, moreover, Mahamati, may appear in many forms, but that doesn’t make confusion impermanent. Why? Because it is apart from existence and nonexistence. And how, Mahamati, is confusion apart from existence and nonexistence? As the varied domains of all the ignorant, as the waves of the ocean and the water of the Ganges River are unseen in the perception of ghosts, for this reason, Mahamati, the existence of confusion does not obtain. Yet insofar as that water appears to others, hence nonexistence doesn’t obtain either. Thus confusion for the wise has nothing to do with misconception or non-misconception. Hence, Mahamati, confusion is permanent, due to description of appearances being uninterrupted. For description of appearances never becomes broken off while being imagined by mental formulation of various different appearances. Hence, for this reason, Mahamati, confusion is permanent.

“And how, Mahamati, is confusion a reality? For the reason, again, Mahamati, that the sense of misconception does not occur to the wise in regard to this confusion, nor the sense that there is no misconception. Neither are the wise cognizant of anything at all, Mahamati, outside this confusion, nor cognizant of a subject of ultimate knowledge. Whatever it is the ignorant say, it is not the talk of the wise.

“That confusion, moreover, being imagined in terms of misconception and no misconception, produces two classes, the class of the wise and the class of unenlightened ordinary people. The class of the wise, furthermore, Mahamati, takes on three forms, by division into listeners, solitary illuminates, and Buddhas.

“How, then, Mahamat, does confusion produce the class of the vehicle of listeners as it is being conceived by the unenlightened? That means as it is entered into by immersion in particular and generic descriptions, it is conducive to the class of the vehicle of listeners; thus, Mahamati, that confusion produces the class of the vehicle of listeners.

“Then how, Mahamati, does that same confusion produce the class of the vehicle of solitary illuminates as it is being conceived? By disconnection from immersion in particular and common characteristics of that very confusion, Mahamati, it is productive of the class of the vehicle of solitary illuminates.

“Then how, Mahamati, does that same confusion, conceived by sages, produce the class of the vehicle of Buddhas? It means by realizing it is only what the subjective mind perceives, being conceived in terms of nonexistence of external things, it produces the class of the vehicle of Buddhas.

“This is why there is class, Mahamati; this is the meaning of class. Confusion being conceived by the unenlightened reifying various things, moreover, Mahamati, produces the class of the vehicle of mundane life and death, maintaining that ‘This is so, and not otherwise.’ Hence, for this reason, Mahamati, confusion is conceived by the unenlightened in terms of a diverse objectivity. But is not a thing, yet not nothing.

“That same confusion, Mahamati, not being formulated, occurring without the wise taking things to be self-existent—a distorted impression in the mind, intellect, and cognitive consciousness—the confusion of the wise is hence called verity. So it is said, Mahamati, ‘Verity is free from thought.’ The meaning illustrated by this same statement is expressed by me in terms of freedom from fictions, detachment from all fictions.”

Mahamati said, “Is confusion there, Blessed One, or not?”

The Blessed One said, “It is there like an illusion, Mahamati—confusion is not there as appears. If, Mahamati confusion were there as appears, immersion in things would be unchecked. This would be like conditional origination, like caused origination according to religions and philosophies.”

Mahamati said, “If, Blessed One, confusion is an expression of illusion, then it will become a cause of other confusion.”

The Blessed One said, “Illusion, Mahamati, is not the cause of confusion, since it is not harmful; for illusion, Mahamati, does not

bring on harm. While unformulated, moreover, Mahamati, illusion takes place through the support of other people's knowledge, not through the support of distorted impressions in one's own imagination. It does not bring on harm. Whatever comes from obsession, Mahamati, is only delusion by mental views of the ignorant, not of the wise. So it is said,

One who is wise does not see confusion, nor reality therein;

Confusion too would be reality, were reality therein.

If a sign occurs after confusion is cleared away,

that too would be its confusion, just as darkness is unclear.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, illusion is not nonexistent. The illusion-like nature of all phenomena is due to the semblance of identity.”

Mahamati said, “Is the illusion-like nature of all phenomena because of the characteristic of immersion in various illusions, or because of the characteristic of cause of immersion in what is not so? For if, Blessed One, the illusion-like nature of all phenomena is due to the character of immersion in various illusions, unfortunately, Blessed One, things are not like illusion. Why is that? Because it would be

due to causeless perception of various appearances of form. For there is no cause at all, Blessed One, by which form appears in a multitude of diverse characteristics like illusion. Hence, for this reason, Blessed One, things are not like illusion because of similarity to immersion in diverse illusory appearances.”

The Blessed One said, “All phenomena, Mahamati, are not like illusion because of similarity to immersion in diverse illusory appearances; rather, Mahamati, all phenomena are like illusion because they are not as they seem, like flashing lightning. Just as a streak of lightning dissolves instantly, seen and gone, yet is still perceived by the innocent, in the same way, Mahamati, all things appearing as subjectively imagined in the absence of discernment are not as perceived through immersion in descriptions of form. So it is said,

“Illusion is not nonexistent; being is spoken of from similarity to existents.

They are like flashing lightning, not as they seem, therefore noted as like illusion.”

Mahamati further said, “It has been said by the Blessed One that all things are unoriginated and like illusions; but your so saying, Blessed One, results in the fault of contradicting your previous statement, expressing the nonorigination of things in terms of being like illusion.”

The Blessed One said, “No, Mahamati, my expressing the nonorigination of things as being like illusion is not at fault for contradicting the previous statement. Why? Through understanding origination and nonorigination are contents of subjective thought objects, due to perception of the nonoccurrence of external existence or nonexistence of the real or unreal, Mahamati, the fault of contradicting the previous statement does not result. Rather, Mahamati, it is said that all things are unoriginated, like illusion, for the purpose of refuting the instantaneous origination argued by dogmatists.

“For groups with hallowed delusions seek the origination of all things, real or unreal, not in relation to the various obsessions of their own imagination. But no alarm, Mahamati, occurs to me. Hence it is for this reason, Mahamati, that the very term ‘nonorigination’ is designated.

“The teaching of becoming, moreover, Mahamati, is for the purpose of mastering mundane existence, and for the purpose of fending off nihilism. Mastery of mundane existence is done by seizing upon the word ‘becoming’ in order to embrace the diverse situations my disciples are in due to their occupations. By pointing out the characteristics of the illusory self-existence of things, Mahamati, for the purpose of ceasing characterization of things as self-existent on the part of naïve ordinary people whose minds have alighted upon the features of false ideas, who have not ascertained that these are only objects of subjective thought, who are immersed in the description of origination as the action of cause and condition, I teach that all phenomena are illusory and dreamlike in nature.

“Then naïve ordinary people with minds engrossed in the features of false views, will divert themselves and others from perception of the state of all phenomena as they are. The perception of the state of all phenomena as they are, Mahamati, means realizing they are only what is perceived by one’s own mind. So it is said,

*The nonexistence of cause in nonorigination is a restraint of mundanity;
one should see, not imagine, appearances as like illusion.*

“Furthermore, Mahamati, we will describe bodies of names, words, and expressions, by careful regard to which bodies of names, words, and expression great bodhisattvas who follow the words and expressions according to meaning will soon realize supreme perfect enlightenment, and then will enlighten all people.

“Now then, Mahamati, the name ‘body’ means the object for which a name is created; that body is the thing. ‘Body’ is not different in meaning from ‘substance.’ This, Mahamati, is the body of a name.

“A word body, furthermore, Mahamati, is the intent, the actual being of the body meant by a word. It is not different in meaning from ‘conclusory understanding.’ This, Mahamati, is my explanation of the body of the word.

“The body of expression, furthermore, Mahamati, is that by which the indication of names and words comes about. Expression is not

different in meaning from sign, description, perception, representation.

“Also, Mahamati, the word body means the usage that functions as a word. A name, then, spells out a designated identity. Expression, then refers to short, long and lengthened syllables.

“Bodies of words, moreover, Mahamati, get the concept of word body from creatures who walk in lines, like elephants, horses, humans, wild animals, domestic animals, cattle, buffalo, goats, sheep, and so on.

“Name and expression, furthermore, Mahamati, belong to the four immaterial clusters. What is considered spoken by name is a name. What is considered expressed by its own description is expression. This, Mahamati, is a definition of name and word of the bodies of names, words, and expressions. You should examine this. Hence it is said,

*The ignorant who are of poor intelligence
stick to expression, to a body of words,*

*and especially to names,
like elephants in a quagmire.*

“Also, Mahamati, due to defect in reasoning, those in the future and in the present who think wrongly with badly developed minds, asked by the knowledgeable about the formula of duality of extremes apart from the descriptions of notions of oneness and otherness, both and neither, will say to the questioners, ‘This is not an issue; this is not grounded,’ meaning that impermanence is other than form and so on, and yet not other; and so nirvana vis-à-vis mental formation, description vis-à-vis characteristic, what is endowed with qualities vis-à-vis the qualities, material vis-à-vis elements, perception vis-à-vis the perceptible, particles to sand, practitioners to knowledge.

“Questioned with such formulas of unanalyzed mutual definition, Mahamati, they will say what has not been distinguished should be settled by the Blessed One. But then those deluded persons will not know how the Realized Ones, the able, the perfectly enlightened, refrain from exposition in order to prevent a state of fear in people from lack of understanding in hearers. The unanalyzed are not

discoursed upon by those who arrive at reality in order to exclude dogmatic views.

“For dogmatists, Mahamati, are those who say ‘Life is the body,’ or ‘Life is other than the body,’ and so on, proclaiming unanalyzed doctrines. For the unanalyzed, Mahamati, belong to dogmatists confused in their proofs, not in my exposition. In my exposition, Mahamati, detached from grasped and grasper, imagination does not occur. How can there be reservation for them? Reservation is for those who are immersed in the grasped and grasper, Mahamati, whose minds have not ascertained these are only subjective percepts. By analysis through four-step questioning, Mahamati, the Realized Ones, the able ones, the perfectly enlightened, teach people the truth. I have made reservation for instruction of people with immature faculties at a different time, but it is not reservation for those with mature faculties.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, apart from action and actor all phenomena do not originate, because of having no creator. That is why it is said all phenomena are unoriginated.

“And for what reason, Mahamati, are all phenomena void of inherent existence? Insofar as the unreality of particular and generic definitions is not ascertained by those reflecting with subjective understanding, hence it is said that all phenomena lack inherent existence.

“Then for what reason, Mahamati, are all phenomena impossible to seek or dismiss? Insofar as the appearance of the particular and the general is not found by being sought and not gotten rid of by being dismissed, hence, for that reason, Mahamati, all phenomena are beyond seeking or dismissing.

“And for what reason, Mahamati, are all phenomena not destroyed? Because of the unreality of an appearance of inherent existence of things, all phenomena are impossible to apprehend. That is why it is said all phenomena are not destroyed.

“Then why, Mahamati, are all phenomena said to be impermanent? Because there is no permanence in the occurrence of appearances; thus all phenomena are said to be impermanent.

“Then why, Mahamati, are all phenomena permanent?

Impermanence is permanent due to the nonexistence of anything that has occurred or not occurred in appearance only. Therefore it is said that all phenomena are permanent.

“So it is said,

*Exposition is of four kinds: one part is inquiry;
then analysis, reservation, and refuting hallowed dogma.*

*For the nonorigination of both reality and unreality
is related by the Sankhya and Vaisheshika;
the unanalyzed are all elucidated by them.*

*Inherent existence is not ascertained by those pondering
intellectually;
so they are called inexpressibles, without inherent nature.*

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Blessed One: “Let the Blessed One indicate to me the definition of the principles distinguishing the course of entry into the stream of stream-enterers, by which definition of the principles distinguishing the source of stream-enterers’ entry into the stream I and other great

bodhisattvas, familiar with the characteristics of the principles distinguishing the course of stream-enterers' entry into the stream, knowing the formulas defining the means to successive states of returning once, not returning, and sainthood, may then teach people; so as, having cleared the two forms of selflessness and the two obstructions, having passed from stage to stage to the goal, having attained the domain that is the inconceivable goal of those who arrive at reality as such, like wish-fulfilling jewels, they may become reliances for all people, that they may be dependable for usefulness to the whole of life in all conditions.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart, accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One,” so saying, Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “There are three distinctions, Mahamati, in stream-enterers' realization of entry into the stream. What three? Lesser, middling, and superior. Of them, Mahamati, the lesser are born at most seven times; the middling attain complete

nirvana after three to five existences; the highest attain complete nirvana in that very lifetime.

“But three ties, Mahamati, also occur in these three; weak, middling, and excessive. What are the three ties? The notion of a real body, uncertainty, and grasping rules of conduct. These three ties, Mahamati, by a process of replacement by better alternatives, become productive of the worthiness of saints.

“Now then, Mahamati, the notion of a real body is of two kinds, inborn and imagined, like independent existence imagined of what is dependent. Just as immersion in diverse imagined natures takes place due to supposition of inherent existence in what is relative, without real being or nonbeing actually there or not there because of being imagination of what doesn't exist, it is therefore imagined by the naïve through immersion in the various appearances of inherent existence, as is a mirage by wild animals.

“The notion of a real body imagined by a stream enterer, Mahamati, has been built up by long-term immersion due to lack of knowledge,

and it disappears through nonexistence of grasping of it on account of the selflessness of personality.

“As for a stream enterer’s inborn notion of a real body, furthermore, Mahamati, because of the equality of the bodies of self and others, being characterized by four clusters and physical form, the origination of form consisting of elements, the form of things being considered as having no aggregation due to the character of mutual causality, a stream-enterer’s notion of a real body disappears through perception of the partial views of reality and unreality. And so it is that passion does not occur to one in whom the notion of a real body has disappeared.

“This, Mahamati, is the definition of the notion of a real body.

“As for the definition of uncertainty, Mahamati, through accurate insight from realization of the truth attained, and due to disappearance of the former imaginations associated with the two notions of a real body, uncertainty about truths does not occur. And one does not hold other teachers’ views either, having cleared away

impurity. This, Mahamati, is the definition of uncertainty for one who has entered the stream

“Why, then, Mahamati, does one who has entered the stream not grasp conduct? It means one does not grasp because of accurate perception of the characteristics of situations in which suffering occurs. Grasping, Mahamati, means unenlightened ordinary people hoping for physical bliss by rules of conduct, austerity, and asceticism, wish for the arising of a state of well-being; but not grasping, they thus transform it into a better goal of first-hand realization. They adhere to elements of conduct that express the characteristics of the state without impulse free of false imagining. This, Mahamati, is the definition of a stream-enterer’s grasping of rules of conduct.

“Passion, animosity, and delusion do not occur, Mahamati, in a stream-enterer in whom the three ties have disappeared.”

Mahamati said “Passion has been spoken of in many forms by the Blessed One; which of those has disappeared in this case?”

The Blessed One said, “The faculty of desire for objects of sense, lust for union with a woman, pleasant in the present, is a cause of a miserable life in the future; one’s passion is not aroused by flirtation embracing, kissing, hugging, smelling scents, glances and looks. Why? Because of having attained a state of bliss in concentration. So this disappears, not the desire to attain nirvana.

“Then what, Mahamati, is the definition of the result realized by the once-returner? It means the imagination of appearances of material characteristics occurs once. Because of the nonexistence of the characteristics described by notions of indicative signs, through accurate perception of the features of the processes of meditation, having come once to this world one will enter complete nirvana to make an end of misery. That is why it is called returning once.

“Then how, Mahamati, does one become a non-returner? Because the false imagination associated with notional errors pertaining to the occurrence of the presence and absence of past, future, and present appearances of form is not forthcoming, and because of the disappearance of ties in the form of not returning, this is called the state of the non-returner.

“A saint, furthermore, Mahamati, is called a saint because of the absence of false ideas of meditations, topics of meditation, concentrations, liberations, powers, superknowledges, afflictions, and misery.”

Mahamati said, “Three saints have been designated by the Blessed One; to which of them is the term ‘saint’ being applied here? Is it to the listener who gets the one-way path to peace, or to the one who has accumulated a fund of good carrying out vows of bodhisattvas, or to the one that is a created projection?”

The Blessed One said, “It applies to the one who gets the one-way path to peace, not to the others. The others, Mahamati, those who carry out the practices of bodhisattvas and those that are projections created by Buddhas, because of following commitments to a useful fund of good, they appear in assemblies in order to adorn the circles of Buddhas’ audiences.

“In this diverse teaching of different forms of alternative process, Mahamati, because of the diversity in attainment of realization,

meditation, meditator, and topic of meditation, the definition of attainment is indicated through a sense of what the individual mind can see.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, if this should occur to one who has entered the stream, ‘I am not bound by these ties,’ one will have fallen into the notion of soul, attached to duality and not free of ties.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, one should detach from the appearances perceived by one’s own mind in order to get beyond the meditations, immeasurables, and the formless realm. And extinction of perception and sense, Mahamati, is not suitable for transcending the conditions of subjective mental objects, because of being mental content. So it is said,

The meditations, immeasurables, formless concentrations, and extinction of perception,

being all mental content , are not really there.

*The realization of stream-enterer and once-returned too,
the realization of non-returned and sainthood too are mental
confusion.*

Meditator, meditation, meditation topic, relinquishment, perception of truth—

whoever realizes this is only mental construction is liberated.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, intelligence is of two forms; examining intelligence and fixating immersion in grasping mentally constructed descriptions.

“Of these, examining intelligence is the intelligence by which the description of the particular natures is not found apart from the four alternatives in the process of examination; that is examining intelligence.

“The four alternatives there, Mahamati, means apart from oneness and otherness, both and neither, existence and nonexistence, permanence and impermanence. I call them the four alternatives. It is said, Mahamati, that all things are apart from the four alternatives; this set of four alternatives, Mahamati, is to be applied in the examination of all things.

“Then what, Mahamati, is intelligence that fixates immersion in grasping mentally constructed descriptions? The immersion in grasping mentally constructed descriptions by which it imposes attribution of what doesn’t really exist—gross elements with imagined characteristics that don’t actually exist, heat, motion, fluidity, firmness—due to immersion in standards defined by assertions and rationales; that is the intelligence that fixates immersion in grasping mentally constructed descriptions.

“This, Mahamati, is the definition of two forms of intelligence, equipped with which definitions of two kinds of intelligence bodhisattvas, having realized the intent of the definitions of selflessness of things and personalities, familiar with the stage of practice of examination with intelligence free of imposed images, attain the first stage, and are absorbed in a hundred concentrations. They also see a hundred Buddhas and bodhisattvas by special attainment of concentration, and enter a hundred eons into the past and future, and illumine a hundred worlds. And having illumined a hundred words, knowing the methods characteristic of the successive stages, playing with specialization of undertakings, consecrated with the anointment of Clouds of Teaching, having

reached the stage realized first-hand by those who attain reality as such, for the sake of maturing people they illumine teachings fully furnished with ten conclusive statements by means of diverse projected beams of light, concentrated in individual bliss.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva should become familiar with the major elements and derivative elements. And how, Mahamati, does a great bodhisattva become familiar with the major elements and derivative elements? There, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva hence studies that reality wherein the major elements have no composition and sees these elements as not composed. Seeing thus, by realizing that the content of imagination is only what is perceived by one’s own mind, because of the nonexistence of external things one observes this triple world to consist of formulation of mental objects, without major elements and derivative elements, clear of the principles of the four alternatives, without self or possession, grounded in the inherent characteristic of verity, self-evident proof of non-origination.

“Now then, Mahamati, how does a derivative element come to be in the major elements. The major element distinguished as moisture

produces the element of water, internal and external. The major element distinguished as energy produces the element of fire, internal and external. The major element distinguished as motion produces the element of wind, internal and external. The major element distinguished as division of forms produces the element of earth along with space, internal and external. Due to immersion in a false reality, the assemblage of the five clusters composed of major elements and derivative elements takes place.

“As for consciousness, furthermore, Mahamati, consciousness occurs by reason of desire immersed in the domains of various matters, in conjunction with other processes.

“The major elements, Mahamati, are the cause of the derivative elements of the element of earth, but not of the major elements. Why? The occurrence of coordination of activities is based on grasping descriptions of appearances of things, not in what have no appearances. Thus, Mahamati, this description of major elements and derivative elements is conceived by dogmatists, not by me.

“Also, Mahamati, we will define the nature of the clusters. There are five clusters, Mahamati. What are they? Form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. Of these, the four immaterial clusters are sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. Form, Mahamati, is composed of four main elements; and the elements are mutually distinct, whereas the immaterial clusters, like space, cannot be reckoned as consisting of four. Just as space, Mahamati, is beyond numerical description, yet it is imagined as space, in the same way, Mahamati, the clusters, beyond reckoning numerically, apart from existence and nonexistence, apart from the four alternatives, are expressed numerically by the unenlightened, not by the wise. By the wise, Mahamati, they are represented as neither different nor not different, like diverse appearances of illusory forms, like phantoms in a dream. The clusters appear manifold by dint of that very adherence because of ignorance of the goal of ultimate knowledge. This, Mahamati, is the definition of the nature of the clusters. You should reject that multiplicity, Mahamati, and, having turned away, teach detachment.

“As detachment is being taught in the circles of the audiences of all Buddhas to refute hallowed opinions, Mahamati, perception of the selflessness of phenomena is clarified, and entry into the stage Far Going comes about. Having entered the great stage Far Going, one becomes master of many concentrations. And due to acquisition of the mental body, one attains concentration analogous to magic: having attained power, superknowledge, and mastery, one becomes a support for all beings, like the earth. Just as the great earth is the support of all beings, so, Mahamati, is a great bodhisattva a support for all beings.

“Also, Mahamati, nirvana is of four kinds. What four kinds? The nirvana of the nonexistence of inherent existence in things, the nirvana of the nonexistence of diverse things, the nirvana of awareness of the nonexistence of self-defining things; the nirvana cutting off the tie of continuity of particular and common characteristics of the clusters. These four, Mahamati, are nirvana to dogmatists, not in my teaching. In my teaching, Mahamati, disengagement of the imagining cognitive consciousness is called nirvana.”

Mahamati said, “Haven’t the consciousnesses been established as eight by the Blessed One?”

The Blessed One said, “They have been established, Mahamati.”

Mahamati said, “Then if they are established, Blessed One, how does disengagement of the cognitive consciousness take place without that of the other seven consciousnesses?”

The Blessed One said, “The operation of the seven consciousnesses, Mahamati, takes place on its own account. Cognitive consciousness, furthermore, Mahamati, acting on immersion in discrimination of objects, fills the receptacle consciousness with impressions; the intellect goes along together in the form of thought immersed in grasping self and possession. Due to immersion in the domain of subjective mental objects dependent on the receptacle consciousness appearing as an integral entity, reciprocal mental disturbance takes place. Like waves of the ocean, Mahamati, driven by the winds of subjective mental objects, they start and stop. Thus, Mahamati, by the disengagement of the

cognitive consciousness, the disengagement of the other seven consciousnesses takes place.

“So it is said,

I do not attain nirvana by a thing, an act, or a form:

I attain nirvana when consciousness grounded in false imagination ceases.

On its account, having seized on it, connected to the course of the intellect,

it gives cause to thought, and fixated consciousness.

Just as there are no waves on a mighty current that's dried up, so variety of consciousness does not go on when it has ceased.

“Also, Mahamati, we will describe the principles of distinguishing imagined nature, by which definition of principles distinguishing imagined nature with suitably apt distinctions you and other great bodhisattvas, detached from the formulations of imagination, well aware of the inherence resource of first-hand wisdom and the guiding methods of dogmatists, free from imagination of grasped and

grasper, will not construe the varied diverse manifestation of the dependent in the form of imagined identities.

“Then what is the definition of the patterns of distinctions of imagined nature? Imagination of verbal expression, imagination of signification, imagination of characteristics, imagination of value, imagination of identity, imagination of cause, imagination of opinion, imagination of connection, imagination of origination, imagination of non-origination, imagination of association, imagination of being bound or unbound. This, Mahamati, is a description of the principles of distinction of imagined nature.

“Then what, Mahamati, is imagination of verbal expression? It means immersion in the sweetness sung in various voices. This, Mahamati, is imagination of verbal expression.

“Then what, Mahamati, is imagination of signification? It imagines there is some thing signified that exists of itself, accessible by ultimate knowledge, based upon which verbal expression takes place.

“Then what is imagination of characteristics? It becomes immersed in that very signification, which appears like a mirage, by immersion in a variety of characteristics; that is to say it imagines all things in terms of heat, motion, fluidity, and solidity.

“Then what is imagination of value? It means talk of objects of value such as gold silver, and jewels.

“Then what is imagination of identity? It means a determination of the identity of a thing, that ‘it is this and nothing else,’ imagining it in terms of dogmatic constructs.

“Then what is imagination of cause? By whatever causal conditions the occurrence of the characteristic of cause is distinguished in relation to existence and nonexistence, that is the imagination of cause.

“Then what is imagination of opinion? It means immersion in dogmatic constructions of erroneous notions of nonexistence and existence, oneness and otherness, both and neither.

“Then what is the imagination of connection? It means specification of connection and separation defining self and possession.

“Then what is imagination of origination? It means immersion in the origination through conditions of what is present and what is not.

“Then what is imagination of non-origination? It means all things which have not previously originated, not having existed, come about by conditions, as groundless entities.

“Then what is imagination of association? It means being intimately associated together like gold and filament.

“Then what is imagination of being bound or unbound? It means being immersed in object and cause of bondage, like a person is tied up with rope and freed from it.

“Such, Mahamati, is a description of the patterns of distinction of imagined nature, in which appearances of patterns of distinction of imagined nature all unenlightened ordinary people are immersed. Engrossed in immersion in the relative as reality and unreality,

Mahamati, they become engrossed in a variety of imagined identities. What appears as variety based on illusion is imagined by the unenlightened with the understanding that what they're seeing is other than illusion. And illusion, Mahamati, is none other than variety, yet not identical. Were it other, variety would not have illusion for a cause. But if it were identical, as long as there is variety there would be no distinction between illusion and variety; but the distinction is evident, so it is not other and not identical.

“Hence, for this reason, Mahamati, you and other great bodhisattvas should adhere to the nonexistence or existence of illusion. So it is said,

Cognition with mind tied to objects takes place in thought.

Insight, though, operates in the domain of essence without image.

Imagined identity imposed on the relative is not really there:

the imagined is grasped by confusion; the relative is not imagined.

Just as illusion does not prove true by multifarious occurrence,

so appearance, construed as manifold, does not prove true.

Thus invalid appearance is bondage occurring in the mind.

What is imagined by the unknowing is conceived as relative.

*This existence conceived of is relative;
the conceived appearance of diversity is imagined of the relative.
Convention and ultimate truth—there is no third causal agent:
the imagined is linked to convention; by cutting it off there is the
realm of the wise.*

*Just as reality to yogis appears as one manifold
while there is no diversity there, so is imagined appearance.
Just as the look of a form is imagined differently by the dim-sighted,
dimness neither form nor formless, so is the relative imagined by the
unaware.*

*Like gold when pure, water when free of pollution,
and the sky when cloudless, thus is the imagined pure:
there is no imagined existence, but the relative is there,
yet it is lost to the one constructing attribution or denial.
If the imagined were nonexistent due to relativity,
without existence, existence is existence originating in nonexistence.
The relative is apprehended based on the imagined;
the imagined is born from association of appearance and name.
Never having become real, what's imagined is not evident to others;
then pure essence in the highest sense is intuited.
Ten kinds of the imagined, six kinds of relative,*

and what is known as such first-hand—there is nothing more.

The five elements are factual, and so the three natures:

the yogi who evokes this in contemplation does not go beyond verity.

Appearance is relative, name is imagined,

while imagined appearance proceeds from relativity.

Examined intelligently, though, there is neither relative nor imagined;

there is no absolute existence—how could it be imagined by

intelligence?

Absolute existence is apart from existence and nonexistence;

without existence and nonexistence, how can there be those two

natures?

It is in the context of imagined nature that the two natures are

established as two;

the imagined seems diverse, but the realm of the wise is pure.

For the artificial appearance of diversity is imagined in relative terms;

thinking otherwise, one would be devoted to dogmatics.

Thought is said to be artificial, being based on perception;

that which is free of the imagined two is itself the absolute.

Then Mahamati said, “Let the Blessed One indicate to me the definition of the goal of first-hand ultimate knowledge and the One

Vehicle, by which description of first –hand attainment of the One Vehicle I and other great bodhisattvas, familiar with the One Vehicle of first-hand ultimate knowledge, may come to need no guide in the teachings of Buddhas.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “By the absence of imagination based on statements taken on authority, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva reflects alone with inherent individual intelligence, not needing another’s guidance, avoiding notional imagination, strives for successive entry into the stages of those who arrive at reality as such. This, Mahamati, is a definition of the goal of first-hand ultimate knowledge.

“Then what is the definition of the goal of the One Vehicle? By virtue of awakening by attainment of the path of one vehicle, I call it One

Vehicle. What is awakening by attainment of the path of one vehicle? When false imagination ceases to operate by abiding in the truth of object and subject as a false dichotomy, awakening to the One Vehicle is accomplished. This awakening to the One Vehicle, Mahamati, has never before been attained by any other religious leaders, hearers, solitary illuminates, priests, or anyone else but me. Hence, for this reason, Mahamati it is called the unique vehicle.”

Mahamati said, “For what reason have three vehicles been taught by the Blessed One, while the One Vehicle is not taught?”

The Blessed One said, “I don’t speak of the One Vehicle to any hearers or solitary illuminates because they have no way to attain complete nirvana on their own; for which reason, Mahamati, all hearers and solitary illuminates are liberated by the instruction of the Realized applying specific knowledge of discipline, not on their own.

“Also, Mahamati, the One Vehicle is not for the hearers and solitary illuminates because they are not free from the obstruction of knowledge and the influences of action. Because they have not realized the selflessness of phenomena, and have not attained

disappearance by inconceivable transformation, I teach three vehicles to hearers. When all harmful influences are gone from them by realization of selflessness of phenomena, then they wake up in the realm devoid of impulse, due to absence of intoxication by absorption in the negative effects of influences. Moreover, after having fulfilled the requirements of the transmundane realm without impulse, they will attain mastery of the inconceivable reality body.

“So it is said,

The celestial vehicle, the vehicle of priests, and that of hearers too, that of the Realized and the solitary—of these vehicles I speak.

There is no fixity of vehicles as long as thought operates; when thought is disengaged, there is neither vehicle nor traveler.

There is no constancy of vehicle; I speak of distinction of vehicles.

It is in order to attract the unenlightened that I speak of distinction of vehicles.

The three liberations, thus, and even selflessness of things amount to affliction by the knowledge of equality; they are abandoned by emancipation.

Just as a piece of wood is carried away by waves in the ocean,

so is the deluded hearer carried along by appearances.

Those bound by the affliction of inclinations but not fettered by compulsions,

intoxicated by the wine of concentration, stay in the realm devoid of impulse:

it has no permanent goal, but doesn't disappear either:

having attained a body of concentration, one never awakens till the end of time.

Just as a drunken person wakes up when there's no wine,

so will they acquire the body of mine known as the enlightened state.

III. Impermanence

Then the Blessed One also said this to Mahamati, the great bodhisattva: “I will indicate the definition of the principles of distinction of mental bodies, so listen, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “There are three kinds of body made of mind. What three kinds? Made of mind by complete attainment of the bliss of concentration, made of mind by perception of the nature of things, and made of mind by purification practices that come with the scriptures. Practitioners attain these by complete knowledge of the characteristics of the successive stages from the first on.

“Then what, Mahamati, is the mental body of complete attainment of the bliss of concentration? In the third, fourth, and fifth stages, the cessation of the sense of attainment of bliss characterized by waves of consciousness on the ocean of mind by enjoyment of diverse

discernment of one's own mind is called the mental body of the intellect because of complete knowledge of the absence of existence in subjective mental objects.

“Then what is the mental body of perception of the nature of things?

In the eighth stage, in one who has experienced revolution of the mental basis by understanding through undistorted examination of phenomena such as illusion, by attainment of concentration analogous to magic, and by attainment of other facets of concentration, the body blossoming with multifarious masteries and superknowledges, as swift as the intellect, like an illusion, a dream, a reflection, immaterial yet appearing material, physically complete with all the various limbs, visiting the circles of assemblies in all Buddha lands, because of having realized the nature of things it is called mental.

“Then what is the mental body of purification practices that come with the scriptures? Because of perception of the pleasures of first-hand attainment of all teachings of Buddhas, it is called made of mind by purification of practices that come with the scriptures.

“Here, Mahamati, you should apply yourself to examination and analytic understanding of the characteristics of these three bodies. So it is said,

“My Great Vehicle is not a vehicle, nor a proclamation, nor words; not truths, not liberations, not even the imageless realm. But the Great Vehicle is a vehicle when controlled by concentration; the body made of mind is variegated, adorned with flowers of masteries.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Blessed One: “Five acts with immediate consequences have been spoken of by the Blessed One. What are those five acts with immediate consequences, which family sons or family daughters who commit will be in unvarying hell?”

The Blessed One said, “Listen, then, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The blessed One said this: “Then what, Mahamati, are the five acts with immediate consequences? Killing mother, father, or a saint; dividing the community; and maliciously shedding the blood of a Realized One.

“What, then, Mahamati, is the mother of beings? It is craving, connected with new birth, concomitant with affection and emotion, acting as a mother. Ignorance acts as a father in the arising of the collective media of sense. By uprooting both of these forever, one becomes a killer of mother and father. By forever abandoning propensities that manifest as enemies, pernicious as rats, characteristically imitating, one becomes a slayer of saints.

“Then what is division of the community? Destroying forever the root of the collection of mutually distinct clusters is called division of the community.

“When erroneous imagination of absence of impulses in the three liberations is terminally removed from the eight bodies of consciousness aware that particular and common externals are

constructions of subjective mental objects, on account of malicious shedding of blood of the Buddha of consciousness one is said to commit an act with immediate consequences.

“These, Mahamati, are the internal five acts with immediate consequences, which a family son or family daughter who commits comes to realize the Dharma. I will also indicate to you, Mahamati, the external five acts with immediate consequences, by means of which indication you and other bodhisattvas future and present will not become confused.

“So what are they? They are the acts with immediate consequences described in the course of the teaching, those who commit which will not attain realization, other than those who have attained the three liberations, but for the application of projected empowerment. For a hearer with projected empowerment is empowered by the support of bodhisattvas or Buddhas in order to repel the notion of remorse of any others who commit the five acts with immediate consequences, so that one who has cast off the burden will not have any idea of regret. Also, the application of projected empowerment is shown by me for the purpose of inspiration.

“The comprehension of one who commits the five acts with immediate consequences is not invariable, except through awareness that what is seen by one’s own mind is the content of conception, by perception free of grasping of self and personal belonging imagined of the body, possessions, abode, and way of life. Somehow, some day, in another context, one will be freed from the ills of subjective imagination.

“So it is said,

“Craving is called the mother, and ignorance then the father.

On account of awareness of objects, consciousness is called Buddha.

Saints are latent inclinations, the community of five is the group of clusters.

By immediate separation, action will have no room.”

Mahamati also said, “Please tell me, Blessed One, how does the buddhahood of the blessed Buddhas come about?”

The Blessed One said, “The buddhahood of the blessed Buddhas comes about from awareness of the selflessness of phenomena and persons, Mahamati, and from awakening of complete knowledge of the two obstructions, and from mastery of the two disappearances and elimination of the two-fold affliction. By mastery of these very same principles, Mahamati, the complete buddhahood of hearers and solitary illuminates comes about. Hence, in this sense, Mahamati, I teach one vehicle.

“So it is said,

*“The two-fold selflessness, the afflictions, and the pair of obstructions;
by attainment of disappearance through inconceivable transformation
one reaches reality as such.”*

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Buddha: “With what intention has it been openly said by the Blessed One in assembly, ‘I am all the Buddhas past, and the variety of exemplars in the birth stories, a hundred thousand birth stories in which it is said,

“I myself at that time, on that occasion, was King Mandhatr, Gaja, Shuka, Indra, Vyasa, Sunetra,” and so on’?”

The Blessed One said, “It is in reference to a set of four kinds of sameness, Mahamati, that the Realized Ones, the able, the perfectly enlightened, announce in company, ‘At that time, on that occasion, I was Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, Kashyapa.’ In reference to what set of four kinds of sameness? Sameness of letters, sameness of speech, sameness of teaching, sameness of body. It is in reference to this set of four kinds of sameness that the Realized Ones, the able, the perfectly enlightened, speak forth in company.

“Now, then, Mahamati, what is sameness of letters? The letters by which my name is called Buddha, those letters are used of those Buddhas, Blessed Ones, no different letters, by the nature of the identity of the letters. This, Mahamati, is sameness of letters.

“Then what, Mahamati, is the sameness of speech of the Realized, the able, the perfectly enlightened? My construction of speech operates with the sixty-four phonemes pronounced in Brahma heavens, and the construction of speech of those Realized Ones

too, those able, perfectly enlightened ones, also operates with the sixty-four phonemes pronounced in Brahma heavens, no less, no more, no different, because of the musical nature of the sounds pronounced in Brahma heavens.

“Then what is sameness of body? It means I and those Realized, Able, Perfectly Enlightened Ones are the same in terms of the body of reality and body of physical features and attributes, no different, except what is adopted to govern disciples. According to the differences in people’s ways of life in different places, Mahamati, the Realized Ones show a variety of forms.

“Then what, Mahamati, is sameness of teaching? It means they and I are people who have realized the teachings of the thirty-seven elements of enlightenment.

“It is in reference to this set of four kinds of sameness that the Realized, Able, Perfectly Enlightened Buddhas speak out in company. So it is said,

“Kashyapa, Krakucchanda, and Konakamuni too were me,

I tell the successors of the Victorious, having emerged from sameness.”

Mahamati also said, “As to what has been said by the Blessed One —‘Between the night the Realized One became enlightened and the night he will enter complete nirvana, in this interval not even a single letter has been pronounced by the Realized One, nor will be pronounced; the word of Buddha has no statement’—in reference to what is it said by the Realized, the Able, the Perfectly Enlightened, that the word of Buddha has no statement?”

The Blessed One said, “In reference to two realities, Mahamati, have I said this. What two realities? The nature of first-hand reality and the nature of eternal permanent reality. I have said this in reference to this pair of realities. What does one’s own first-hand reality refer to? What was attained by those Realized Ones has also been attained by me, no less, no more, the realm of first-hand attainment, beyond verbal formulation, free from the ambiguities of words.

“Then what is the nature of eternal, permanent reality? It means the permanence of this realm of reality of mine is eternal, imbued with

the nature of reality, like a mine from which gold and silver are extracted; whether or not there come to be Realized Ones, the reality of these truths is permanent, because of the permanence of reality and the necessary nature of reality.

“It is like the road to an ancient city, Mahamati; it is like someone wandering in a forest might discover an ancient city, accessed by an indistinct road. Suppose he enters that city, and having gone in and gone wherever he wants, experiences the pleasures of the activities of the city. What do you think, Mahamati—was that road by which he entered that city and experienced the variety of the city produced by that person?”

“No, Blessed One,” he said.

The Blessed One said, “So is what has been attained by me and other Realized Ones: this reality is permanent, the permanent nature of reality, the necessary nature of reality, essentially so, actuality, verity. Hence, for this reason, Mahamati, I have said, ‘Between the night the Realized One became enlightened and the night he will enter complete nirvana, in this interval not even a single

letter has been pronounced by the Realized One, nor will be pronounced.'

“So it is said,

*“Between the night I attained realization and the night I entered complete nirvana,
I never promulgated anything at all.
What I’ve said refers to the permanence of reality first hand;
neither by those Buddhas nor by me is anything predicated at all.”*

Then Mahamati also entreated the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One teach me the definition of the nonexistence and existence of all things such that I and other great bodhisattvas, detached from nonexistence and existence, may quickly attain supreme perfect enlightenment.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said, “This world is doubly attached, namely attached to existence and attached to nonexistence, and is fallen into views favoring being or nonbeing, judging what is no way out to be a way out.

“So how is this world dependent on existence? That is to say that the world comes about when there are causes and conditions, but not when there are not; it comes about when evidently occurring, but not when not evident—so saying, Mahamati, of things with the causes and conditions of existence, one attributes cause to the world.

“Then how does one become attached to nonexistence? It means while accepting passion, animosity and delusion, yet one imagines passion, animosity, and delusion have no actual existence.

“Between one who does not accept the existence of things because of detachment from the appearance of being, and one who does not

acknowledge passion, animosity, and delusion in Buddhas, listeners, and solitary illuminates, saying they are not there due to liberation from the appearance of being, which of these, Mahamati, is the nihilist?”

Mahamati said, “The one who has accepted passion, animosity, and delusion yet doesn’t admit them.”

The Blessed One said, “Good, good, Mahamati; it is very good indeed, that you have spoken thus. One does not become a nihilist only by disavowal of the existence of passion, animosity, and delusion; one also negates Buddhas, hearers, and solitary illuminates. Why? Because of the internal and external ungraspability of afflictions. For passion, animosity, and delusion cannot be apprehended internally or externally, having no body. And by the refusal to acknowledge those without passion, animosity, or delusion, one negates Buddhas, hearers, and solitary illuminates. ‘They are naturally liberated, those Buddhas, hearers, and solitary illuminates, due to the nonexistence of anything to be bound, or a cause of bondage. It is when there is something to be bound that

there is bondage and a cause of bondage.’ So saying, Mahamati, one becomes a nihilist.

“This, Mahamati, is the definition of nonexistence and existence. It is in reference to this that I have said, ‘A notion of personality as big as the polar mountain is better than the notion of emptiness of those who overestimate nonexistence and existence,’ for those who overestimate nonexistence and existence become nihilists.

“One whose mind has fallen into individual and common notions without acknowledging it because of having no realization that they are constructions of subjective mental objects, due to not acknowledging it, due to the consequent view of permanence associated with external existents, conceiving the clusters, elements, and media—which are apart from any form of construct—as each instant distinctly separate, stopping and disappearing as a continuity, also becomes a nihilist.

“So it is said,

“The range of thought is as far as the two ends of is and is not:

by blocking its range, accurate thought is destroyed.

When there is no grasping of objects, there is no destruction in negation,

as there is reality as it is to the wise, as such, as a realm.

Whatever comes to be after not having existed, having come to be passes away too: being and nonbeing are not fixed by assumptions in my teaching to you.

Not by philosophers, nor by Buddhas, not by me or by anyone at all is existence proven by assumptions; how can negation be?

How can there be proven existence of anything to which nonexistence applies?

Nonexistence and existence are construed by the erroneous notions of doctrines of origination.

Whatever involves nothing at all that originates or passes away the world does not find its existence or nonexistence when seeing clearly.”

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also entreated the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One teach me, let the Felicitous One teach me, let the Realized, Able, Perfectly Enlightened One, best of speakers, indicate to me the leading principle of the goal, by which

description of the leading principle of the goal, properly analyzed, I and other great bodhisattvas may quickly awaken supreme perfect enlightenment and become free of any need for others' guidance, from any religious or philosophical dogmatists.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, Mahamati listened to the Buddha.

The Blessed One said this to him: “The leading principle of the goal of all hearers, solitary illuminates, enlightened people, and people living for enlightenment, is twofold, namely the leading principle of the goal and the leading principle of instruction.

“The leading principle of the goal, Mahamati, is distinguished by first-hand experience, beyond speech, imagination, and words, reaching the realm where there is no impulse, the inherent characteristic of arrival at the stage of first-hand realization, excluding all the destructive forces of speculation and dogmatism. Having struck

down all those demons of dogmatics, first-hand realization reigns.
This, Mahamati, is a description of the leading principle of the goal.

“Then what, Mahamati, is the leading principle of instruction? That is to say the diverse instruction of the nine-part teaching, excluding suppositions of other and same, real and unreal, led by employment of skill in expedient means, is discerning accommodation to people’s conditions. Whatever anyone feels confidence in, that is what to teach that individual. This, Mahamati, is a description of the leading principle of instruction. You and other great bodhisattvas should apply this in practice.

“So it is said,

*“Aim and leading principle, first-hand experience and instruction:
those who see cognizant of the distinctions are not under the control
of speculation.*

*Existence is not really there as imagined by the naïve;
why don’t logicians seek liberation by nonexistence?*

*Those viewing the constructed as bound to origination and
dissolution*

develop dualism but do not see, due to perversion.

*There can only be one truth, nirvana detached from intellect;
one should see the imagined world as insubstantial, an illusion, a
reflection.*

*Passion is not really there, nor animosity, delusion, or personality;
all the clusters seem to be there, like dreams, due to craving.”*

At that time Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also entreated the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One teach me, let the Blissful One teach me, the definition of imagination of what doesn’t actually exist. Why, what, how, and to whom does imagination of the unreal occur when it is happening? Imagination of what doesn’t actually exist has been called by the Blessed One imagination of what doesn’t actually exist: to what phenomenon, Blessed One, does the expression ‘imagination of what doesn’t actually exist’ refer? And how does imagination of what doesn’t actually exist come to be when imagining specifically?”

The Blessed One said, “Good, good, Mahamati! It is good indeed that you think instruction should be sought on this matter. You have undertaken to benefit many people, Mahamati, for the happiness of

many people, out of compassion for the world, for the sake of the mass of living beings, for the welfare and happiness of celestials and humans. So listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “Imagination takes place proceeding from immersion in mental construction of a variety of objects that don’t actually exist. And in people engrossed in immersion in the grasped and the grasper, Mahamati, whose minds have not ascertained that these are only subjective perceptions, and who have fallen into extremes of notions of being and nonbeing, and have nurtured impressions of the specific constructions of hallowed opinions, through immersion in grasping of various external objects disturbance of mind and psyche occurs, communicated through imagination, taking place through immersion in self and possessory interest.”

Mahamati said, “Then, Blessed One, if imagination takes place proceeding from immersion in mental construction of a diverse variety of objects in people who have fallen into extremes of notions of being and nonbeing, who have nurtured specific conceptions of hallowed notions of what can be apprehended and what apprehends, due to immersion in grasping various external objects disturbance of mind and psyche occurs, communicated through imagination; taking place through immersion in various things existent and nonexistent due to failure to realize they are only subjective perceptions, then just as the varied appearance of external objects, the appearance of falling into extremes of being and nonbeing, is unrelated to existence and nonexistence, void of the characteristics defined by these notions, so it has none of the characteristics of measure, capacity, element, example, or reason, in an ultimate sense. Then why does varied imagination take place only in conceiving immersion in varied existence that has no real substance, while imagination does not take place in conceiving immersion in the characteristics of ultimate truth?

“No, Blessed One, a doctrine with inconsistent reasoning sticks to you in saying it occurs in one and not the other, while saying

immersion in extremes of being and nonbeing is the development of views from imagination of what is not—like construing, by means of imagination, the semblance of a single complete form from the variety in a person made by the diverse elements of a magic trick—hence the nonexistence of the various things, with the cessation of imagination. This is fallen into the mode of thinking of materialism.”

The Blessed One said, “Imagination, Mahamati, neither goes on nor ceases. Why? Due to the inapplicability of imagination of being and nonbeing because of the absence of existence of external objects, due to awareness that they are only subjective perceptions, Mahamati, imagination neither goes on nor ceases, except by the construction of imagination of a variety of subjective thoughts on the part of the unenlightened. I say that imagination takes place accompanied by activity, through immersion in the appearance of existence of variety. How then, Mahamati, can unenlightened ordinary people, freed of ideas of self and possession through awareness that their own imaginations are only thought, freed of the ill consequences of assumptions of effect and cause, having experienced a withdrawal from mental relation by realizing it is only subjective perception, accomplished in knowledge in all the stages,

attain the state of first-hand realization of those who arrive at reality themselves, the cessation of mental construction of the notion of self-existent substance in the five elements? So it is for this reason, Mahamati, that it is said by me, 'Imagination comes from immersion in a variety of things that don't exist; one is liberated by thorough knowledge of the meaning of the substance of the variety of subjective imagination as it is.'

"So it is said,

*"Those for whom the world operates
by causes and conditions
are hooked on the four extremes;
they are not experts in my teaching.*

*The world does not come to be if it isn't existing,
nor if existing, nor yet both existing and not existing
by conditions and by causes
as imagined by the unenlightened.*

When one sees the world as not existing

*and not not existing, not real or unreal,
then the mind is freed
and discovers selflessness.*

*All things from which conditions come about are unoriginated,
for effect is all conditions; nothing comes from effect.
Effect does not come from effect; duality would be implied of effect,
and becoming from effect is not found by adherence to duality.*

*When one sees the constructed has no objective support,
it is surely only mental, so I say it is thought content.
Matter, the basis of nature, is unrelated to becoming by conditions;
eternal existence, supreme Brahma, I say is this matter.*

*For soul is not there as an existing thing
really as represented;
the nature of the clusters as clusters like that
is representational, not as an objective thing.*

*Equality is fourfold—characteristic, cause, becoming,
and equality of selflessness is the fourth for practitioners.*

*The cessation of all views is detached from imagined and imagining;
I say the content of thought is void of real perception and is
counterfeit.*

*Not existence, nor nonexistence either,
unconnected to existence and nonexistence,
as such I say the matter of mind
is independent of thought.*

*The end of emptiness as such
is nirvana of the reality realm;
the diverse mental body
I say is made of mind.*

*The occurrence of varied thought is bound
by the impressions of imagination
for what is attributed to the world
is only mental but appears external to people.*

*What is seen is not found externally;
thought appears diverse—*

body, possessions, and abode

I say are contents of thought.”

At that point Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, said this to the Blessed One: “How about what has been said by the Blessed One, that great bodhisattvas and others should not grasp meaning as articulated? How not, Blessed One, is a great bodhisattva not one who grasps meaning as articulated? And what is articulation? What is meaning?”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “Then what, Mahamati, is articulation? It refers to discourse produced by the teeth, jaws, palate, tongue, and space between the lips, forming correspondences between words and letters, causing conceptual impressions; this is called articulation.

“Then what, Mahamati, is meaning? With insight substantiated by thought and meditation on what has been heard, the one-flavored path to the city of nirvana, preceded by turning away from dependence on impressions by one’s own intelligence, examining the attainment defined by the particular meanings in the states of the stages in the domain of one’s own first-hand attainment, a great bodhisattva becomes familiar with meaning.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva who is familiar with articulation and meaning sees articulation as other and not other from meaning, and meaning from articulation. Now if meaning were other than what is articulated, it would be based on expression of unarticulated meaning. But that meaning is accessed by articulation, like a valued object by means of a lamp. Just as a person might hold up a lamp to look upon a valued object—‘This specific item of mine is here in this particular place’—in the same way, Mahamati, by means of the lamp of articulation of verbal instructions great bodhisattvas gain access to first-hand ultimate attainment beyond verbal construction.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, by becoming engrossed in immersion in meaning as articulated in respect to ‘undestroyed,’ ‘unoriginated,’ ‘completely extinct by nature,’ ‘three vehicles,’ ‘one vehicle,’ ‘five elements,’ ‘mind,’ ‘nature,’ and so on, one falls into ideas of attribution and denial, construing them otherwise than as they are used, like the false imagination of seeing a variety in a magic trick, just as an illusory variety is imagined other than as it should be viewed, by children but not by full-fledged adults.

“So it is said,

*Having construed as articulated, they attribute thingness;
due to that attribution, they fall into the abode of hell.*

For self is not found with the clusters, nor the clusters in self.

They are not as imagined, but they are not nonexistent.

*If the existence of all things as the ignorant imagine
were as viewed, all would be seers of reality.*

*Due to the nonexistence of defilement of all things, there is no state
of purity;*

they are not as viewed, yet not nonexistent.

“And also, Mahamati, I will teach you a description of knowledge and consciousness, by means of which description of knowledge and consciousness, involving suitable distinction, you and other great bodhisattvas, having realized the import of the description of knowledge and consciousness, may quickly awaken supreme perfect enlightenment.

“Now then, Mahamati, knowledge is of three kinds: worldly, above the world, and utterly beyond the world. Then that which, having come about, passes away, is consciousness, while what does not pass away after coming about is knowledge.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, consciousness is subject to signs or absence of signs, caused by the appearance of diversity, not existing and existing. Knowledge transcends signs and absence of signs.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, consciousness is characterized by addition, while knowledge is characterized by reduction.

“Now knowledge is of three kinds: that which perceives particular and common characteristics, that which perceives origination and destruction, and that which perceives nonorigination and nondestruction.

“Worldly knowledge is that of those who are immersed in suppositions of being and nonbeing, all dogmatists and unsophisticated ordinary people.

“Knowledge above the world is that of all hearers and solitary illuminates who are immersed in a mentality fallen into identity and commonality.

“The knowledge utterly beyond the world, of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, detached from extremes of being and nonbeing by examination of truth without images, seeing nondestruction and nonorigination, takes place from realization of selflessness in the stage of arrival at reality as such.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, knowledge is characterized by having no contact, while consciousness is characterized by contact with a

variety of objects.

“Moreover, consciousness is characterized by a combination of passing away and arising of threefold contacts [of sense faculties, sense data, and sense consciousnesses], while knowledge is without contact by its own nature.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, knowledge, the realm of ultimate knowledge realized first hand, is characterized by having no acquisition, because it neither enters in nor goes out, like a reflection of the moon in water.

“So it is said,

*Action is accumulated by mind and arranged by knowledge,
and by insight one attains the imperceptible, and power.*

*Thought is tied to objects, knowledge operates in reasoning;
but insight operates on an imperceptible and higher plane.*

*The real nature of imagination
beyond the conceived distinction*

*of mind, intellect, and consciousness
hearers have gotten, but not the Victor's own heirs.*

*In peace, and exceptional patience,
knowledge of reality as such is pure;
a higher meaning appears,
beyond anything intended.*

*For my insight is of three kinds:
that by which the wise are developed,
that by which characteristics are distinguished,
and that which describes things.*

*For insight is separate from the two vehicles, being exclusive of
nonexistence;
that of the two vehicles proceeds from immersion in existence as
real,
while mine, insight into reality as such,
operates by entry into the matter of mind.*

“Furthermore, Mahamati, the notion of development held by dogmatists who preach development is of nine kinds: development of form, development of appearance, development of cause, development of connection, development of view, development of origination, development of existence, development of manifestation of conditions, development of manifestation of action. These are the nine notions of development in reference to which all dogmatists become proponents of development arising from being or nonbeing.

“Now then, Mahamati, development of form is from the appearance of formation becoming different, like the appearance of gold in a variety of modifications as ornaments. Just as gold is seen changed into various forms by being turned into bracelets, necklaces, good luck charms, and so on, while the gold does not change in state, in the same way, Mahamati, the development of all things is imagined by some philosophers and others to be derived from primary matter. But that is not so; and it is nothing but a conceptualization. So can the distinction of all development be seen, like the development of curd from milk or wine from fruit; just as development is conceived by philosophers as development of each modification from milk to curd, fruit to wine, and so on, but nothing herein transforms, because

of the absence of external existence of subjective mental objects, real or unreal; so also, Mahamati, is the operation of thought projection of subjective mental construction of unenlightened ordinary people to be seen. There is no phenomenon starting or stopping herein, Mahamati, being like the vision of forms taking place in a hallucination or a dream. It is like appearance and disappearance are apprehended in a dream, like the death and birth of the son of a barren woman.

“So it is said,

*Whoever imagine that development in form over time
in elements, state, and capacities
can be comprehended in intermediate existence
are not enlightened.*

*The Victors do not imagine the world
as having come about in dependence,
but this world is indeed a causal ground,
like an unborn soul.”*

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also asked the Blessed One for the meaning of attachment to all things and the meaning of liberation: “Let the Blessed One teach me, let the Realized, Able, perfectly Enlightened One teach me the definition of attachment and nonattachment in relation to all things, by which definition of attachment and nonattachment, well-informed as to accurate distinction, I and other great bodhisattvas, familiar with all strategies of attachment and nonattachment, may not fall into attachment by immersion in meaning as articulated; and by familiarity with attachment and nonattachment in respect to all things, disregarding literalistic thinking, traveling to the societies in all Buddha-lands by means of intelligence, clearly marked by the impressions of powers, masteries, superknowledges, and concentration spells, intellects firmly fixed on ten rays of perfection by means of a variety of emanated light beams, effortlessly as the movement of the sun and moon, magnets and elements, in all stages seeing without subjectively imagined description, by seeing all things as like dreams and illusions, having entered into the basis of the stage of buddhahood, attracting the realm of all beings by teaching truth according to capacities, may establish them in detachment from partiality to extremes of reality or unreality of all things as dreams

and illusion, detachment from imagination of dissolution and origination, based on use of understanding other than as articulated.”

The Blessed One said, “Good, good, Mahamati; then listen, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “Unlimited, Mahamati, is attachment by immersion in meaning as articulated pertaining to all things: attachment by immersion in descriptions, attachment by immersion in customary usage, attachment by immersion in being and nonbeing, attachment by immersion in distinction of origination and nonorigination, attachment to preconceived distinctions of extinction and nonextinction, attachment to preconceived distinctions of what is a way out and what is not a way out, attachment by immersion in distinction of what is constructed and what is not constructed, attachment by immersion in distinction of the characteristics of what is a stage and what is not a stage, attachment to the imagination of comprehension in subjective thinking,

attachment to the particular notions of hallowed ways of thinking in one-sided positive or negative terms, attachment to distinctions of the realizations of the three vehicles and the one vehicle.

“These and others, Mahamati, are unenlightened ordinary people’s attachments to their own thinking, thinking in terms of which attachments they wrap themselves and others up like silkworms in the thread of attachment to their own thought and opinions by the allure of the thread of attachment to subjective thought and opinion, engrossed in immersion in descriptions attached to existence and nonexistence. But there is no attachment here at all, Mahamati, nor any manifestation of attachment, from a detached perception of all things. With false imagination inoperative, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva goes about in the midst of all things as a detached seer.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, from the perspective of awareness that external existence or nonexistence describe subjective objects of thought, conformity to the imperceptible matter of mind, and detached perception of attachment to notions of all things, neither attachment nor nonattachment is characteristic of all things. No one is bound here, Mahamati, or released, except insofar as bondage

and release are distinguished by mistaken judgment. Why?

Because attachment to all things, actual or unreal, does not actually get anything.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, there are three attachments of unenlightened ordinary people, namely passion, hostility, and delusion. And craving causing repeated becoming, accompanied by passion finding pleasure, is why attachments to mundane existence are propagated. There, by cutting off connection at the five-way point of contact of people’s attachments, Mahamati, neither attachment nor nonattachment is distinguished.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, attachment is due to immersion in action and effort, based on a triple combination. Attachment to being comes about from immersion, in combination with behavior, as long as the consciousnesses are uninterrupted. By the turning away of the consciousnesses from dependence on the triple combination, by beholding the three liberations, all attachments become inoperative.

“So it is said,

*“Untrue imagination is said to be characteristic of attachment.
By true knowledge of that, the web of attachment is cleared.
By grasping existence, cognition, and articulation,
The unenlightened are bound, like silkworms,
by their own imagination, unaware of attachment.”*

Mahamati also said, “As to what has been said by the Blessed One, that however things are construed, it is not their inherent nature, for that is imagined, then if that is imagined, Blessed One, and not ascertainment of inherent characteristics of things, in saying so you cling to the nonexistence of defilement or purification, all things being conceived in terms of an imaginary nature.”

The Blessed One said, “Indeed, Mahamati, it is as you say. It is not as the nature of things is construed by unenlightened ordinary people. That is imagined, not ascertainment of inherent characteristics of things. But, as the nature of things is ascertained by the wise by ultimate knowledge, Mahamati, by ultimate vision, by the eye of ultimate insight, such is the nature of things.”

Mahamati said, “Then if, Blessed One, the nature of things is as ascertained by the wise by ultimate knowledge, by ultimate vision, by the eye of ultimate insight, and not by the celestial or physical eye, and not as the nature of things is construed by unenlightened ordinary people, then how will unenlightened ordinary people be able to turn away from misconception without ascertainment of something with an accessible ultimate substance? They are neither mistaken, Blessed One, nor not mistaken. Why? Because of ideas of implication in description of reality and unreality without ascertainment of the inherent existence of an accessible ultimate substance.

“Even as construed by the wise, Blessed One, a thing is not objectively so inherently. To them, Blessed One, the inherent characteristics of a thing appear as its nature is imagined, by designating what is not a cause as a cause. That is to say, because of being confined to a view of inherent characteristics of a thing, an object is not to others as it is to them. Thus this is attached to uncertainty, as there is no ascertainment of inherent characteristics of things. For the inherent characteristics of a thing are not the cause of imagined identity. So how will it not be as imagined when

construed by imagination? The imagined description and inherent characteristic are different. The construed and inherent characteristics, Blessed One, are differently caused. They will not become as they are imagined in relation to each other by unenlightened ordinary people.

“But this is called the meaning of turning away from people’s false imaginations—they are not actually there as construed by imagination. How is it, Blessed One, that after having rejected people’s notions of nonexistence and existence, you throw them back into a notion of existence by assumption that the domain of ultimate knowledge is an object of sense, by assumption of its inherent existence as a thing, and nullifying the teaching of detachment by teaching that ultimate knowledge is a self-existent object?”

The Blessed One said, “I have not nullified the teaching of detachment, nor induced a notion of existence, by teaching the self-existence of an ultimate object. But in order to remove the fears of people who have always been immersed in the appearance of things

as self-existent, I teach detachment by means of a view presuming ultimate knowledge exists on its own as an object.

“I do not teach them that things exist of themselves, but they will come to abide in a realistic state of detachment attained on their own. With vision not grounded in confusion, having penetrated the matter of subjective mental objects, free of notions of existence or nonexistence of external objects, they will come to abide in a realistic state of detachment comprehending three liberations. With vision not grounded in confusion, accurately impressed with the stamp of reality comprehending the three liberations, they will become direct witnesses of the nature of things by intelligence attained first hand, without reified notions of actual existence or nonexistence.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, it should not be asserted by great bodhisattvas that all things have not originated. Why? Because it is the very nature of assertion to affirm the intrinsic existence of everything, and it is applied for a particular reason. In saying by way of assertion that all things have not originated, Mahamati, a great bodhisattva fails in the assertion. Whoever asserts that all things have no origin, his assertion fails because of the nature of assertion

implying reference. Hence that assertion itself does not originate from within all things, because of the nonoccurrence of the characteristic of nonorigination to which the assertion refers: the statement that all things have not originated fails. The truth or untruth of the assertion does not originate in the elements of logical argument; for that assertion comes from description of non-occurrence of reality or unreality in all things. If they make the assertion that all things have not originated by means of that unoriginated assertion, this in itself implies destruction of the assertion. Because the truth or untruth of the assertion is something that has never occurred, the assertion cannot be made, for that assertion itself would never have occurred. So that assertion, Mahamati, should not be made. Because of the corruption of the elements of the logical argument by many flaws, and because of being constructed indefinitely as mutual grounds, assertion of the elements of the logical argument is not to be made, namely that all things are unoriginated.

“Thus it should not be asserted by a great bodhisattva that all things are empty and have no inherent nature. But a great bodhisattva should teach that all things are like illusions and dreams due to the

nonobjectivity of sense objects. It should also be taught positively that all things are like illusions and dreams because of how views delude intelligence, except to prevent the fears of the unenlightened. For ordinary people, Mahamati, are unenlightened; fallen into views of nonexistence and existence, they would deny out of fear. When afraid, Mahamati, they become alienated from the Great Vehicle.

“So it is said,

Not inherent existence, nor representation, nor substance, nor yet receptacle—

for these are imagined by the unenlightened who think wrongly, who are as if dead.

All things are unoriginated for the purpose of all philosophical arguments,

for no things have ever come about complete with proof.

One cannot construe all things as unoriginated by insight, since for that very reason the understanding of that conclusion is lost to them.

*Just as a corneal distortion is wrongly apprehended by people with dim vision,
so is this conception of existence wrongly constructed by the unenlightened.*

The triple world as a construction of representation does not exist as a thing on its own; thinkers will imagine the representation as something actually existing.

That is an interpretation, an object, a representation, and a mental struggle: transcending that, my heirs live without false ideas.

Like a mirage in the sky taken as water where there is no water, it is an object to the unenlightened, different to the wise.

The vision of the wise, who perceive the imageless, is pure; coming from three liberations, it is independent of origination and destruction.

*For the imageless, for practitioners, is not in the nonexistence of things;
the realization of the wise is produced by equality of being and nonbeing.*

*For how is the nonexistence of existents made? How equality?
When one does not recognize outer, intermediate, or inner agitation
as mental,
then one takes annihilation for the vision of an equanimous mind.”*

Mahamati also said, “According to what has also been said by the Blessed One, when it does not apprehend a graspable object, knowledge is then based on representation alone; due to the nonexistence of anything that can be apprehended by representation, there is no apprehending of that which apprehends either. Because it has no apprehension, knowledge does not occur as an expression of imagination. Then, Blessed One, does one not gain knowledge due to not perceiving the sameness and variety of particular and common characteristics of things? Or is knowledge not obtained due to disregarding the identities of things with a variety of particular and common characteristics? Or does knowledge fails to apprehend the knowable due to the interference of walls, screens, barriers, enclosures, earth, water, wind, or fire, or being too remote or too close? Or does one fail to obtain knowledge as a knowable object on account of infancy, senility, or blindness?”

“If, Blessed One, one does not gain knowledge due to not perceiving the sameness and variety of particular and common characteristics of things, then that should not be called knowledge. This is unknowing, Blessed One, which does not find an object there.

“If one does not gain knowledge due to disregard of the identities of things with a variety of particular and common characteristics, that too is unknowing, Blessed One, not knowledge. Knowledge operates when there is something to know, Blessed One, not when there isn’t; it is in connection with a cognizable object that it is called knowledge.

“Suppose knowledge is not obtained due to the interference of walls, screens, ramparts, enclosures, earth, water, wind, fire, and excessive distance or proximity, or not obtained because of a defect in the faculties associated with infancy, old age, or blindness; so if it is thus not obtained, Blessed One, it is not knowledge. It is as unknowing, cognizing an object through a defect of perception.”

The Blessed One said, “That is not unknowing, Mahamati, that is knowledge, not lack of knowledge. That is not what I meant by

saying that when it does not apprehend a graspable object, knowledge is based on representation alone. Rather, due to awareness of the construction of objects by one's own mind, given the absence of any thing existing externally, real or unreal, even knowledge does not apprehend an actual object. Because of that non-apprehension knowledge and objects of knowledge both do not occur. With attainment of the three liberations, there is no apprehending of knowledge either.

“But thinkers whose intellects have always been under the influence of propositions of existence and nonexistence do not discern this. And, not discerning, they explain ‘mind alone’ as the cessation of thought construction by negating the existence of things characterized by an external material foundation. Immersed in involvement in grasping descriptions of self and possession, because of not realizing it is a construction of a subjective mental object, they construe knowledge as an object. And by construing knowledge as an object, because of not discovering the nonexistence of external things, they take to a notion of annihilation.

“So it is said,

If knowledge does not see a cognizable object when it is there, that is unknowing, not knowledge’—this is the doctrine of logicians.

If knowledge does not see due to absence of identifying characteristics,

that is called false knowledge, obstructed, remote or too close.

If knowledge does not develop due to infancy, old age, or blindness, even with its object there, that is called false knowledge.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, ordinary unenlightened people, ever acting in a show of distorted subjective mental construction of conceptual elaboration, inexpert in both self-realized wisdom and guidance, immersed in the appearance of subjective mental objects as existing externally, enter into the path of expedient guidance, and do not actualize self-realized wisdom clear of the principles of the four extremes.”

Mahamati said, “It is as you say, Blessed One. Let the Blessed One indicate to me a definition of guidance and realization whereby I and other great bodhisattvas in the future and present may not misapprehend expertise in guidance and realization, like faulty

thinkers on the vehicles of religion and philosophy, hearers, or solitary illuminates.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart, accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “The normative method of those who arrive at reality as is, the able, the perfectly enlightened, past, future, and present, Mahamati, is of two kinds: namely a method of guidance and a method of restoration of realization. Of these, the method of a path of guidance refers to the instruction in the various collections of scriptures; they teach people according to their mental propensities.

“Then what, Mahamati, is the method of realization.? That by which practitioners dispel construction of subjective mental objects; that is to say, the realm of ultimate attainment first hand, which does not fall into extremes of bias toward oneness or otherness, both or neither,

and is beyond thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness, detached from descriptions of views connected with cause, not experienced by any false thinkers on the vehicles of religions and philosophies, hearers and solitary illuminates, who have fallen into dualistic extremes of nonexistence or existence—that I call realization.

“This, Mahamati, is the description of realized wisdom and guidance that you and other great bodhisattvas should work on. So it is said,

“My doctrine is of two kinds,

realization and guidance:

Guidance, I teach to the ignorant;

realization, to the cultivated.”

At that point Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Blessed One: “It has been said by the Blessed One, the Realized, the Able, Perfectly Enlightened One, at one time, one on occasion, that the inspiration of various formulas should not be fostered, engaged in, or partaken of as does the materialist, which is propitiation of worldly desire in the devotee, not absorbing truths.

For what reason has the Blessed One said this, that the inspiration of various formulas is materialistic, devotion to which is propitiation of worldly desire, not absorption of truth?”

The Blessed One said, “The materialistic inspiration of various formulas, Mahamati, deludes the unenlightened by various expressions of purpose; it is not reasonable, or beneficial, yet he teaches any nonsensical prattle whatever. For this reason it is called the inspiration of sundry spells of the materialist. He attracts the unsophisticated by the beauty of a variety of sounds, and does not guide by application of true principles. Not understanding all things himself, he deludes the unsophisticated with views fallen into two extremes, and also ruins himself.

“Because of not being liberated from attachment to a way of life, not being aware of the construction of subjective mental objects, being engrossed in the identities of external things, imagination does not cease. Hence, Mahamati, for this reason, the materialist imagination of various formulas, not free from birth, old age, sickness, death, grief, lamentation, suffering, dejection, and so on, deludes the

unsophisticated with various expressions evoking paradigms of cause.

“Even Indra, Mahamati, whose intellect had digested many sciences, and an author of treatises in his own voice: a student of his in the guise of a serpent declared in Indra’s court in heaven, ‘Either your thousand-spoked chariot must break, or may every one of my snake heads be cut off.’ And the materialist student in the guise of a serpent defeated the lord of the gods with the same doctrine, destroyed the thousand-spoked chariot, and came back to this world. Such, Mahamati is this fixation on various materialistic paradigms of cause by which even an animal, having studied, deceives deities and titans with various verbal expressions, engrossing even them, to say nothing of humans, in the notion of coming and going. So, for this reason, Mahamati, materialism is to be abandoned as a bearer of causes of production of misery; one should not serve it, be devoted to it, or be associated with it. For only apprehension of objects by bodily perception, Mahamati, is taught by materialists by means of various verbal expressions.

“Materialism is a hundred thousand fold, Mahamati, but in the twilight of the world, in the last five hundred years it will become fragmented because of being led on by wrongly conceived notions of cause; it will become fragmented because of not getting students. It is not their own doctrine but this same fragmented materialism, Mahamati, adhering to various arguments, that is taught by philosophers, while immersed in the presumption that it is their own reasoning. For none of the philosophers has a doctrine of his own science, Mahamati; rather, they teach this very same materialism in many forms, with hundreds of thousands of rationales. And because of delusion they don't realize that it is not their own doctrine, that it is materialism.”

Mahamati said, “If, Blessed One, all the philosophers are teaching the very same materialism by means of diverse verbal expressions setting forth examples, not their own doctrine, while immersed in the presumption that it is their own reasoning, then does even the Blessed One also teach the same materialism with various expressions to deities, titans, and humans gathered in different places, not your own idea, being within the teachings of doctrines of all philosophers?”

The Blessed One said, “I do not teach materialism, Mahamati, nor coming and going. Rather, Mahamati, I teach no coming and going. Therein, ‘coming’ derives from the arrival of the totality of occurrence, while ‘going,’ Mahamati, is annihilation. ‘No coming and going’ refers to nonorigination. I do not teach any of the conceptions of philosophers or religious leaders, Mahamati. Why? Because dualistic conceptualization does not take place, because of not being engrossed in external things that don’t exist because they are based on subjective construction of mental objects. Because of the nonexistence of defined objects due to realizations they are constructions of what is seen by the subjective mind, conception of subjective mental objects does not go on. Because of entry into the three liberations realizing signless emptiness wherein imagination is inoperative, it is called liberated.

“I remember, Mahamati, I was in another region when a materialist Brahmin approached me, and without even being acknowledged said to me, ‘Everything, Gautama, is created.’ I said to him, ‘If everything is created, O Brahmin, this is the first materialism.’

“‘Everything is uncreated, Gautama.’”

“ ‘If everything is uncreated, O Brahmin, this is the second materialism. So too ‘all is permanent,’ ‘all is impermanent,’ ‘all is produced,’ and ‘all is unproduced.’ This last, Brahmin, is the sixth materialism.’

“The materialist Brahmin also said to me, ‘Everything, Gautama, is the same,’ ‘Everything is different,’ ‘Everything is both,’ ‘Everything is neither,’ ‘Everything is based on causes, as seen to occur from various causes.’ I told the Brahmin this brought it up to the eleventh materialism.

“ ‘Furthermore, Gautama, all is unexplained, all is explained, soul exists, soul does not exist, this world exists, this world does not exist, the next world exists, the next world does not exist, the next world both exists and does not exist, there is liberation, there is no liberation, all is momentary, all is not momentary; space, extinction without consciousness, and nirvana, O Gautama, are created, are uncreated; there is intermediate existence, there is no intermediate existence.’

“I said this to him: ‘If so, O Brahmin, this is materialism; it is not mine. O Brahmin, this materialism is yours. I describe the triple world as caused without meaning by the influence of conceptually elaborated imagination since beginningless time. Imagination only goes on, O Brahmin, because of not realizing it is only subjective mental objects, not due to apprehending external things. What occurs to philosophers with their triplex combination of soul, sense, and object, does not occur to me. I, O Brahmin, do not propose causality or acausality, except that I teach interdependent occurrence, representing it conceptually in terms of object and subject. It is not understood by the likes of you and others whose mental continuum is fallen into self grasping.’ The reality of nirvana, space, and extinction, Mahamati, is not apprehended in reasoning, much less as something created.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, the Brahmin materialist also said, ‘Is this triple world, O Gautama, caused by ignorance, craving, and action, or is it causeless?’

“ ‘These two are both materialism, O Brahmin.’”

“ ‘All things, O Gautama, fall within the particular and the general.’

“ ‘This too, O Brahmin, is materialism. Whatever the mental agitation associated with imagination engrossed in external objects, O Brahmin, that is materialism.’

“The Brahmin materialist also said to me, ‘Is there anything at all, O Gautama, that is not materialism? This same holding of mine is taught by all philosophers as established, by means of various verbal expressions presenting paradigms of reasoning.’

“ ‘There is, O Brahmin, that which is not this holding of yours, but neither is it not taught as established, nor without using diverse verbal expressions, nor without making sense.’

“ ‘What is that which is not materialism which is not taught as established?’

“ ‘There is, O Brahmin, non-materialism where the intellect of all philosophers, and you, who are engrossed in conceptual elaboration of false imagination of external things, does not penetrate. That is

the non-development of imaginations of being and nonbeing. Because of awareness it is only subjective mental objects, imagination does not evolve. Because there is no grasping of external things, imagination is seen remaining in its own state. So this is my non-materialism, not yours. "Remaining in its own state" means it does not evolve or develop. It is called the non-development of inefficient imagination. It is this, O Brahmin, that is not materialism. In sum, Brahmin, where there is coming and going of consciousness, disappearance and emergence, wishful obsession, theory, opinion, position, grasping, immersion in diverse appearances, the meeting of people with cravings, and immersion in rationalization, this is materialism, O Brahmin. It is your holding, not mine.'

"Thus was I approached and questioned, Mahamati, by the Brahmin materialist; and thus dismissed by me, he went off silent. At that time a serpent king from the dark side came in the form of a Brahmin and said to the Blessed One, 'Then, Gautama, there is no other world.'

" 'Then where did you come from, young man?'

“ ‘I have come from White Island, Gautama.’

“ ‘Even that, Brahmin, is another world.’

“Then the young Brahmin, speechless, withdrew from sight without even asking me contrary exposition of my own doctrine, thinking, ‘The Shakyan is unfortunate, being outside my doctrine, declaring inoperative cause; he recommends that conception not take place, by understanding it as a description of subjective imagination.’ And now you ask me, Mahamati, why one who pursues the inspiration of the various formulas of materialism becomes absorbed in desire, not absorbed in truth.”

Mahamati said, “Then what do ‘truth’ and ‘desire’ mean?”

The Blessed One said, “Good, good, Mahamati! Profound thought has been given to the meanings of these two words, out of consideration for those to be born in the future. So listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, Mahamati the great bodhisattva listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “What, then, Mahamati, is desire? It refers to desire, touch, attraction, caressing, fondling, charm, immersion in eternal objects, getting into dual extremes.

“From mistaken notions, furthermore, comes the manifestation of the clusters, the development of birth, old age, sickness, death, sorrow, lament, misery, depression, distress, beginning with craving producing renewed existence. This is called desire, by me and other blessed Buddhas. This, Mahamati, is absorption in desire, not absorption in truth, which a materialist gets practicing materialism.

“Then what, Mahamati, is absorption in truth? It means that false imagination does not develop due to realization of the twofold selflessness of one’s own mind and of phenomena, seeing the selfless character of phenomena and personality, detachment from thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness, due to successive knowledge of the stages, reaching anointment with knowledge by all Buddhas, attaining a state of independence, mastery of ability not to

indulge in all things, is called truth, by virtue of not falling into dual extremes produced by imagination elaborating all views. For, generally speaking, Mahamati, the doctrines of philosophers and religious leaders, but not of the intelligent, makes the unsophisticated fall into two extremes, namely annihilation and eternity. By accepting a doctrine of no cause, the notion of eternity comes to be, and the notion of annihilation comes about from the nonexistence of cause in the sense of negation of instrumentality. But I speak of truth as such from perception of origination, abiding, and dissolution.

“This, Mahamati, is the determination of truth and desire which you and other great bodhisattvas should learn. So it is said,

*Restrain people by the integrative methods
and control them with discipline.*

*Eliminate opinion by insight,
let people grow by liberations.*

*Everything taught by dogmatists
is materialism, desire;*

*with a notion of effect and cause as true,
their own conclusion is not found.*

*I alone teach a doctrine of my own
to a group of disciples
apart from effect and cause,
apart from materialism.*

*The full measure of mind is not perceptible;
mind is perceived divided
into what apprehends and what is apprehended,
apart from eternity and annihilation.*

*As long as thought goes on, that is materialism;
by one in whom false imagination does not go on,
the world is seen as subjective thought.*

*What comes is accomplishment of an objective,
what goes is perception of an object;
by thorough knowledge of coming and going,
false imagination does not develop.*

*Permanent or impermanent,
created or uncreated,
other or not other—
the likes of these can all be materialist doctrine.”*

At that time Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Blessed One: “The Blessed One repeatedly refers to ‘nirvana.’ What is the meaning of this word ‘nirvana’ which is misconstrued by all dogmatists?”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you. Nirvana is not as dogmatists imagine nirvana.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One told him, “In the case of some of the dogmatists, Mahamati, the totality of mind and mental factors does not act, because of not seeing any difference, due to dispassion toward

objects because of the extinction of the clusters, elements, and media of sense; they explain the inactivation of discrimination as cessation of perceiving, like an extinguished lamp, a burnt seed, or a fire gone out, by not remembering past, future, or present objects. Hence their understanding of nirvana is therein. But, Mahamati, one does not experience nirvana through nihilism.

“Others describe liberation as going to another place, by the association of thoughts of objects like a spent arrow or wind stopping.

“Other philosophers explain liberation as annihilation of perception of intelligence and information.

“Others imagine liberation from the notions of permanence or impermanence by inactivation of discrimination.

“Yet others describe conceptualization of various omens as harbingers of misery, not knowing they are construction of subjective mental objects; smitten by fear of omens, because of belief in omens

they come to have an understanding of nirvana grounded in desire for happiness.

“Still others imagine nirvana in terms of unperishing existence past, future, and present through comprehension of the particular and common characteristics of all phenomena, internal and external.

“Others imagine nirvana as the unperishing nature of everything of self, being, life, growth, person, and personality.

“Yet other dogmatists, Mahamati, with poorly developed intellects, imagine nirvana as realization of the supreme soul within the servant, and that which develops virtues.

“Others think it comes from annihilation of merit and demerit. Others think it comes from annihilation of afflictions, and by means of knowledge.

“Others imagine the nirvana of the world as from the vision of a Lord as independent Creator.

“Others say the origin of this world is from interactive evolution, not from an original cause. But that is adherence to cause, yet they aren’t aware of it due to delusion, and conceive of nirvana from that unawareness.

“Other dogmatists, Mahamati, consider nirvana to be from understanding a path of truth. Others come to understand nirvana as from perception of oneness, otherness, both, and neither in the connection of qualities with that which is endowed with qualities.

“Others, seeing the nature of things as originally so, like the beauty of the peacock, mines of all kinds of jewels, and the sharpness of thorns, imagine this to be nirvana.

“Still others, Mahamati, imagine it to be from understanding twenty-five realities. Others imagine nirvana to derive from the king’s taking up instruction on the six virtues. Others, from a doctrine of Time as Creator, saying that the evolution of the world is Time, thinking nirvana derives from that understanding.

“Others deem it being, others nonbeing; others deem it comprehension of being and nonbeing. Others imagine nirvana in terms of a view that being and nirvana are not distinct.

“Yet others, Mahamati, describe, as if from one who roars the lion’s roar of omniscience, the nongrasping of reality due to the bewildering nature of reality, through seeing without grasping any standard, not grasping object and subject, not falling into two extremes of imagination that is a subjective mental object, seeing based on being as is, detached from the four extremes, not adhering to external existence or nonexistence, through understanding the construction of mental objects; they imagine nirvana to be cessation of concentration, thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness in the highest stage and heaven through rejection of that, attainment of truth first hand, realizing two-fold selflessness, cessation of the two afflictions, and removal of the two obstructions.

“Other illogical presentations of false dogma that thinkers offer in this way too are abandoned by the knowing. For all of these imagine nirvana with a mentality fallen into two extremes. Nirvana is imagined by all dogmatists, Mahamati, in terms of constructions such

as these. But none of this transpires or ceases. The nirvana of each and every one of the philosophers fails, being considered in terms of the doctrine of their own system. It is not there is imagined by them. Due to the exertion of coming and going of cogitation, none of them has nirvana.

“Having learned this, Mahamati, you and other great bodhisattvas should avoid all dogmatic philosophical and religious notions of nirvana.

“So it is said,

Dogmatists construct notions of nirvana differently;

these are only hypotheses, without means of liberation.

Dogmatists who disregard what's bound and what binds, and lack expedients too

imagine liberation, but liberation isn't there.

The doctrine of dogmatists appears divided into many distinctions.

Hence they have no liberation; how can it be imagined by the deluded?

*Dogmatists with faulty notions of effect and cause are all deluded,
so there is no liberation for them, for partisans of being or nonbeing.*

*For the unenlightened are content with conceptual elaboration of
talk;*

they do not make resolution on truth strong.

*Talk is the source of the misery of the triple world,
while truth is the cause of annihilation of misery.*

*Just as form is seen in a mirror but isn't in it,
mind appears divided to the unenlightened in the mirror of
impressions.*

*Due to not knowing it is a mental object, imagination is born, divided
into two;*

*Due to recognition that it is a mental object, imagination does not
proceed.*

*Variety is thought, unconnected to described and description;
visible appearance is not objective as imagined by the
unenlightened.*

The triple world is only imagination, no external object can be found;

imagination appears various, but that's not recognized by the naïve.

*In each scripture it is said differently,
and with alternative concepts and names;
without any vocabulary,
meaning is not defined.”*

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, said this to the Blessed One:
“Let the Blessed one, the Realized One, the Able, the Perfectly
Enlightened, indicate to me the inherently enlightened buddhahood
of the Realized, whereby I and other great bodhisattvas may make
ourselves and others aware of the inherent skill of the Realized.”

The Blessed One said, “Then inquire, Mahamati; I will answer as is
suitable to you.”

Mahamati said, “Is the Blessed One, the Realized, the Able, the
Perfectly Enlightened One, uncreated or created, effect or cause,
defined or definition, expression or meaning, intelligence or
information? Is the Realized One different or not different from such
expressions?”

The Blessed One said, “The Realized, Able, Perfectly Enlightened one is not uncreated or created, nor an effect, nor a cause, in such terms as these. Why? Because both fail. For if the Realized One were created, Mahamati, that would be impermanence; and, being impermanence, the Realized One would be all effect; and this is not sought by me or other Realized Ones. But if the Realized were uncreated, the preparations of those who attain perfect knowledge would be meaningless because of not being obtained; they would be like the horns of a rabbit, the equivalent of the son of a barren woman, because of being uncreated.

“And what is neither effect nor cause, Mahamati, that is neither existent nor nonexistent. What is not existent or nonexistent is outside the four alternatives; and the four alternatives, Mahamati, are worldly convention. What is outside the four alternatives refers to mere verbal construction, like ‘the son of a barren woman.’ For the ‘son of a barren woman,’ Mahamati, is only a verbal construction, nor within the limits of the four alternatives. Never having come about, it is not a standard of sages. Thus should the meanings of all

statements about the Realized One be understood by the knowledgeable.

“You should also understand what I mean by saying that all things have no self. Not being self-existent, Mahamati, is selflessness. All things are there as themselves, not other selves, like cows and horses. Just as a horse is not a cow and a cow is not a horse, neither being nor not being, it is not that they are not there with their own characteristics—indeed they are with their own characteristics—in the same way, Mahamati, it is not that all things are not there with their own characteristics. They are indeed there. Therefore an imagination is understood by ignorant ordinary people as the meaning of selflessness, not absence of imagination. Thus should the emptiness, nonorigination, and absence of inherent existence of all things be understood.

“Thus a Realized One is not other than or none other than the clusters. If one were identical to the clusters, one would be impermanent because of the created nature of the clusters. But if one were other, being two one would be different, like the horns of a cow. So the identity of all things is from similar appearance, while

the difference is from the appearance of short and long. For a cow's right horn, Mahamati, is different from its left horn, and the left from the right; hence the relativity of shortness and length of the two. So it is too of color and variety. Thus, while different, not being relative, yet a Realized One is not different from the clusters, elements, and media of sense.

“In this way a Realized One is not different from or identical to liberation. A Realized One is indicated by the word ‘liberation.’ If a Realized One were other than liberation, that would be connected to description of form; and, being connected to description of form, would be impermanent. Yet if one were identical, there would be no distinction in the characteristics of attainments of yogis; and the distinction among yogis is evident. So one is neither different nor identical.

“In this way knowledge is neither different from nor identical to what is known. What is not permanent or impermanent, not effect or cause, not created or uncreated, not intelligence or information, not describable or descriptive, not the clusters or other than the clusters, not signification or expression, not bound to oneness or otherness,

both or neither, that frustrates all measure. What frustrates all measure amounts to mere words. What is only words is unoriginated; what is unoriginated is unperishing. What is unperishing is like space; and space, Mahamati, is not an effect and not a cause, cannot be objectified. What cannot be objectified is beyond all conceptual elaboration. What is beyond all conceptual elaboration has arrived at verity. This, Mahamati, is true enlightenment. This is the enlightenment of the enlightened, inaccessible to all faculties of measurement.

“So it is said,

*Beyond any faculty of measure, neither effect nor cause,
beyond intelligence and information, neither describable nor
descriptive,*

*a state of perfect enlightenment dependent on the clusters
has never been seen by anyone anywhere.*

*What has not been seen by anyone anywhere,
how can it be conceived?*

It is not created, not uncreated, not an effect, not a cause.

It is neither the clusters nor without the clusters,

not elsewhere than combination.

*It is not that what is imagined to exist is not seen;
that should not be understood to be nonexistent,
like the thingness of things.*

*Not being presupposes being, being presupposes nonbeing;
hence nonexistence is not to be concluded and existence is not to be
imagined.*

*Those who rely on faulty measurement due to confusion of self and
selflessness,*

mired in dual extremes, lost, destroy the naïve.

*When they see my guidance free from all failings,
then they see correctly; they do not disparage the guides.”*

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Realized One: “Let the Blessed One instruct me; let the Blissful One instruct me—in the recital of instruction mention is made by the Blessed One of unperishing nonorigination: you say it as an epithet of the Realized, *unperishing, without origination*. Is this unperishing nonorigination nonexistence, or another term for the Realized? As the Blessed One has said, ‘All things are shown by the Realized One

to be unperishing and without origination, by having no view partial to being or nonbeing.’ If all things are unoriginated, then one cannot apprehend anything, because of the non-production of all things. But if this is an alternative term for some reality, let the Blessed One say what it is.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “The Realized state is not nonexistence, Mahamati, nor is the apprehending of the unperishing nonorigination of all things. It is not an idea to be considered, yet mention of nonorigination is not made by me without meaning or purpose. But this is a term for the Realized One as a mental spiritual body, which is not within the range of any philosophers, hearers, solitary illuminates, or bodhisattvas as far as the seventh stage. That is the nonorigination of the Realized; this, Mahamati, is a synonymous expression. It is like Indra, Shakra, and Breaker of

Strongholds [for a deity]; *hasya, kara,* and *pani* for ‘hand,’ *tanu, deha,* and *sharira* for ‘body,’ *prthivi, bhumi,* and *vasumdhara* for ‘earth,’ *kha, akasha,* and *gagana* for ‘sky,’ and so on—each individual thing has multiple different synonyms, but a multiplicity of entities is not construed from this multiplicity of names. And the particular property is not nonexistent.

“Thus, Mahamati, I too am heard of by unsophisticated people in this world Endurance under three incalculable hundreds of thousands of names, and they speak of me in these terms, and do not know these are alternative names for the Realized. So some know me as the Realized One, some as the Independent One. Some recognize the Guide, the Preceptor, the Leader, the Enlightened one, the Sage, the Manly One, Brahman, Vishnu, Lord, Chief, Kapila, End of Existence, Secure, Nemin, Soma, the Sun, Rama, Vyasa, Shuka, Indra, Bali, Varuna. Others recognize unperishing nonorigination, emptiness, verity, reality, actuality, the edge of existence, the realm of reality, nirvana, the everlasting, equality, nonduality, unperishing, signless, certainty, enlightened indication of cause, liberation, realities of the path, all knowledge, the Victorious, mentally made.

“The people here and in other worlds know me by such names as these, Mahamati, a full hundred thousand infinities, no less, no more, like the moon in water, neither in nor out. But the unenlightened do not realize, with a mental continuum fallen into dual extremes. And so they honor, revere, esteem, and worship me, unskilled in interpretation of the meanings of words, indiscriminate in understanding; they don’t know their own doctrine, adhering to the recitation of didactic expressions. They will construe unperishing nonorigination as nonexistence, not a different name for one who has realized verity, Indra, Shakra, or the Breaker of Strongholds; they will not trust anything contrary to their own doctrine, because of following the recital of meaning of all teachings as articulated.

“And so those deluded persons will say to you, Mahamati, ‘Meaning is as articulated; meaning is none other than what is articulated.

Why? Because of the incorporeality of meaning, there is no meaning apart from what is articulated; rather, the articulation itself is the meaning.’ This is due to not knowing the nature of articulation, their intellects being immature. So they will not know how articulation is originated and passes away, while meaning does not originate or pass away. Articulation, Mahamati, rests on letters,

whereas meaning is not in letters. Beyond being and nonbeing, it has no birth and no body. And those who realize verity do not teach a doctrine captured in letters, because letters do not apprehend reality or unreality. It is only the literal-minded one, Mahamati, who teaches a doctrine imprisoned in letters; and he is talking nonsense, because truth is not literal.

“So it is for this reason, Mahamati, that it is said by me and other Buddhas and bodhisattvas in the recital of instruction that the Realized do not cite or relate so much as a single letter. Why is that? Because the teachings are not literal. And yet they do not present them for no reason. They present them in consideration of mental construction. Without material to use, Mahamati, instruction in all the teachings would disappear. And due to the disappearance of instructions, Buddhas, solitary illuminates, hearers, and bodhisattvas would not exist. Given that nonexistence, who would be taught what?

“Hence, for this reason, Mahamati, the great bodhisattva should be free of obsession with the articulation of the recital of teaching. The recital of teaching, Mahamati, has divergent meanings on account of

the engagement of people's mentalities; teaching is formulated for people of various beliefs for the purpose of deliverance from thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness, by me and other Realized, Able, Perfectly Enlightened Buddhas, not by contrasting first-hand attainment of ultimate knowledge from the cessation of dualistic mental construction, realization that all things are beyond the range of the senses and are constructed from what is perceived by one's own mind.

“A great bodhisattva should resort to the meaning, Mahamati, not to the expression. One who follows expression, Mahamati, whether a family son or family daughter, destroys oneself and does not elucidate meanings for others. With a mental continuum settled on false views one is confused for one's own part by false religious leaders who are not expert in the particular characteristics of the stages of the teaching and do not have higher knowledge of what words express. But those who master the interpretation of synonyms, expert in connection of actuality and meaning, will become expert in the particular characteristics of the stages of all the teachings. Thenceforth they refresh themselves with true signless bliss, and set others on the true Great Vehicle. And when correctly

guided in the Great Vehicle, Mahamati, a relationship with Buddhas, solitary illuminates, hearers, and bodhisattvas is established.

Through the relationship with the Buddhas, people living for enlightenment, hearers, and solitary illuminates, a relationship with all beings is established. Through the relationship with all beings, a relationship with truth is established. And through the relationship with truth, Mahamati, the continuity of the lineage of the enlightened is established. Through continuity of the lineage of the enlightened, the understandings of different states are comprehended.

“Henceforth, taking on appearance in the contexts of the understandings of different states, in order to establish others in the Great Vehicle the great bodhisattvas enter into different forms with the ten masteries; assuming patterns of behavior characteristic of people’s various dispositions, they teach doctrine aiming at verity. Verity means not being otherwise; truth. Neither coming nor going, cessation of all imagined amplification is called truth. So, Mahamati, family sons or family daughters should not become clever in adhering to meaning as articulated, because of the nonliteral nature of truth. And one should not ‘look at the fingertip.’

“Just as if someone points out something to someone with a finger, and he looks only at the fingertip, in the same way ignorant ordinary people, as if of infantile disposition, will go to their death in adherence to the ‘fingertip’ of meaning as articulated, and will not arrive at the ultimate meaning beyond the ‘fingertip’ of expression.

“It is like food that even infants can eat, someone might eat unprepared; if someone should eat it unprepared, he would be considered crazy, not knowing to prepare the food beforehand. In the same way, Mahamati, what has no origination and no perishing is not appealing without preparation. So it is necessary to be prepared for it, and not see meaning in the apprehending of the fingertip oneself.

“So for this reason, Mahamati, meaning is to be applied. Meaning, Mahamati, is the only way to nirvana; articulation is bound to imagination—it brings on repetitious routine. And meaning, Mahamati, is obtained from the learned. And being learned, Mahamati, means familiarity with meaning, not familiarity with articulation. Familiarity with meaning is vision that is not mixed with any of the doctrines of dogmatists. As one is not fixated oneself, one

does not induce fixation in others. Thus does one become learned, Mahamati, in true meaning. So the learned should be attended out of desire for meaning. Hence those who adhere on the contrary to meaning as articulated should be shunned by the seeker of truth.”

Furthermore, empowered by the Buddha, Mahamati said, “There is nothing special about the Blessed One’s vision of the unperishing unoriginated. Why? The primary causes claimed by all philosophers and religious leaders too, Blessed One, are unoriginated and unperishing. For you too, Blessed One, space, unconscious extinction, and the realm of nirvana are unperishing, unoriginated.

“Philosophers and religious leaders also describe the origin of the world as caused by a creating agency, and the Blessed One too describes the origin of the world as due to the causes of ignorance, craving, activity, and imagination, assumptions having produced the difference in alternate concepts of that same creative agency. So they and you regard the origination of external things as by external causes. So this doctrine, Blessed One, is no different from the doctrine of philosophers and religious leaders.

“Atoms, the supreme spirit, Lord, ruler of Creatures, et cetera, nine elements in all, are unperishing and unoriginated. For you too, Blessed One, all things are unoriginated and unperishing due to the nonapprehension of either being or nonbeing. And as the existent has no annihilation, self-definition does not originate or pass away. In this state, the existent does not relinquish existent inherent nature. This is a variant of the concept of reality constructed by all philosophers and religious leaders, and by you as well. So, for this reason, this doctrine is nothing special.

“It should be said wherein lies the difference by which the Realized One’s doctrine is distinguished, not the doctrine of all philosophers and religious leaders. As your own doctrine is not different, Blessed One, all philosophers and religious leaders must have a connection to the Buddha, because of the reasoning of unperishing nonorigination. It has been declared by the Blessed One inappropriate and uncalled-for that many Realized Ones should come forth in one part of the world, but the multiplicity of Realized Ones is accomplished by concern with real and unreal effects, no different from your own doctrine.”

The Blessed One said, “My unperishing nonorigination, Mahamati, is not equivalent to dogmatists’ doctrine of the unoriginated unperishing nor to the doctrine of impermanence of origination. Why? The inherent nature of things, Mahamati, is known to dogmatists as unoriginated and unchanging, but mine is not fallen into extremes of being and nonbeing like this. Mine, Mahamati, is free of partiality to being or nonbeing, free from origination and destruction, neither existence nor nonexistence.

“Like the sight of a variety of forms in an illusion or a dream, it is not nonexistent. Why not existent? Because of the absence of apprehension of characteristics of inherent existence in form, the nonobjective nature of the perceived, the inability of apprehension to apprehend. Hence, for this reason, all things are neither existent nor nonexistent.

“But by the cessation of false imagination through awareness that it is only subject mental objects, the world stays in its natural state, with no business. The unsophisticated imagine it as having business, but the wise do not. This is confusion of meaning in imagination of something nonexistent, Mahamati, like phantoms in a

city in the sky. It is as if someone of infantile disposition should imagine of a variety of phantom people going in and out of a city in the sky on business, 'Those have gone in, those have come out,' whereas no one has gone in or out. Just as this is existing in the confusion of their imaginations, so is this the confusion of origination and nonorigination on the part of the unsophisticated. For there is nothing completed or uncompleted here, like the coming forth of a phantom person. A phantom neither comes into being nor passes away, since neither existence nor nonexistence apply to it. In the same way, all things are without destruction and origination. The ignorant imagine origination and extinction otherwise, with inaccurate conception, but not the wise.

“In that context, Mahamati, 'inaccurate' means the nature of things is not conceived of as it is. But it is not otherwise. Being construed otherwise would be adherence to the inherent existent of all things. Not seeing with detachment the failure to see with detachment, it would not be cessation of imagination. So for this reason, Mahamati, perception without motive is superior, not perception with motive. Motive is not superior because it is a cause of repeated birth. 'Without motive,' Mahamati, I call the inactivation of false

imagination; nonorigination, nirvana. There, 'nirvana,' Mahamati, is seeing the state of things as it is, after desisting from the mental and psychological complex of imagination. Attainment of one's own first-hand ultimate knowledge of the realized I call 'nirvana.'

"So it is said,

I teach a doctrine of no primary cause complementing nonorigination to counter origination, but this is not perceived by the unsophisticated.

All this is unoriginated, but it's not that things don't exist.

Things are there like castles in the air, a dream, an illusion, without a causal agent.

And how are they empty because intrinsic nature is unoriginated, tell me.

A thing is not apprehended by the intellect apart from combination, so I say it is empty, unoriginated, and has no independent existence.

Combination thus is not there, due to nonexistence of objects individually.

It is not because of the failure to extinguish philosophical notions

that combination isn't there.

*A dream, an optical illusion, a phantom, a city in the sky, a mirage
are seen without cause; so too the world's diversity.*

*Nonorigination must be complemented
by the explanation of ungraspability and absence of primary cause;
in proving nonorigination, my eye does not come to naught.
When taught there is no primary cause, dogmatists become afraid.*

*How, whereby, whence, wherein can becoming have no cause?
When they see the constructed
as neither causeless nor from causes,
then the notion claiming destruction and origination ceases.*

*Tell me—is nonorigination nonexistence, or awaiting conditions?
Is it the name of something, or is it meaningless?
Nonorigination is not nonexistence, nor awaiting a conditions;
neither is it the name of a thing, nor yet a meaningless name.*

Inaccessible to hearers and solitary illuminates, and to dogmatists,

and those in the first seven stages—that is the characteristic of nonorigination.

Turning back from cause and conditions, obliterating agency, determination of mind only I call nonorigination.

*The occurrence of things with no primary cause,
without construed and construction,
free from extremes of being or nonbeing,
I call nonorigination.*

*Mind liberated from objects,
detached from the two natures,
revolution of the mental basis
I call nonorigination.*

*Not external existence, not nonexistence,
not even the content of mind:
dreams, misperceptions, illusions, castles in the air, mirages—
relinquishment of all notions is the definition of nonorigination.*

Thus should one regard all terms

*such as 'empty' and 'essenceless'—
not empty by voidness,
but by the emptiness of nonorigination.*

*A totality of conditions starts and stops:
no separate existent is born or passes away from the totality:
there is no separate existence at all relative to the totality
as a unit, singly, as imagined by philosophers.*

*Something is not born from nothing;
it is not nonexistent,
nor existent or nonexistent at all,
other than this totality starting and stopping.
It is indeed but convention,
this totality of mutual relations:
there is no other object
besides a collection of particular conditions.*

*Because there isn't anything produced,
nonorigination is free of philosophical failings:
I point out only collectivity,*

but it is not realized by the ignorant.

*Anyone for whom anything may be produced at all
separately from a collectivity
is to be known as an advocate of unreason,
who denies collectivity.*

*If collectivity were a lamp illumining things,
something would exist somewhere separate from collectivity.
Things construed by the naïve as existing separately from collectivity
have no existence of their own, indeed have not come to be, by
nature like space.*

*The nonorigination of the wise is different from the others, the
essence of attainment,
of which kind of nonorigination there is acceptance in its
nonorigination.*

*When one sees this whole world is a collective, that this is all a
collective,
then the mind is concentrated.*

*Ignorance, craving, activity, and so on,
would be the internal collective;
a vessel made of clay formed into a hollow, rope, and so on,
seeds and elements, et cetera, are external.*

*If anything were born other than by conditions,
it would not consist of a collective:
they are not invariables in the science of reasoning.*

*If what's produced is not existent,
relative to whose perception would that be?*

*These produce each other,
hence they are known as conditions.*

*The phenomena of heat, fluidity, motion, and solidity
are imagined by the naïve;
this is a totality, there is no phenomenon;
hence the lack of independent existence.*

*As a physician prescribes the type of treatment according to the
illness,
and there is no division in the science,
but treatment is distinguished by the type of illness,*

*so do I teach the family of beings
according to the afflictions with which they are troubled,
after having ascertained the power of beings' capacities:
my teaching is not divided by the distinction of afflictions and
capacities;
the vehicle is one, the peaceful eightfold path.”*

At that point Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, went on to say this to the Blessed One: “Impermanence is conceived as impermanence by all philosophers, Blessed one, and in all the recitals of instruction it is also taught by you that ‘All formations are impermanent, having origin and dissolution.’ Is this right, Blessed One, or wrong? How many kinds of impermanence are there, Blessed One?”

The Blessed One said, “Impermanence is imagined in eight ways in all by dogmatists, but not by me. What eight ways?

Some just say ‘starting and stopping is impermanence.’ But starting, Mahamati, is origination; impermanence is unoriginated.

“Others describe impermanence as the cessation of existence.

“Others say form itself is impermanent.

“Others say change in form is impermanence, that with an uninterrupted connection, dissolution of the particular characteristics of all phenomena, like the change in milk turning into curd, an indivisible destroyer is active in all things, not permanence.

“Others imagine impermanence is rebirth.

“Others imagine impermanence is the nonexistence of things.

“To others, impermanence as nonorigination of all things is due to the inherence of impermanence therein.

“Now then, Mahamati, impermanence as the nonexistence of things means no apprehension due to the perishing of the particular characteristics of elemental matter, the inertness of an element in itself.

“Impermanence as nonorigination means the inapplicability of reality or unreality as permanent or impermanent, the nonseeing of all phenomena being nonseeing from investigation of the ultimate particle. This is a reference to nonorigination, not origination. This, Mahamati, is the definition of impermanence as nonorigination, which philosophers fail to understand, and hence hasten to a doctrine of impermanence of origination.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, if impermanence exists according to anyone, even by the construction of his own thinking, what exists is permanence, not impermanence. Why? Because impermanence doesn't destroy itself.

“In this case, Mahamati, the nonexistence of all things is the effect of impermanence. And the nonexistence of all things is not found other than by dint of impermanence, like a club, stone, or hammer that breaks other things without being broken itself.

“This is seen as perception of mutual indistinguishability. Hence impermanence is the cause, nonexistence of all things is the effect, but there is no such distinction between effect and cause as ‘this is

impermanence, this is the effect.’ Because of the lack of distinction between effect and cause, all things are permanent, because of the nonexistence of a primary cause of existence. Indeed the nonexistence of all things, Mahamati, is groundless. But this is not understood by unenlightened ordinary people. A cause does not produce a dissimilar effect; if it did, there would be an effect dissimilar to the impermanence of all things. If it be supposed there no division of effect and cause, yet the division of their effect and cause is evident.

“If, however, impermanence were nonexistence, it would also fall into description of activity and cause as existing, or would be contained in all things as the same nature. And because of falling into description of activity and cause as existing, impermanence itself would be permanent, and so because of their impermanence all things would be permanent, would thus become permanent. Hence the impermanence within all things would fall into the three times. Then whatever form is past, it disappears together with it, and the future has not occurred. Because of the unoriginated nature of form, [impermanence] is also indistinguishable from presently occurring form.

“Form is a particular combination of elements. The material nature of the elements does not perish, having nothing to do with other and not other. Because of the nonperishing of all elements, the entire material world is represented by all the philosophers in terms of origin, stasis, and change. What else is impermanent apart from the elemental matter whose impermanence is conceived by philosophers? The elements don’t start or stop due to adherence to their own essential characteristics. Now starting and stopping is impermanence; the elements do not begin within what exists—because of inherence of mutual differences, distinction is not begun. Because of that absence of distinction of theirs in having no renewed beginning, joining the divided, they come to conceive of impermanence as pertaining to not beginning.

“Now then, impermanence as cessation of formation means elemental matter does not pass away to extinction. Extinction, Mahamati, is the passing away of elemental matter examined down to the ultimate particle. Because of changed appearance of formation, long and short measurements are not apprehension. Because there is no extinction of elements in the elements at the

atomic level, by the view of cessation of formation they hasten to the doctrine of the Samkhya.

“Now then, impermanence of formation means whatever has impermanent form, its impermanence is of formation, not of elements. If it were impermanence of elements, the business of the world would be nonexistent. By negation of the business of the world it would fall into a materialist view, on account of the verbal construction of all things, not from seeing the origination of identifying features.

“Now then, impermanence as change means changed appearance of form, not of elements, like the diverse appearance of ornaments formed of gold. The gold does not pass away from existence, but the shapes of ornaments are perishable.

“The notion of impermanence is misconceived on the grounds of change in these and other ways by philosophers. For the elements are not burned out of their own characteristics when burned by fire. Mutual loss of their own characteristics would be extinction of the existence of elemental matter.

“But I claim neither permanence nor impermanence, Mahamati.

Why? When not supposing external existence, indicating the mental construction of the triple world, not pointing to various characteristics, individuality of combinations of elements neither starts nor stops. The dualism of imagination does not start out from elemental materiality, because of absence of definition of object and subject.

“With knowledge of the dual manifestation of imagination, free from notions of external existence or nonexistence, realizing they are only subjective thought, imagination operates by formulation of ideation, not without being formulated. Being innocent of mentally construed existence and nonexistence, all phenomena, mundane or transcendental, have neither permanence nor impermanence.

“Impermanence is construed by all dogmatists, storytellers who are without realization, because of not being aware of their own subjective imagination, with a mental continuum on falsely conceived dual extremes because of unawareness they are subjective mental constructions. All the things expressed by speech and imagination

that are mundane or transcendental to all dogmatists, Mahamati, are of threefold character, but unenlightened ordinary people do not realize.

“So it is said,

Starting and stopping,

and change in formation,

confused philosophers imagine impermanence,

as existing form.

There is no destruction of elements,

elements are stable by nature;

those dogmatists, mired in various views,

imagine that permanence.

Neither destruction, as per the dogmatists,

nor becoming either, apply to anything at all:

elements are permanent by nature—

of what do they conceive impermanence?

This all consists of thought;

*thought operates divided into two:
self and possession are not really there
as subject and object.*

*All the way up to the primal abode of Brahma
is only mind, I say:
Brahma and all the rest is not apprehended
apart from the content of mind.*

IV. Realization

At that time Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Blessed One: “Please teach me, Blessed One, expertise in the features of the succession of steps to extinction for all bodhisattvas, hearers, and solitary illuminates, by means of which expertise in the features of the successive steps I and other great bodhisattvas may not be confused by entry into the attainment of the bliss of extinction and not fall into the confusion of hearers, solitary illuminates, and philosophers.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “From the sixth stage, Mahamati, great bodhisattvas, and all hearers and solitary illuminates, experience extinction. In the seventh stage, further, great bodhisattvas experience it in every moment of thought by abandoning the appearance of inherent existence of all things, but

hearers and solitary illuminates do not. For the experience of extinction attained by those hearers and solitary illuminates is preparatory and set upon seeming object and subject: so in the seventh stage it occurs to them in every moment of thought, 'This must not be attainment of nondifferentiation of all things, or nonexistence of variety.' The experience comes about from not perceiving any sign of good and bad inherently existing in things. Hence in the seventh stage they do not have the skill of attainment in every moment of thought whereby they might attain it.

“In the eighth stage, Mahamati, the cessation of imagination and conception in the mind, intellect, and cognitive consciousness comes about in great bodhisattvas, and in hearers and solitary illuminates.

“In the first six stages, one observes the content of the triple world as only thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness, without self or possession, coming to be from the imagination of one's own mind, not in the variety of appearances of external things, except as subjectively thought. Thoroughly conditioned by the naïve dualistic way of thinking in terms of object and subject, those under the

influence of impressions from elaboration of valueless imagination ever since ever do not realize their own knowledge.

“In the eighth, Mahamati, is nirvana for the hearers, solitary illuminates, and bodhisattvas. But those bodhisattvas are restrained by the concentration Buddhas from that bliss of absorption, whereby they do not enter final nirvana without having fulfilled the stage of the Realized. They would neglect all that is to be done, were there no restraint, and the lineage of the family of the Realized would end. And those Blessed Buddhas teach the inconceivable greatness of a Buddha. Hence they do not enter final nirvana. But hearers and solitary illuminates are carried away by the bliss of absorption; hence this state seems to them to be final nirvana.

“In seven stages, Mahamati, I distinguish the principles relevant to enlightenment—skill in examination of manifestations of mind, intellect, and cognitive consciousness; self and possessory interest; object and subject; selflessness of phenomena and personality; starting and stopping; examination of particular and common characteristics; skill in ascertainment by four analytic sciences; masteries; sweet bliss; and entry into the process of the stages.

“The steps of the stages are arranged so that great bodhisattvas who are inexpert in the procedural order of the stages due to not comprehending particular and common characteristics may not fall into the path of false views of dogmatists. And yet, Mahamati, nothing proceeds here, or ceases, except insofar as this consists of objects of one’s own mind, namely the order of steps of the stages and the diverse behavior of the triple world. But the unsophisticated do not understand. Because of lack of comprehension, instruction in the procedural order of the stages and diverse behavior of the triple world is established for the unsophisticated, as well as the store of teachings of the enlightened.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, hearers and solitary illuminates in the eighth stage of awakening, intoxicated by the rapture of the bliss of attainment of extinction, unaware that it is only a subjective mental percept, fallen into the notion of an agent apprehending identity and commonality, obstructions and influences, selflessness of personality and phenomena, they come to understand extinction of imagination, but not the realization of a state of detachment.

“Bodhisattvas, on the other hand, Mahamati, seeing the entrance into the bliss of absorption in extinction, equipped with the pity and compassion of prior vows, knowing the distinction of ultimate attainment, do not enter final nirvana. But they are in final nirvana in the sense that false imagination is inert. The false distinction of object and subject has ceased in them. Because of understanding it as only subjective mental percepts, imagination of all things does not go on.

“One imagines falsely when thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness are immersed in the appearance of self-existence of external things; and thereby the impulse of buddhahood does not operate. It operates guided by knowledge, through attainment of the stage of individual first-hand arrival at reality as such, like a dreamer getting out of water.

“It is like someone sleeping getting himself out of a flood in a dream by exertion of great effort, then as he gets out he wakes up, and being awake wonders if this is real or not. He should observe this is not real or unreal, other than experiences of the cognitive consciousness seen in a dream, without distinction of notions of

nonexistence or existence, fallen into imaginations of diverse configurations of form influenced by imagination of what has been seen, heard, thought, and experienced over time without beginning. In the same way, Mahamati, great bodhisattvas who are in the eighth stage, seeing imagination inoperative, by understanding all teachings through the course of the first through seventh stages, with impartiality toward phenomena, beginning with illusion, seeing the flow of thought construction attached to a distinction of object and subject in zeal for all the teachings, focus on the qualities of Buddhas. This is effort to understand what hasn't been understood, Mahamati, the nirvana of bodhisattvas, not annihilation. And through departure from all imaginary concepts of mind, intellect, and cognitive consciousness, acceptance of things as unoriginated is attained.

“But there is no procedure here in the ultimate sense, Mahamati, no succession of stages, because of communicating a truth without images, detached from imagination.

“So it is said,

In mind alone, without images,

are the abodes and the stage of buddhahood:

this has been said, is said,

and will be said by the Buddhas.

For seven stages are thought, while the eighth is imageless.

Two stages are a pleasure ground; the remaining stage is my own.

This stage of mine is to be known first-hand, and it is pure;

inferior to none, it reigns over the supreme state of a god.

Its rays of light come forth like those of fire;

varied, pleasing, cheerful, they shape the triple world.

*To some extent the triple world is yet to be shaped, to some extent it
is already shaped—*

there I teach the vehicles; this is my own stage.

But the tenth can be the first, and the first can be the eighth;

the ninth can be the seventh, and the seventh can be the eighth.

The second may be the third, the fourth may be the fifth, and the

*third may be the sixth: where there are no images, how can there be
a process?*

V. Implications of Eternity or Impermanence of the Realized

At that time Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Realized One: “Is a truly realized, able, perfectly enlightened Buddha eternal or impermanent?”

The Blessed One said, “A Realized One is not eternal, Mahamati, nor impermanent. Why? Because of the connection of both with error. For in both cases, Mahamati, there would be error implied.

“Being eternal would be attachment to a primary cause, for the primary causes claimed by all dogmatists are eternal and uncreated. So the Realized One is not eternal in the sense of the eternity of the uncreated.

“Being impermanent would imply being created. There would be annihilation due to the passing away of the clusters, no manifestation definable as the clusters. But the state of the Realized One does not become extinct. For everything that is created, Mahamati, is impermanent—pitcher, cloth, straw, wood, brick, and so on. By association with all impermanence, the provision for omniscient knowledge would be meaningless because of being created. Indeed

the Realized One would be entirely fabricated, having no separate cause.

“So for this reason, Mahamati, a Realized One is neither eternal nor impermanent.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, a Realized One is not eternal because that would imply the space-like provision is meaningless. Just as space is neither eternal nor impermanent, because of the exclusion of eternity and impermanence it cannot be spoken of in terms of the errors of sameness, otherness, both, neither, permanence, or impermanence.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, eternity in the sense of having no origin would imply equivalence to the horns of a rabbit, horse, mule, camel, frog, snake, fly, or fish. Hence the Realized One is not eternal insofar as that would imply the eternity of having no origination.

“And yet, Mahamati, there is also another sense in which a Realized One is eternal. How so? Because of the permanence of the knowledge attained by realization, the Realized One is eternal. For

the knowledge in the attainment of realization of the truly realized, the able, the completely enlightened Buddhas, is eternal. Whether or not Realized Ones come to be, this nature of reality is always there by natural necessity, by natural stability, in the realization of all hearers, solitary illuminates, and philosophers. The stability of nature does not exist in a void, though unsophisticated ordinary people do not perceive.

“And the knowledge in the attainment of the Realized, Mahamati, is produced by insight and knowledge. Realized, Able, Completely Enlightened Buddhas, Mahamati, are not produced by the unwitting impressions of the clusters, media, and elements in the thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness.

“For the whole triple world, Mahamati, is a product of imagination of what has never been, but the Realized are not products of imagination of what has never been.

“For it is when there is duality that there is eternity and impermanence, not with nonduality. Duality, indeed, Mahamati, is separate from the nondual nonorigination characteristic of all

phenomena. Hence, for this reason, the Realized Ones, the Able, the Completely Enlightened Buddhas, are not eternal or impermanent.

“As far as language and imagination go, Mahamati, so far does the error of eternity and impermanence adhere. Grasping of eternity and impermanence ceases in ignorant people by the ending of opinionated intellect, not by ending the discernment of detached vision.

“So it is said,

*Those who always see the Buddhas
independent of eternity and impermanence
manifesting eternity and impermanence
are not under the control of opinion.*

*Meaninglessness of full knowledge is implied in eternity and
impermanence;
eternity and impermanence are avoided by having no opinionated
intellect.*

Whatever assertion is made, it is all so much conception;

seeing it consists of subjective thought, one should not enter into debate.

VI. The Momentary

At that time Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, went on to entreat the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One teach me, let the Blissful One teach me, about the activity and cessation of the clusters, media, and elements of sense. With no real self, whose is activity and cessation? Yet the unenlightened dwelling on activity and cessation do not find nirvana because they don’t know the end of misery.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “The matrix of realization, Mahamati, the agent of good and bad, acts as the doer of all ways of life, like a dancer, confined to conditions, without self or possession. Due to lack of awareness of that, functional connection of a triplex combination of cooperating conditions takes place. But philosophers do not see this, adhering to presumptions of cause.

“Influenced by valueless impressions of various exaggerations since beginningless time, a permanent uninterrupted body called the receptacle consciousness operates, together with seven consciousnesses born from the ground of the influence of ignorance, like waves on the ocean. Free from the problems of impermanence, not claiming self, it is ultimately pure by nature.

“As for those other consciousnesses, arisen and ceasing beginning with the intellect and cognitive consciousness, momentary, seven all dependent on different combinations of formations and appearances generated by the agency of imagination of the nonexistent, engrossed in names and signs, perceiving the characteristics of forms of subjective mental objects, not recognizing happiness and misery, not producing liberation, supports of the cause of the products and producer of passion arising from name and signs, in the terminal extinction of sense data obtained by them, along with the nonarising of others, the sense of liberation occurs to yogis who do not recognize pleasure or pain in their own mental calculations, who have attained extinction of perception and sensation and are expert in the four meditations, truths, and liberations, by dint of nonfunction.

“In the receptacle consciousness that is not detached, however, known by the name of the matrix of realization, there is no extinction of the active seven consciousnesses. Why is that? Because of operating as the causal support of the consciousnesses. The matrix of realization develops outside the range of awareness of all hearers, solitary illuminates, and practitioners of religious disciplines, because of their understanding of their own personal selflessness, because of grasping particular and common characteristics of the clusters, media, and elements. It ceases by perception of the objective selflessness in the nature of the five elements by disengagement through the process of the stages. It cannot be ascertained by the views of other religious paths.

“Thence, established in the Immovable stage of bodhisattvas, one finds ten entryways into the bliss of absorption. Restrained by the concentration Buddhas, turning back from the existent limit of the bliss of absorption by observing their own commitment to the innumerable qualities of Buddhas, by means of paths of practice conducive to first-hand ultimate attainment unlike those of all hearers, solitary illuminates, and philosophers, they attain the path of

ten noble families, as well as a mental body of knowledge without the preparation of concentration.

“Hence, Mahamati, the matrix of realization is therefore to be purified as the receptacle consciousness by great bodhisattvas seeking higher meaning. For if, Mahamati, there were no matrix of realization called the receptacle consciousness, without the matrix of realization called the receptacle consciousness there would be no activity or cessation; but there is activity and cessation, Mahamati, for both the ignorant and the wise. And yogis who have not put down the burden and are invincible enjoy the bliss of the state experienced in first-hand ultimate attainment.

“Mahamati, this sphere of the matrix of realization, the receptacle consciousness, even while being naturally pure in the thought and vision of all hearers, individual illuminates, and philosophers, to them—though not to the Realized—it appears impure, due to being defiled by adventitious afflictions. To the Realized, Mahamati, it is a matter of direct witness, like a piece of fruit in the palm of the hand.

“This is also indicated in the book of instruction regarding Shrimala Devi, by me and others, great bodhisattvas with subtle, sharp, purified intellects, to whom I resort: the matrix of realization, called the receptacle consciousness, together with seven consciousnesses, the realm of the Realized, is pointed out through Shrimala Devi to show the selflessness of phenomena to hearers engrossed in activity. It is not the domain of thought of hearers, solitary illuminates, and other philosophers and religious leaders; instead the domain of the Realized that is the matrix of realization, the domain of the receptacle consciousness, Mahamati, is for great bodhisattvas like you who discern with subtle sharp intelligence and resort to meaning, not for all other philosophers and religious leaders, hearers, and solitary illuminates who adhere to a book of teachings literally. Thus, Mahamati, you and other great bodhisattvas should concentrate on this domain of all the Realized, thorough knowledge of the receptacle consciousness as the matrix of realization; you should not be satisfied just hearing about it.

“So it is said,

The matrix of the realized,

furnished with seven consciousnesses

*goes into action alone due to grasping,
ceases by way of thorough knowledge.*

*It is seen like a reflection, mentally created
by thought, intellect, et cetera:
the appearance of substance is not substance
to those who see as is.*

*Just as the ignorant one fixed on the pointing fingertip
does not apprehend the moon,
so does one attached to the letter
not know my truth.*

*Thought dances like a dancer,
intellect like a jester;
along with five consciousnesses,
it arranges the perceived like a theater.”*

At that time Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also entreated the Blessed One, “Let the Blessed One teach me, let the Blissful One teach me how to define the subdivisions of the five elements, nature,

consciousness, and two-fold selflessness, by which distinction of two kinds of selflessness I and other great bodhisattvas may actualize these teachings in the process of all the stages, so as to gain access to all teachings of Buddhas through those teachings, and by immersion in all teachings of Buddhas may enter the stage of first-hand attainment of the Realized themselves.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: I will tell you how to distinguish the five elements, nature, consciousness, and two-fold selflessness.

“[The five elements are] name, appearance, imagination, true knowledge, and verity, entry into ultimate first-hand attainment of the Realized; beyond notions of eternity and annihilation, reality or unreality, the pleasure-ground of attainment of bliss in the present, it becomes evident to practitioners in accord. There, Mahamati,

imagination goes on in the naïve, though not in the wise, due to not perceiving the nonexistence of external things in the subjective percepts of the five elements, natures, consciousnesses, and two-fold selflessness.”

Mahamati said, “Why then, Blessed One, does imagination go on in the naïve, but not the wise?”

The Blessed One said, Because of being engrossed in conventions of name and conception, Mahamati, the naïve pursue thought. By various behaviors in this pursuit, with minds fallen into notions of self and possession, they become immersed in the multiplicity of appearances. And while so immersed, whirled about by ignorance, they get excited. Excited, they formulate action born of passion, hostility, and confusion. Doing so again and again, minds wrapped up in their own subjective imagination like silkworms making cocoons, fallen into the seas and wilderness of mundane ways of life, like a water-wheel they do not progress beyond. And they do not know, because of confusion, that all things are in essence like illusions, mirages, the moon in water, without imaginary self and possession, an expression of imagination of the nonexistent, void of

described and description, not going through the course of destruction, origination, stasis, and whether originating from a deity, time, atoms, or primary matter, originate in construction of subjective mental objects. Like a companion of name and appearance, Mahamati, the naïve follow appearance.

“Now this appearance, Mahamati, is what comes into the range of the eye-consciousness, known as form. Likewise, what is known to the ear, nose, tongue, body, and cognitive consciousness as sound, scent, flavor, feel, and phenomena, this I call appearance.

“Now imagination, Mahamati, is that by which one declares a name. This is what gives expression to appearance—‘It is this and nothing else’—in what designates an elephant, horse, carriage, pedestrian, woman, man, and so on—that is imagination operating.

“True knowledge, Mahamati, is that whereby there is non-recognition of name and appearance; because of their mutual adventitiousness, consciousness is not excited. Because of not causing one to fall into any of the stages of philosophers, hearers, or solitary illuminates, having neither annihilation nor eternity, it is called true knowledge.

Also, Mahamati, it is by true knowledge that a great bodhisattva does not construe a name as an existent and does not construe appearance as nonexistent. Consciousness in which objectification of name and appearance does not go on, free of the false views of dual extremes of attribution and denial, this state I call verity. Established in verity, Mahamati, by attainment of a realm without images, one attains the Joyful stage of awakening.

“Having attained the Joyful stage of awakening, one has turned away from the risky courses of all philosophers and entered into the course of transcendental truth; meditating on the course of all phenomena, beginning with illusion and the like, by examination of characteristics one seeks attainment of ultimate truth first hand without interest in speculation or opinion, in an orderly progression all the way to the stage of Cloud of Teaching.

“With Cloud of Teaching, one attains the stage of the Realized, blossoming with concentrations, powers, masteries, and superknowledges. Having attained that, in order to develop people to maturity, one radiates diverse emanations of light, like the moon in water, teaching people bound in the spider’s web of diverse beliefs

a body of truth apart from intellectual representation. This, Mahamati, great bodhisattvas attain by entering into verity.”

Mahamati then said, “Are the three natures within the five elements, or are they established by their own characteristics?”

The Blessed One said, “The three natures are indeed herein, Mahamati, and so are the eight consciousnesses and two kinds of selflessness.

“Now then, Mahamati, name and appearance are to be known as imagined nature.

“And that upon which, Mahamati, the operation of imagination called thought and associated mental functions depends, arisen at once lie the sun with its rays, the nature of diverse characteristics that is the substratum of imagination, that nature, Mahamati, is called relative.

“True knowledge and verity, Mahamati, being indestructible, are to be known as absolute in nature.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, while engrossed in objects of subjective thought, imagination is split eight ways. By ceasing the double grasping of self and possession because they are merely imagined, unreal characteristics of appearances, the two kinds of selflessness are realized.

“In these five elements, Mahamati, are contained all Buddhas’ teachings, including the differentiation and arrangement of the stages of hearers, solitary illuminates, and bodhisattvas, and the entry into first-hand ultimate knowledge.

“Again, Mahamati, the five elements are appearance, name, imagination, verity, and true knowledge. Of these, Mahamati, appearance is what is perceived in different configurations and shapes, such as form. What formulates conceptions, such as a pitcher, on the basis of appearance—‘It is this, nothing else’—that is a name.

“That by which that name is proclaimed, expressing appearance or equivalency, that is imagination called thought and associated mental functions. The ultimate ungraspability of the name and

appearance of all those things because they do not follow from one another and are imagined due to lack of comprehension, that is verity. Truth, actuality, certainty, completion, nature, essence, ungraspable—this is descriptive of verity, attained then suitably indicated, represented, revealed, and expounded by me and other Realized Ones.

“Having arrived there, with true understanding having neither extinction nor perpetuity, false imagination does not go on; consistent with first-hand ultimate knowledge, inaccessible to sectarians or other factions, hearers, or individual illuminates—that is true knowledge.

“These are the five elements, Mahamati. Within these same five are three natures, eight consciousnesses, two kinds of selflessness, and all Buddhas’ teachings. Here you, Mahamati, should develop your own intellectual skill, and also get others to do so. You shouldn’t be led by others.

“So it is said,

Five elements, nature, eight consciousnesses, and twin selflessness

*are all contained in the great Vehicle;
name, appearance, and imagination are of two natures,
true knowledge and verity are described as absolute.”*

At that time Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, went on to say this to the Blessed One: “When it is said by the Blessed One in a record of instruction that the Realized Ones past, future, and present are like the sands of the Ganges River, is this to be taken literally, or is there some other meaning to it? Please tell me, Blessed One.”

The Blessed One said, “It is not to be taken literally. The Buddhas of the three times cannot be measured by the measure of the sands of the Ganges. Why? Because they are quite beyond the world, an example affords no comparison, because there is no resemblance to any likeness. And the Realized, Able, Perfectly Enlightened Buddhas do not adduce an example beyond the world without resemblance to any likeness, Mahamati, unless it is just an analogy presented by me and those Realized Ones.

“Saying that the Realized, Able, Perfectly Enlightened Buddhas are like the sands of the Ganges is for the purpose of startling

unsophisticated ordinary people who are engrossed in attachment to permanence or impermanence, attached to wrong views belonging to dogmatists, going along with the wheel of repetitious mundane existence. So that these seekers of the exceptional may be able to get beyond the straits of mundane ways, in order to show buddhahood as easy to attain, they are told that the emergence of the Realized is not like the udumbara blossom, so that they will begin to make effort.

“But it is also said by me in the record of instruction to people who can taught that the appearance of the Realized is as rare as the udumbara blossom. But an udumbara blossom has never been seen by anyone, nor will ever be seen, whereas Realized Ones are seen in the world, and will be seen too.

“It is not in reference to a statement establishing my own doctrine that the appearance of the Realized is as rare as the udumbara blossom. In exposition establishing my own doctrine, Mahamati, examples quite beyond the world are employed, because of unbelievability; it would be incredible to unsophisticated ordinary people. It is not that they do not hold good in the domain of one’s

own first-hand ultimate knowledge, but the Realized are reality, hence are not explained in those examples. But is related only as a matter of analogy that the Realized are like the sands of the Ganges River; they are neither alike nor unlike, having neither resemblance nor distinction.

“Just as the sands of the Ganges River, Mahamati, while being agitated by fish, turtles, porpoises, buffalo, lions, elephants, and so on, do not consider or imagine themselves agitated or not, having no misconception, inherently clean, free from pollution, in the same way the sands of the powers, superknowledges, and masteries of the great Ganges River of first-hand ultimate knowledge do not consider or imagine being agitated by all the dogmatic ignorant fishy challengers. Because the Realized are already committed to it, they do not arrange or imagine the fulfilling of attainment of all happiness of beings. Hence the Realized are like the sands of the Ganges River, no different, in neither inviting nor refusing.

“Just as the sand in the Ganges River is earth because its nature is earthen, and does not relinquish the nature of earth even burning in the eonic fire—for earth does not burn by connection with the

element of fire, except insofar as ignorant ordinary people with mental continuum fixated on unreality imagine it burning, and does not burn as an element on which that fire is based—in the same way, Mahamati, the reality body of the Realized is unperishing like the sands of the Ganges River..

“Just as the sands of the Ganges River are measureless, Mahamati, measureless too is the light of the rays of the Realized, diffused by the realized throughout the circles of audiences of all Buddhas to promote the maturation of beings.

“Just as the sands in the Ganges River do not take on a nature other than sand, as sands remain sand, in the same way, Mahamati, in repetitious mundane existence there is no origin or extinction of the Realized, Able, Perfectly Enlightened Buddhas, because of the cause of the process of becoming having been cut off.

“Just as the sands in the Ganges River do not notice if they are picked up and do not notice if they are thrown, Mahamati, in the same way the knowledge of the Realized is neither exhausted nor increased by employment in the development of people, because of

the incorporeality of truth. For destruction happens, Mahamati, to the corporeal, not the incorporeal, and truth is incorporeal.

“Just as the sands in the Ganges River, even if pressed by those seeking grease or oil, have never had any grease or oil to begin with, in the same way the Realized, when pressed by the sufferings of beings, do not give up the pleasure of the commitments of lordship of the realm of truth, having undertaken great compassion as long as all beings have not been relieved by the Realized.

“Just as the sands in the Ganges River flow along with the current, Mahamati, not where there is no water, in the same way the teaching of the truth of all Buddhas by the Realized goes with the flow of nirvana. Therefore the Realized are said to be like the sands in the Ganges River.

“This does not imply a sense of going in the Realized. Perishing is the meaning of going. And the starting point of mundane existence is not known; without knowing that, how can I teach in terms of going? The meaning of going, Mahamati, is extinction, but unsophisticated ordinary people do not comprehend.”

Mahamati said, “If, Blessed One, the starting point of worldly existence is not known, how can the liberation of living being be known?”

The Blessed One said, “Cessation of the cause of the impressions of valueless imagination elaborated since beginningless time, Mahamati, because of recognition of external things as objects of subjective thought, the basis of imagination not taking effect, Mahamati, is liberation, not annihilation. Hence it does not make any argument for eternity.

“Ultimate eternity, Mahamati, is another name for an imagination. There is here no other essence at all but imagination, either internal or external, when examined with discernment. For all phenomena are beyond knowledge and information, except that imagination goes on because of not realizing it is subjective thought construction, and ceases from perception of that.

“So it is said,

Those who see the Guides as like sands in the Ganges

see the Realized in an unperishing state.

*As the sands in the Ganges are free of all defects,
going with the flow, everlasting, so is the buddhahood of a Buddha.”*

At that point Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, went on to say this to the Blessed One: “Please indicate, Blessed One, please indicate to me, Blissful One, Able One, Perfectly Enlightened One, the instantaneous dissolution of all phenomena, and their distinction. That is, how are all things momentary?”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “All phenomena means everything, Mahamati, namely good and bad, concrete and not concrete, mundane and transmundane, blameworthy and blameless, distressing and painless, perceived and unperceived. In sum, Mahamati, the five acquisitive clusters, conditioned by impressions

of thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness, are imagined for better or worse by naïve ordinary people filled with impressions of thought, intellect, and cognitive consciousness. Attainments of absorption and ecstasy, Mahamati, by sages' production of enjoyment of bliss in the present state, are called good and wholesome.

“Good and bad, furthermore, Mahamati, refer to the eight consciousnesses. What are the eight? They are the matrix of realization called the receptacle consciousness; the intellect, the cognitive consciousness, and five bodies of consciousness mentioned by philosophers. These five bodies of consciousness, together with the cognitive consciousness, go on occurring as moments of good and bad mutually distinguished, undivided bodies connecting in a continuum. Having occurred, they cease. Because of not recognizing subjective mental objects, immediately upon cessation another consciousness takes place. The cognitive consciousness that apprehends distinction in formation and appearance operates in conjunction with the five bodies of consciousness without stopping for a moment's time. That I call momentariness.

“Momentary too, Mahamati, is the receptacle consciousness called the matrix of realization, together with the intellect. It is momentary under the influences of the active consciousnesses, not momentary under the influence of the painless without impulse. But unsophisticated ordinary people adhering to the doctrine of momentariness do not perceive this momentary and non-momentary nature of all things. Because of not perceiving that, by a nihilistic view they will negate even uncreated phenomena.

“The five bodies of consciousness, Mahamati, are not recurrent, do not experience happiness or sorrow, have no bases for nirvana. But the matrix of realization, Mahamati, together with causes of consequential happiness and sorrow, starts and stops, congealed by four impressions. But the unsophisticated do not realize, their minds habituated to construing the notion of momentariness.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, gold, diamond, and the special quality of a saint’s relics stay the same, abiding through time, not dissolving. If, moreover, Mahamati, the attainment of realization were momentary, that would negate the wisdom of the wise. But the wise are not

devoid of wisdom. Gold and diamond, Mahamati, staying the same, even to the extent of being stable throughout time, neither decrease nor increase; how can that be construed in the sense of the momentariness of all phenomena, inner and outer, by the unsophisticated who are unfamiliar with esoteric language?”

Mahamati also said, “It has also been said by the Blessed One that buddhahood is attained on fulfilling the six perfections. What are the six perfections, and how do they reach fulfillment?”

The Blessed One said, “There are three kinds of these perfections, Mahamati: the worldly, the transmundane, and the supremely transmundane.

“The worldly accomplishments are immersed in adherence to grasping self and possession; those who grasp dual extremes fulfill the accomplishment of giving aiming for attainment of various states of being, desirous of sense objects such as form; in the same way the ignorant fulfill the accomplishments of discipline, patience, diligence, meditation, and insight. And they elicit superknowledges seeking godhood.

“Now then, by means of the transmudane perfections hearers and solitary illuminates devote efforts to giving and the rest with minds fallen into grasping nirvana. Like the ignorant, they are seekers of nirvana for their own pleasure.

“As for the supremely transmudane, Mahamati, by apprehending the content of construction of subjective mental objects, realizing duality as in one’s own mind, by the inactivity of imagination, having no proprietary grasping, by not getting engrossed in subjective descriptions of forms, the perfection of giving for the benefit and happiness of all beings is born in great bodhisattvas engaged in the highest effort.

“The abstention from imagination they cultivate on that basis is the perfection of discipline.

“The patience in abstention from imagination by observing what apprehends the apprehended, that is the perfection of patience.

“The diligence by which one cultivates cessation of false imagination in the beginning and end of the night by means of observation suited to discipline, that is the perfection of diligence.

“Not falling into cultic grasping of nirvana from cessation of imagination is the perfection of meditation.

“As for perfection of insight, when one does not fall into dual extremes in the process of examination due to attentive examination without subjective thought construction, nullifying past actions by reversal of the mental basis, engaged in attainment of first-hand realization, that is the perfection of insight.

“These, Mahamati, are the perfections; this is the meaning of having gone beyond.

“So it is said,

*The ignorant construe the concrete as empty and impermanent;
by examples of a river, a lamp, a seed,
is the meaning of the momentary misconstrued.
I say the meaning of the momentary*

*is that all things have no function, are momentary, isolated,
without destruction and without origination.*

*I do not teach the unsophisticated
that dissolution is immediate upon origination.*

*Uninterruptedly imagination of things pulses in a course;
that experience is the cause activating those thoughts:
no form of any kind is born inside.*

*As soon as one thought disappears,
another thought commences:
form does not remain through time—
based on what can it be made to go on?
Whence and where thought operates,
it causes deviation from verity;
how can instant dissolution be conceived
of what has never been effected?*

*The attainment of yogis, gold, the relics of saints,
and the properties of light
are indestructible by worldly means.*

The states and attainments of Buddha,

fulfillment of knowledge, asceticism and realization

are evident; how can they be momentary?

Forms like castles in the air and magical illusions—

are they momentary or not?

The unreal and the actual

have come about from some agency.

VII. Projection

At that time Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, also said this to the Blessed One: “It has been predicted by the Blessed One that arhats also reach unexcelled perfect enlightenment, and that people without the practice for complete nirvana will reach realization of verity. And between the night the Realized One awakened unexcelled perfect enlightenment and the night he passed away completely, not so much as a single word has been related or uttered by the Blessed One. And, perpetually concentrated, the Realized do not conjecture or ponder. And, creating projections, by them they do the work of the Realized. For what reason is the disintegration of the consciousnesses as a succession of moments taught? And the Thunderbolt Bearer is always in constant attendance. And the starting point is not known, yet extinction is represented. And destroyers and destructive actions and floods of doings—Cancamanavika, Sundarika Pravrajika, and the empty begging bowl—obstacles from actions are evident, Blessed One. How did the Blessed One attain omniscience without being rid of faults?”

The Blessed One said, “Well then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “The realm of nirvana with no extra residue is the aim of invitation to bodhisattva practice and cultivation. For there are, Mahamati, practitioners of bodhisattva practice here and in other Buddha-lands: the purpose of invitation to the course of the Great Vehicle is to cause those among them who are desirous of the nirvana of the hearers’ vehicle to turn away from their relish for the vehicle of hearers. And those turned hearers are given the prediction by projected bodies, not by reality-Buddhas. It is in this sense, Mahamati, that the prediction for hearers is announced, not in reference to hearers’ and solitary illuminates’ special property of destruction of the obstacle of afflictions by relishing only emancipation. There is no destruction of the obstacle of information in this.

“The obstacle of information, Mahamati, is cleared by the special property of perception of the selflessness of phenomena. The obstacle of afflictions, though, is destroyed with practice in

perceiving the selflessness of personality, through deactivation of the cognitive consciousness. Liberation from the obstacle of phenomena, moreover, is purified by deactivation of impressions in the receptacle consciousness.

“It is in reference to the perpetuity of primary truth, and due to the discontinuity of what has no before or after, the Blessed One teaches the truth without conjecturing or pondering in terms that are already worn out. Being one who acts on accurate knowledge and has unfailing memory, he does not conjecture or ponder, by dint of having destroyed the ground of the four impressions, avoiding the two falls, and having removed the two obstacles of afflictions and information.

“Seven [consciousnesses], Mahamati—the intellect, cognitive consciousness, eye consciousness, et cetera—are momentary, being caused by impressions, void of the good and the painless without impulse, not flowing. The matrix of realization, however, Mahamati, does flow; it is the ground of nirvana, happiness and sorrow, but naïve ordinary people do not understand, their minds bewildered by emptiness.

“It is the created projections of the Realized that the Thunderbolt Bearer accompanies, not the original Realized Ones, the able, Perfectly Enlightened Buddhas. For the original Realize One is inaccessible to all faculties of measurement of all the naïve, hearers, solitary illuminates, and philosophers. Those abiding in a state of bliss come to him with the patience of knowing the truth of realization; hence the Thunderbolt Bearer does not accompany them.

“For projected Buddhas are not altogether products of work. There is no Realized One in them, and no Realized One apart from them. He engages in the normal activities of people, like a potter combining ingredients, and teaches formally, but not a standard speech asserting his own doctrine, the realm of first-hand ultimate attainment.

“Furthermore, Mahamati, from the passing away of six bodies of consciousness naïve ordinary people resort to the notion of annihilation; from lack of understanding of the receptacle they develop a notion of eternity.

“The starting point of subjective imagination is not known; the cessation of subjective imagination is known to be liberation.

“The elimination of all faults comes from elimination of the four impressions.

“So it is said,

The three vehicles are not an escape, indeed;

the Buddhas have no extinction.

All are assured of Buddhahood,

and those free of faults are directed.

The knowledge that is the aim of realization,

and the state of nonattachment—

this is taught to inspire

those who are stuck.

Knowledge is brought forth by the Buddhas,

and the path is taught by them too.

They go thus, not otherwise,

so they have no extinction.

Impressions of four kinds—

things, desires, forms, and views—

made of cognitive consciousness,

abide in the intellect as a receptacle.

Those with intellectual views of nirvana

claim annihilation and impermanence

on account of the cognitive consciousness, eyes, and the rest,

and eternity on account of beginninglessness.

VIII. Meat Eating

Then Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, having questioned the Blessed One with verses, also entreated, “Let the Blessed One, the Able, perfectly Enlightened Buddha, indicate to me the merit and fault in eating meat, whereby I and other great bodhisattvas in the future and present may teach people who are habituated to the ways of flesh-eating beings, eager to eat meat, so that they give up craving for flavor, and such that meat-eating people become indifferent to craving for taste, and, wishing to partake of the taste of truth, with love for all beings as for one’s only child, they may acquire great friendliness toward one another; and having attained it, after having done the practices in all the stages of bodhisattvas may quickly realize perfect enlightenment. Or, having come to rest in the stages of hearers or solitary illuminates, may they gradually approach the stage of the Realized.

“Eating meat is opposed even by other philosophers with wrongly stated principles, who preach annihilation or eternity proposing being or nonbeing, and they themselves don’t eat it; all the more in the case of the perfectly enlightened one who relishes only compassion, the guided leader of the world—in your teaching could one eat meat

oneself and not oppose its consumption? Very well, then, Blessed One, sympathizer with all worlds, who sees all beings as like his only child, great compassionate one, out of sympathy please teach me the merits and faults in meat eating, so that I and other bodhisattvas may teach people accordingly.”

The Blessed One said, “Then listen, Mahamati, and take it to heart accurately and aptly; I will tell you.”

“Very well, Blessed One.” So saying, the great bodhisattva Mahamati listened to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this to him: “For countless reasons, Mahamati, no kind of meat should be eaten by a bodhisattva, soul of compassion. I will just mention some of them.

“Here in this world, Mahamati, of being flowing in common over such a long period of time, there is no being having taken on form that has not been mother or father, brother or sister, son or daughter, partners, or kinfolk, family, and friends. How can the flesh of that relative or friend from another life, born as a wild animal, domestic

animal, or bird, flesh born of the being of all living creatures, be eaten by a great bodhisattva aspiring to Buddhahood, wishing to identify with all beings? Even the demoniacal, hearing of this benevolence of the teaching of the Realized Ones, become compassionate protectors, who have given up meat eating; how much the more people who love virtue. Thus, Mahamati, in order to cultivate the conception of all beings as one's only child, the conception of all those different forms of existence as one's own kith and kin, meat is not to be eaten at all. For a bodhisatta, soul of compassion, meat is not to be eaten.

“Even as an exception, Mahamati, all meat is unsuitable for consumption by someone with the conduct of a bodhisattva, for dog, mule, camel, horse, bull, human, and other kinds of flesh unsuitable for people's consumption are sold as edible mutton in market stalls for profit. Even for that reason, Mahamati, meat is not to be eaten by bodhisattvas.

“Because it is produced from semen and blood, too, Mahamati, meat should not be eaten by a bodhisattva, out of a desire for purity. And because it causes anxiety in beings, Mahamati, a practicing

bodhisattva wishing friendliness of beings should not eat any meat at all.

“Just as dogs are scared to death on seeing flesh-eating people like hunters, butchers, and fishers, even at a distance, thinking, ‘They’ll kill us too,’ in the same way, Mahamati, other small creatures living in the air, earth, or water who, even far from the sight of a meat eater, smelling the demon-like human odor with a keen sense of smell, quickly move away, as when in danger of death. For that reason too, Mahamati, because it causes anxiety, meat should not be eaten by a practicing bodhisattva abiding in great friendliness, as it is enjoyed by unworthy people and has a bad smell.

“Because it makes for a bad reputation too, Mahamati, and being shunned by civilized people, meat should not be eaten by a bodhisattva. Civilized people eat the food of seers, Mahamati, not food of flesh and blood; for this reason too, meat should not be eaten by a bodhisattva.

“To protect the minds of many people, and seeking to avoid slander of the teaching, a bodhisattva, soul of compassion, should not eat

meat.

“As it is, Mahamati, there are in the world those who speak ill of the teaching: ‘Is there any austerity in them, or religious quality?

Disregarding the foods of the seers of yore, bellies full of meat like carnivores, they go around this world scaring the small creatures living in the air, earth, and water, terrorizing living beings. Austerity is lost to them, their religious character is ruined; they have neither duty nor discipline.’ Those with hostile minds slander the teaching in many ways like this. Therefore, even to protect the minds of many people, and seeking to avoid slander of the teaching, Mahamati, meat should not be eaten by a bodhisattva, soul of compassion.

“Because of unpleasant likeness to the foul odor of a corpse too, Mahamati, meat should not be eaten by a bodhisattva. For the smell of the flesh of a dead human being burning is no different from the smell of the flesh of other animals. The bad smell of both kinds of burning flesh is the same. Hence, Mahamati, no meat should be eaten by a practicing bodhisattva desiring purity.

“Since it also obstructs the learning, practice, and liberation of those staying in burning grounds, of yogis practicing their disciplines in the wilderness, sleeping and sitting in remote haunted places, holders of spells abiding in friendliness wishing to accomplish spiritual knowledge, seeing how it also creates obstacles to the accomplishment of all disciplines of family sons and family daughters who have set out on the Great Vehicle, meat should not be eaten at all by a bodhisattva, who wishes well for self and others.

“Because it produces relish based on consciousness of objects with form, too, no meat should be eaten by a bodhisattva, soul of compassion, who identifies with all beings.

“Considering that even celestials shun this, Mahamati, meat should not be eaten at all by a bodhisattva, soul of compassion.

“Considering that one’s own mouth will be extremely bad-smelling all one’s life here, Mahamati, a bodhisattva, soul of compassion, should not eat meat of any kind.

“One sleeps uncomfortably, awakens uncomfortable, and has bad and frightening dreams. And demons steal the energy of one staying alone in an empty house, living in solitude. They are fearful, sometimes frightened, afraid for no reason. And one knows no measure in food, nor sees to the proper seasoning, cooking, and nutrition of what he eats and drinks. One comes to have a stomach that is a toxic cause of disease filled with worms and bugs, and is frequently plagued by illness. And one doesn’t see anything wrong with this.

“And while calling it eating the flesh of one’s child as if it were medicine, Mahamati, how indeed could I permit my disciples to take food of flesh and blood, to which uncivilized people resort and which civilized people reject, which bears many faults and eliminates many virtues, is not prescribed by seers, and is not suitable?

“I have permitted, on the other hand, Mahamati, all food partaken of by civilized people and rejected by uncivilized people, which bears many good qualities and is free of many ills, food prescribed by all seers of yore, considered suitable; namely rice, barley, wheat,

beans, lentils, and the like, prepared with clarified butter, sesame oil, honey, raw sugar, molasses, syrup, sugar cane juice, and the like.

“However, Mahamati, this prescribed food is not related for some deluded people in the future preaching various alternatives in discipline, influenced by the habits of meat eaters, in whom a craving for taste has been established. Rather, Mahamati, I tell great bodhisattvas who have worked for previous Buddhas, who have sent down roots of good, who are faithful without changing, multitudes of successors to the lineage of the Buddha, family sons and family daughters, without attachment to body, life, or property, who are not greedy for taste, who do not have eager appetites, who have unflinching compassion, who want to approach identification with all beings, who see all beings with affection as for an only child.

“Long ago in the past, Mahamati, there was a king named Sinhasaudasa. He indulged so much in eating meat that in pursuing his paramount devotion to craving for taste he even ate human flesh. And because of that he was abandoned by his friends, counselors, kith and kin, and his whole set, not to mention the

citizens and country folk. So, deserted by his own kingdom, he suffered a great calamity on account of meat.

“Even Indra, in a former existence before attaining celestial lordship, because of the fault of habituation to eating meat, in the form of a hawk chased down Vishvakarman in the form of a dove, who then placed himself on a scale; whereat King Shibi, pitying an innocent being, was greatly distressed. So even one who has become a celestial lord through many lifetimes of practice, Mahamati, has brought trouble on self and others; how much more everyone else!

“Princes of others who had become kings, Mahamati, kings who were taken away by horses and while wandering in forests had sexual intercourse with a lioness out of fear for their lives and produced offspring from cohabitation with lions, the princes beginning with Kalmashapada, were meat-eaters even after becoming kings, because of the harmful habit of eating meat in their former lives.

“Here in this life as well, Mahamati, even in a village of seven houses, horrible goblins and demonesses who eat human flesh

appear seeking it fanatically out of ardent longing for a lot of meat. And at the end of a life, Mahamati, due to such effort for the taste of meat they are caused to fall into the wombs of carnivores like lions, tigers, leopards, wolves, hyenas, wildcats, jackals, owls, and so on; into even more horrible wombs such as those of demons who are even more voracious flesh eaters, where it is difficult for the fallen even to reach a human womb, let alone emancipation.

“These and other bad consequences arise from meat eating, Mahamati, especially in those who are habituated to it; and there are even more virtues from giving it up. But ignorant ordinary people, Mahamati, are not aware of these and other faults and merits. Seeing such merits and faults, I say no meat is to be eaten by a bodhisattva, soul of compassion.

“And if, Mahamati, no one ever ate meat, then they wouldn't kill for that purpose. For most innocent living beings are slaughtered for profit, few for other reasons. It is abominable, Mahamati, that in the over-eagerness of craving for flavor even human flesh is eaten by humans, not to mention the flesh of other living creatures such as animals and birds. Most of this is killed in nets and traps for that

purpose, by deluded people afflicted with craving for the taste of meat, as fowlers, herders, fishermen, and so on slaughter innocent creatures of the air, earth, and water in many ways for the sake of profit. And these bitter, cruel-hearted, demoniacal, ruthless people have no concept of living beings as living beings; as they are killing and eating them, they feel no compassion.

“And there is no ground on which meat is suitable for me to permit to disciples, be it that it has not been prepared by them, at their behest, or especially for them. But in the future, Mahamati, there will be deluded people who, having gone forth into my teaching and claiming to be Buddhists, wearing the trademark of the brown-red garment, their intelligence destroyed by false thinking, preaching various alternative disciplines, attached to the notion of a real body, obsessively craving for flavor, will string together sophisms rationalizing meat eating. And they will think it proper to make an unfounded false accusation against me. Concocting this and that purpose and motive, they will say, ‘For this purpose, on this account, eating meat has been permitted by the Blessed One as suitable. It is mentioned among prescribed foods too, and indeed it has been eaten by the Realized One himself.’ But in no scripture has it been

approved for indulgence, Mahamati, nor is it mentioned among prescribed foods as suitable.

“If, Mahamati, I wanted to permit it, or if it were proper for my disciples to indulge in it, I would not have forbidden all meat eating to yogis abiding in friendliness, practitioners of yoga staying in cemeteries, to family sons and family daughters who have set forth on the Great Vehicle, in order to cultivate the conception of all beings as one’s only child; but I have in fact forbidden it. Here, Mahamati, all meat is forbidden to family sons and family daughters who have set out on all the vehicles, to forest-dwelling yogis staying in graveyards, abiding in friendliness, practitioners of yoga, in order to accomplish all discipline, for the purpose of cultivating the perception of all beings as one’s only child.

“Combining a collection of disparate passages in the record of teaching confined to measures suitable to the states of students, three at most are not explicitly forbidden. Beyond that, even ten kinds of meat from natural death are prohibited.

“But here in this scripture, all is forbidden, any way, anyhow, with no accommodation at all. Hence, Mahamati, I have not assented, do not assent, and will not assent, to anyone’s meat eating. To eat meat is unsuitable, I say, Mahamati, for those who have left secular society.

“And even if they think it proper to make a false accusation against me, Mahamati, saying that even the Realized One eats meat, for other deluded persons surrounded by the obstacles of the ills of their own doing that will be a long night of hellfire, without meaning and to no avail.

“For civilized disciples, Mahamati, do not eat the food of primitive people; how indeed could food of meat and blood be suitable? For my disciples, solitary illuminates and bodhisattvas eat for truth, not for enjoyment; how much more the Realized Ones! For the Realized Ones as embodiments of reality, Mahamati, are sustained by the consumption of truth, not bodies for enjoyment, and not sustained by eating for enjoyment. They have vomited out all habits of craving and possessiveness for worldly amenities, are freed of all the bad habits of the afflictions, have completely liberated intelligence and

insight, all-knowing and all-seeing, greatly compassionate ones who look upon all beings like an only child.

“So, Mahamati, being one who perceives all beings as an only child, how could I permit disciples to eat the flesh of my only child? How, indeed, could I eat it myself? There is no basis, Mahamati, for the statement that I allowed disciples to eat it, or ate it myself.

“So it is said,

Alcohol, meat, and onions should not be eaten, great sage,

by bodhisattvas, great people, victorious heroes speaking.

Enjoyed by the uncivilized, foul-smelling, and a cause of ill repute, meat is the food of carnivores, I say, not to be eaten, great sage.

You should realize what ills are in meat eating, Mahamati,

what faults are in eating it and what merits in abstaining.

Because of kinship, because of injury, because of originating in semen and blood,

a practitioner should avoid meat, which frightens creatures.

Meats and onions and sundry alcoholic drinks,

red garlic and garlic too, let the practitioner always avoid.

One should give up anointment with oil, and not sleep on a bed of nails,

a state of great terror to the beings in the spaces, from their space.

Arrogance arises from eating;

expectation of advantage comes from arrogance.

Born of expectation of advantage is passion;

hence one should not indulge.

From expectation of advantage, passion is born;

the mind is deluded by passion:

becoming accustomed to a state of delusion,

one is never liberated in life.

For the sake of gain, a being is killed;

money is given for the meat:

both of those evil acts

result in terrible hells.

Any moron who eats meat in violation of the word of the sage

is designated in Buddhism as a destroyer of the welfare of two worlds.

*Those evildoers go to the most horrible hell;
in agonizing, terrifying hells meat eaters are tormented.*

*As for pure meat with three limitation—
not specially prepared, not requested, not ordered—
there is no such thing,
so one should not eat meat.*

*A practitioner should not eat meat; it has been censured by me and
all Buddhas.*

Beings eating each other are born as carnivorous species.

*Stinking, contemptible, and even insane, one is born
in families of butchers and hunters, and among outcastes, again and
again.*

*And from a demonic womb one is born in a meat-eating family;
and that lowest of men is born in the wombs of goblins and wildcats.*

*In the Hastikaksha, Mahamedha, Nirvana, Angulimalika,
and the Lankavatara sutras meat is rejected by me.*

*It is censured by Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and listeners;
if one eats it shamelessly, madness always occurs.*

*But one may be born among Brahmins, or in a family of yogis,
with wisdom and wealth too, by giving up meat and so on.
With doubts about what is seen and heard, one should avoid all
meat;
thinkers born in meat-eating families do not understand.*

*Just as passion is an impediment to liberation,
so are such as meat and alcohol an impediment.
In the future deluded preachers who eat meat
will say meat is mentioned by Buddha as proper and blameless.*

*Meat eaten as medicine
is also like the flesh of one's child;
let the yogi treat a piece of meat
with proper revulsion.
For those who abide in friendliness
it is always censured by me in every way;
one will join the company of lions, tigers, wolves, and the like.*

Hence one should not eat meat, which scares people.

*Because it is inconsistent with the teaching of emancipation,
this is the trademark of the civilized.*

IX. Spells

At that time the Blessed One counseled Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, “You should take up the mantras in the Lankavatara, Mahamati, which have been spoken, are spoken, and will be spoken by the Blessed Buddhas of the past, future, and present. I too will enunciate them for the assistance of those who speak on the teaching:

Tatte tatte

vatte vatte

patte patte

vatte vatte

katte katte

amale amale

vimale vimale

nime nime,

hime hime,

vame vame

kale kale

atte matte

vatte tutte

jnette sphutte

katte katte

latte patte

dime dime

cale cale

pace pace

bandhe bandhe

ance mance

dutare dutare

patare patare

akke akke

sarkke sarkke

cakre cakre

dime dime

hime hime

tu tu tu tu

tu tu tu tu

tu tu tu tu

tu tu tu tu

du du du du

du du du du

du du du du

du du du du

ru ru ru ru

ru ru ru ru

ru ru ru ru

ru ru ru ru

phu phu phu phu

phu phu phu phu

phu phu phu phu

phu phu phu phu

svaha.

“These, Mahamati, are the mantras in the *Laṅkavatara* scripture of the Great Vehicle. Any family son or family daughter, Mahamati, who will take up, memorize, recite, and study these mantras will not be overcome by any male or female deities, serpent demons, apparitions, titans, supernatural birds, centaurs, snake monsters, celestial musicians, malevolent beings, flesh-eating imps, energy-stealers, wayward spirits, or anti-humans—none of these will find a way in.

“And if any misfortune should befall one, by reciting this weeping one hundred and eight times one will see the direction of felicity and go there.

“I will also tell you other mantras, Mahamati:

Padme padmadeve

Hine hini hine

Cu cule culu cule

Phale phula phule

Yule ghule yula yule

Ghule ghula ghule

Pale pala pale

Muñce muñce muñce

Chinde bhinde bhañje

Marde pramarde dinakare svaha.

“Any family son or family daughter, Mahamati, who will take up, memorize, recite, and study these mantras will not be overcome by any male or female deities, serpent demons, apparitions, titans, supernatural birds, centaurs, snake monsters, celestial musicians,

malevolent beings, flesh-eating imps, energy-stealers, wayward spirits, or anti-humans—none of these will find a way in.

“Whoever reads these mantras will have read the *Laṅkāvatāra* scripture.

X. Summation in Verse

At that time Mahamati, the great bodhisattva, said this to the Blessed One:

The world has no origin or dissolution, like a flower in the sky;
being and nonbeing are not found here, by your insight and
compassion.

The world is without eternity or annihilation, always like a dream.
It is not found to be or not to be, by your insight and compassion.

All things are like illusions apart from thought and consciousness,
not found to be or not to be, by your insight and compassion.

Selflessness of phenomena and personality, afflictions and
information too,
are always pure to you, being signless, by your insight and
compassion.

You do not become extinct, you are not in extinction, extinction is not
in you,

beyond intelligence and information, apart from extremes of being and nonbeing.

Those who see the Sage at peace, thus, detached from events, become unacquisitive in this world and the next, without embellishment.

Like a mirage shimmering in the heat deceiving the mind, animals take it for water, but there is no substance to it.

So does the seed of consciousness quicken in the field of views; the ignorant grasp it as being, as the dim-sighted do the dark.

Meditator, meditation, and topic of meditation, relinquishment and vision of truth—whoever realizes this is only mental construction is liberated.

These phenomena are insubstantial, deriving from thought; even that thought by which 'empty' is thought is itself empty.

The clusters, with consciousness the fifth, are like reflections of trees in water;

an object analogous to an illusion or a dream one should not imagine to be as represented.

Like magic, a zombie, a machine, a dream, lightning, a cloud— always seeing this world with the triple continuum cut off, one is liberated.

Consciousness occurs through invalid imagination, eightfold, ninefold, variously, waves on a vast ocean.

Constantly strengthened with impressions by the intellect as a basis of permanent reliance, the mind rambles in the realm of the senses like iron drawn to a magnet.

The generic matter inherent in all beings is beyond thought; it is at rest, disengaged, beyond knowledge and information.

Illusion-like concentration too is beyond the ten stages; you see the mind-king, beyond conceptual consciousness.

When the mind is turned around, then it remains eternally
in a lotus-shaped aerial car made in the realm of illusion.
While in it, one attains effortless movement,
and does the things people do, like a jewel of all hues.

There is nothing created or uncreated
outside of imagination;
the ignorant with deluded thought grasp them
like a barren women does her son in a dream.

Personality, the clusters, and continuity have no origination
in the sense of lacking independent existence;
elements as contingencies, and emptiness as knowable too,
as things not coming to be.

Mine is expedient instruction; I do not teach definition.
The naïve grasp definition as the defined, as actual reality.

The knower of all is not wed to it all, in the midst of everything yet not
anything.

The naïve imagine the world awake, but I am not awakened and do not cause awakening.

This world is representation, made of names, not there as it appears.

The clusters are makers of optical illusions imagined by the naïve.

Nothing comes to be from nonexistence, nor perishes conditionally; when one sees the constructed as the child of a barren woman, a flower in the sky, then, seeing grasper and grasped as confusion, it ceases.

I do not enter nirvana by cultivation, ritual or appearance; I attain nirvana by cessation of the consciousness causing imagination.

Just as waves don't arise on a calm ocean, so does variety of consciousness, extinguished, not proceed.

Empty, devoid of inherent existence, analogous to illusion, unborn, these dreamlike things are not found to be real or unreal.

I teach one nature, apart from thinking and representation;
the celestial realm of the wise, beyond two natures.

As shiny insects appear multicolored to the intoxicated but are not,
seeming so because of agitation of the elements of sense, so is this
world, by nature.

Just as a magic illusion appears in straw, sticks, and pebbles
while the illusion is not actually there, so are phenomena, by nature.
There is no grasper and no grasped, no one to be bound and no
bondage,
like an illusion, a mirage, a dream scene, a partial blindness;
when a seeker of truth sees without false imagination, without
embellishment,
then, discipline accomplished, one will see me, without doubt.
For nothing is represented here, like a mirage in the sky;
when conscious of phenomena thus, one does not assert anything.

In assumptions of being and nonbeing
there is no origin of phenomena;

thought rambles in the triple world,
whereby it appears diverse.

A dream and the world are of the same nature,
and the forms and colors there too;
experience and contact prove equal,
as well as death, the teacher of the world, and action.

For mind is the womb of what's in the triple world,
for this wandering mind is seen here and yon;
knowing the state of this world to be thus, unreal,
one should not imagine the world.

The naïve see origin and destruction from delusion;
one with insight does not distinguish origin or destruction.

In the peak celestial abode, rid of all evil, those free of false
imagination,
always disciplined, are detached from thought and mental
conditions.

Those who've attained the powers, superknowledges, and masteries,
and reached the goal of that concentration,
are awakened there, perfectly enlightened,
while the projection is awakened here.

For countless tens of millions of projections of Buddhas issue forth;
everywhere the undeveloped listen to them, hearing the truth,
free of beginning, middle, and end, beyond being and nonbeing, all-
pervasive, immovable, pure, unvaried, source of variety,
concealed by a multitude of representations, dwelling in all living
creatures.

It is due to confusion that there is illusion; illusion is not the cause of
confusion.

It is by confusion of mind that anything seems to be there,
veiled in two natures projected by the receptacle consciousness,
the world consisting of representation, the flood of views,
phenomena and personality.

When one has turned away, having contemplated the world thus,
then one will be an heir of mine, who deals with perfect truth.

The phenomena of heat, fluidity, motion, and hardness imagined by the ignorant

are untrue attributions; there is nothing definable and no definition.

This faculty in the form of a body, the ignorant, confused, in the cage of the common flow, imagine as made of eight things.

The ignorant imagine origin as a totality of causes and conditions; not knowing this principle, they wander in the abode of the triple world.

All things, without inherent existence, are in fact human speech.

Yet there is no creation from thinking; existence is like a dream.

If one observes this, one will not go with the common flow, nor yet pass away.

Manifold thought, known as seed, is called the sphere of mind.

The ignorant attached to duality of thought construe origination in a name.

Ignorance, craving, and action, cause of thought and mentality—where it starts from is known as relativity.

What they construe as objective is confusion of the subjective,

the inadequacy of thought, imagined by error and confusion.

The thought of embodied beings operates in connection with conditions;

I say I do not see apart from conditions.

Free of conditions, without self-definition,
when it is not in a body it is thus not an object to me.

Just as an eminent king gets his children likenesses of various animals

to play in the house a gathering of animals in the woods,
so do I give similes for realities with various definitions,
but I tell my heirs the boundary of reality must be known first-hand.

As waves on the ocean aroused by the conditions of the wind
go on dancing with no end in sight,
so too the flood in the receptacle,
always agitated by the wind of objects,
goes on dancing with manifold waves of consciousness.

The thought of living beings is subject to the supposition

of something apprehended and something apprehending;
the character of the perceptible
is not there as imagined by the naïve.

The primary receptacle and the receptacle as a datum too are
veritable,

I teach, when the grasped and grasper are gone:
there is no soul in the clusters, no being or personality;
but consciousness occurs, and consciousness passes away.

Just as low and high are seen in a picture but aren't there,
so does being appear in beings without really being there.
Like a castle in the air, like a mirage,
an object is known as such usually, but is not there to insight.

What is produced by the faculties of measurement is not an effect or
a cause,
apart from intelligence and information, without anything definable or
any definition.

No one has ever seen anyone who became completely awakened based on the clusters;
what has never been seen by anyone, how can it be contemplated?

By proofs, paradigms of logic, and by proposition and reason,
in terms of a dream, a castle in the air, a mirage, the moon and sun,
I use such examples to say an origin is not objective.

The imagined world is called a dream, confusion, or illusion, in the sense of being empty.

But independent of everything in the triple world, inner and outer,
seeing existence unborn, patience from nowhere is born.

One will have concentration like magic, and a mental body too,
superknowledges, masteries, powers, and brilliance of mind.

Things in relation to which confusion occurs, unoriginated, empty,
essenceless,

are also those in relation to which it passes away.

For thought is perception of mind, the external is perception of what has form;

no other object is there as the naïve imagine.

Collections, the image of Buddha, analysis of elements;
the properly learned master the varied world by means of
representation.

Body, abode, and property—these are three representations of what
is grasped;
intellect, reception, representation and imagination are terms for
what grasps.

Whether imagination or what can be imagined, anything in the realm
of words
thinkers do not see truly, because of confusion of thought.

When the lack of inherent existence of things is realized,
then the yogi is at peace, beyond the range of the senses.

As something painted black is taken for a snake by the unaware,
the three vehicles are mistaken by the ignorant who do not know.
For there are no disciples here, no one in the vehicle of the solitary;
what appears to be the form of a disciple or a master
is a projection that bodhisattvas, souls of compassion, show.

The triple world, construed as of two natures, is only a representation;
verity is off the path of phenomena and personality.

Just as moon and sun, the flame of a lamp, elements, and gems occur without contrivance, so does the buddhahood of a Buddha.

Just as visual distortion is misapprehended by dim-sighted people, so the conception of things is falsely construed by the naïve.

Apart from stasis, dissolution, and origination, neither permanent nor impermanent,
analogies like visual distortion have the aspect of cleaning away afflictions.

Just as the world sees an idol as something gold whereas there's no gold there, but gilded earth,
so too do the ignorant corrupted by beginningless thoughts and mental states
grasp illusory mirage-like existence as real.

One seed is not the primary cause; seed is of a single mark;
see that all seed is variegated thought.

When one seed is pure, it ceases to be seed.

The mixture of races is equivalent to nondiscrimination on a large
scale:

seed brings variety; that is called the seed of all.

Nothing originates therein by conditions, nor passes away;
even the conditions occurring and passing away are imagined.

The triple world is only a representation; nothing exists of its own
nature.

Thinkers will imagine a representation as an objective existence.

Wanting to know the nature of things does not prevent confusion;
seeing the nonorigination of the nature of things, one is liberated.

Illusion is not nonexistent; its existence is spoken of
because it is of the same nature of things;
unreal, like a flash of lightning,

they are therefore noted as analogous to illusion.

They are not to be produced, nor have they originated;

nor is there any condition;

whatever seems there is therefore called convention.

Conditions' affliction of dissolution and origin cannot be avoided;

but what the ignorant imagine of conditions is completely avoidable.

There's no essential nature, no representation, no thing, no

receptacle,

as these are imagined by the ignorant under the influence of bad thinkers.

When heirs of the Victorious see the world as made by mind,

then they gain a projection body without practice and cultivation

endowed with powers, superknowledges, and masteries.

When thought acts on the appearance of all forms,

there is no mind here, or forms, but thought confused since ever;

then the yogi sees the world without false images by means of insight.

A sign is a representation of a thing, and a mental palpitation,
transcending which my heirs act without false conceptions.

A castle in the air, a magical illusion, a visual distortion, a mirage:
the unreal seem real; such is supposition of things.

All things are unoriginated; confusion alone is seen.

The ignorant attached to duality imagine confusion as originated.

Manifold thought as an element of cause,
produced from impressions,
rolls on as a flood of waves;
by cutting it off, it does not go on.

As a varied basis of diversity operates in thought,
so in space, on a blank, it doesn't come from anywhere.

When thought goes on relative to any sign,
thought produced by conditions
is not focused on mind alone.

There is no mind with agency grasped by thought;
the true essence of mind is pure—there is no impression in the sky.

Thought comes from immersion in subjective mentation;
there is no external object, so it is only thought.

Mind is the receptacle consciousness, intellect is the thinker;
what grasps objects is called consciousness.

Mind is always indeterminate, intellect goes both ways,
active consciousness is good and bad.

The door of ultimate truth is beyond the two representations [of
imagined and relative];
how can the arrangement of the three vehicles remain where there
are no images?

The abodes and the stage of Buddhahood are only mind without
images;

this has been told, is told, and will be told by the Buddhas.

Seven stages are thought, the eighth is imageless.

Two stages are a pleasure ground, the last stage is my own.

My own stage, pure, must be known first hand;
it shines over the supreme state of the great lord at the peak of
existence.

Its rays of light come forth like those of fire, variegated, pleasing,
cheerful,
which show a triple world;
showing some triple world, or one already shown,
there they teach the vehicles—this stage is my own.

There is no time in realization of the stages, the passage to
sovereignty;
transcending mental content, the sure result is beyond the range of
the senses.

Even nonexistence is seen as existence, and variety too.

The ignorant have wrong notions because of grasping; for variety is
a delusion.

When knowledge is without imagination,

it is not accurate to say there's an object;
the reason why mind is not forms
is being free of imagination.

The sense faculties, and their objects, illusory appearances, are like
dreams;
agent, action, and procedure too are nowhere to be found.

The meditations, the immeasurables,
and the formless concentrations,
the extinction of perception too,
are not found at all in mind alone.

The fruition of the stream enterer, and the fruition of once-returner
too,
the fruition of non-returner, and even sainthood, is mental illusion.

The naïve imagine the created to be empty and momentary;
the meaning of momentariness is construed by examples such as a
river or a lamp.

But the momentary is inert, isolated, without activity;

so I say the nonorigination of phenomena is the meaning of momentary.

The nonarising of existence and nonexistence, in the tradition of the Samkhya and Vaisheshika, all are explained by them as indeterminate.

Explanation is of four kinds: complete affirmation, questioning, necessary analysis, and what is to be avoided, refuting hallowed dogma.

All is found in common convention, not in ultimate truth.

The essencelessness of phenomena is seen in ultimate truth, in the essencelessness of non-apprehension; hence the term convention.

If a thing based on words has independent existence, a thing made of words is not found not to exist.

There is no substance to a word, even in conventional usage, and due to the actuality of delusion, there is no apprehension.

If delusion is there, essencelessness is not found;
what is apprehended through the actuality of delusion
must have no essence of its own,
for that is not found to be there anyhow.

What appears obvious is thought arbitrarily impressed;
grasping the appearance of form outside is confusion of mind.

By thinking without contrivance, false imagination ceases;
by thinking without contrivance, the truth of emptiness is seen.

Like a phantom elephant, like leaves painted gold,
so does the visible appear in the mind influenced by ignorance.

One who is wise does not see confusion, or any truth in it;
confusion too would be truth, if there were truth in it.

If a sign occurs after confusion is all cleared away,
its not being cleared will also be confusion, like darkness.

Just as one with dim eyesight misapprehends a visual distortion,

so does the grasping of sense objects by the naïve begin.

Contemplating the triple world as like a visual distortion,
mistaking a mirage for water, like a dream or an illusion, one is
liberated.

Imagination, what is imagined, and imagination's action,
bondage, what is bound, and being bound—these six are reasons
for liberation.

No stages, no truths, no lands, no emanations;
Buddhas, solitary illuminates, and hearers too are contrived.

Personality, continuity, the clusters, conditions, atoms,
and the supreme creator god too is imagined in mere thought.
For mind is all, everywhere, operating in all bodies;
mind alone, invisible, is grasped as diverse by the false.

For there is no soul in the clusters,
and the clusters are not in a soul;
they are not as imagined,

yet it's not that they don't exist.

If the existences of all things were as imagined by the naïve,
they would all be as seen by one who sees the truth.

Because of the unreality of all phenomena,
there is neither defilement nor purity;
they are not as seen,
yet not nonexistent either.

The sign of confusion is conception, a description of the relative.
The name assigned to that sign describes the imagined.
When conception of name and sign does not occur in relation to it,
the absolute character is an allusion to conditions without real
abiding substance.

The Buddhas resulting from maturation
and the Victors that are projections,
beings and bodhisattvas,
and lands too are everywhere.

The Victors emanating as results of the teaching,
and those that are projections,
all issue from the Blissful land of Infinite Light.

What is spoken by the projections,
and what is said by those born of maturation—
know the extensive teaching of the scriptures is its totality.

Whatever has been said by the heirs of the Victorious
and whatever the Guides say,
is what has been said by projections,
but not Victors born of maturation.

These phenomena are unoriginated, yet they are not nonexistent;
they are like castles in the air, dreams, illusions, projections.

Thought engages in thought; it is thought that is to be abandoned;
it is thought that is born, and none other than thought that passes
away.

The appearance of objects to humans is thought;
thought expresses what is imagined.

There is no object; it is only thought;
without imagination, one is freed.

A collection of elaboration without value
since time without beginning,
false imagination is brought into being;
thus does false appearance occur.

As the appearance of objects is consciousness,
knowledge is the domain of verity,
detached, without images,
that is in the domain of the wise.

Meditation investigating things
is meditation practiced by the unsophisticated;
meditation focused on verity is realized pure meditation.
As merely imagined, everything is unborn on its own;
focused on the relative, people's imagination rambles.

As the relative is pure when disconnected from imagination,
verity is detached, a state apart from conception.

Don't construct imagination;
an imagination doesn't really exist.

Confusion belongs to the one falsely imagining,
not to the apprehended and what apprehends.

The view of external objects is a construction;
intrinsic existence is entirely imagined.

By that construction they construe inherent existence produced from
conditions;

the view of external objects is fallacious; there is no object, but
thought.

To those seeing accurately, what grasping grasps disappears.

No object is found external as imagined by the naïve.

The appearance of objects starts as thought agitated by
impressions;

by annihilation of constructed substitutes, knowledge is the realm of
verity.

The sphere of the wise occurs without images, inconceivable:
conception of name and sign characterizes two natures;
true knowledge, veritable, characterizes the absolute.

The combination of receptacle and intellect
from the union of father and mother
grows with fertilization
like a mouse in a jar of ghee.

The fetus, an impure eruption of a variety of activity,
is brought about like a fruit by the material elements impelled by
actions.

With five fives plus five, and nine flaws,
covered with nails, teeth, and hair, one is born, quivering.

Like a maggot when newborn,
the human being is as if awakened from sleep;
form becomes visible by means of the eye,
development proceeds from performance.

With a combination of the palate, lips, and oral cavity,
conceived by mental construction,
human speech issues like that of a parrot,
by false imagination.

Hallowed doctrines are dogmatic,
the Great Vehicle is nondogmatic;
it starts from people's inclinations,
it is no business of those with false views.

My vehicle, which must be known first hand,
is not accessible to thinkers;
after the Guide is gone, pray tell,
who will uphold it?

Some time after the Blissful One has passed away
there will be, you realize, Mahamati, one who will have the eye:
in Vedali in the South, an eminent renowned mendicant, Nagahvaya
his name,
a destroyer of bias toward being or nonbeing.

Having elucidated my vehicle to the world, the unsurpassed Great Vehicle,
reaching the stage of Joy, he will go to the realm of Bliss.

Inherent existence is not ascertained in things when observed with intelligence,
whereby they are shown to be inexpressible and devoid of independent being.

For in an object originating in conditions, nonexistence and existence cannot be found;
those who imagine that a thing within conditions does or does not exist
are far from my teaching, with dogmatic views.

The naming of all things through hundreds of lifetimes, continuously, has been accumulated and is being accumulated by repetition, by interactive imagination.

Without talking, everyone would be confused;
hence name is created to exclude confusion.

Things are imagined by the naive in terms of three kinds of conception,
in terms of conception that is utter error, and what is produced by conditions.

Undestroyed, unborn, by nature like space,
what have no intrinsic existence of being are imagined characteristics,
illusory appearances like a mirage, as in a dream,
come about like a fire-wheel, a castle in the air, an echo.

Without duality, veritable, empty, the limit of existence, the nature of reality,
and without false imagination, are what I indicate as descriptions of the absolute.

Falsehood, truth, and insight in the realm of speech and thought are imagined.

Thought falls into dual extremes, so insight is not constructed.

The two extremes of existence and nonexistence are there
to the extent of the domain of thought:
by relinquishment of the domain, all thought is stopped.

By the nonexistence of grasping of sense objects, and not by
destruction,
is the state of verity found, as the domain of the wise.

The perception of the ignorant is not like the perception of the
intelligent,
as the intelligent perceive all phenomena have no definition.

As an attractive counterfeit is imagined by the naïve to be gold,
so are all things to false thinkers not gold that appears to be gold.

The origination of what doesn't exist,
the existent passing away,
and conditional being or nonbeing—
these are not established in my teaching.

Being beginningless, endless, without becoming,

thinkers intent upon description of what exists
in a world with a cause and creator
do not awaken.

Past existence is evident, so is the future;
the present is evident, so things are not born.

Those who imagine an abode of a time of development
in the faculties of being of a creature,
or the taking on of an intermediate existence,
they are not wise.

The Victors do not describe the world as interdependently arisen;
rather this world is really a notion, like a castle in the air.
It is only a convention for a thing; there it is called this:
being a convention, it is not born and does not perish individually.

In a mirror, in water, in the eye,
in ornaments and in jewels,
an image may be seen,
but there is no image anywhere in them.

Thought as a reflection of things is like a mirage in the sky;
it appears in various forms, like the child of a barren woman in a
dream.

For me the Great Vehicle is not a journey, a voice, or words,
not truths, not liberations, nor a realm beyond sense.

But the Great Vehicle is a means, active mastery of concentration,
a mental body of manifold wonder, adorned with the flowers of
masteries.

Existence and birth are spoken of as one and as distinct,
though not in the context of analysis;
as the same and not the same,
like, indeed, extinction and nonexistence.

The emptiness of the unborn is one,
and the emptiness in the produced is one.

Unborn emptiness is best;
produced emptiness passes away.

Verity, emptiness, the limit, like the realm of reality,
the mental body of manifold wonder I indicate with figures of speech.

Those who imagine purification by the sutra, vinaya, and abhidharma
are not relying on selflessness either in terms of text or of meaning.

Not by philosophers not by Buddhas, not by me, not by anyone
has existence been established by assumption; how can
nonexistence be?

How is the existence of something
to which nonexistence is attributed
be proven by assumptions?

One imagines nonexistence and existence
by the false views of the doctrine of origin.

Whatever has nothing that originates
has nothing that passes away;
existence and nonexistence do not pertain to it
when seeing the world detached.

Those who imagine the appearance
of a rabbit's horn can be seen,
or that what people imagine is there
are confused, like animals at a mirage.

Imagination starts by immersion in mental construction;
for even imagination does not apply to causeless imagination.

As a mirage in the sky
is apprehension of water where there's no water,
an object is seen by the simple,
but not in terms of individual essence by the wise.

The perception of the wise is pure,
coming from the three liberations,
free of origination and dissolution,
appearing without false images.

Knowledge deep, high, and broad,
lands, and superhuman power too
I teach the successors of the victorious;

to hearers, impermanence.

The triple world is impermanent, empty, without self or possession;
to hearers I teach such a general description.

Having no attachment to anything, being detached, living alone,
I teach to solitary illuminates as a reward, free of conjecture.

The external is imagined self-existent, and relative to living beings;
not seeing its own confusion, thought goes on from there.

The tenth [stage] can be first, and the first can be eighth;
the ninth can be seventh too, and the seventh can be eighth.

The second may be third, the fourth can be fifth, the third may be
sixth—

where there are no images, how can there be steps?

The imageless nonbeing of things, indeed, does not exist to yogis;
the reward of the wise comes from equality of being and nonbeing.

How is the nonexistence of existents effected, how about equality?

When the mind does not know external and internal agitation,

then it makes annihilation of the view of equanimity.

Being covered by grasping of things in the beginningless common flow

is ceased by the simple like a wedge removed with a wedge.

Causing it, supporting it, within the course of the intellect it gives cause to thought and dependent consciousness.

There are four kinds of superknowledge, obtained by development, from empowerment, by putting the canon into practice, and even in dreaming.

What is obtained in dreaming, and what through the mediation of Buddha, and those in the family of canonical procedure are produced by development of consciousness.

Thought produced by impressions operates on the appearance of things; when the naïve do not understand, then one should indicate origin.

As long as it imagines something that can be expressed in speech,
having a definition,
so long does the mind misunderstand, not seeing its own confusion.

Why is origin described, and why not the object?

To whom, how, and why can perceiving with no object be described?

The mind is inherently transparent; intellect is the cause of turbidity.
And the intellect, together with the consciousnesses, constantly
casts an impression.

The receptacle is disembodied, intellect seeks a course,
consciousness gets confused on seeing the appearance of objects.

One's own thought is perceived; an external object is not found.

One should think of confusion thus, and remember verity.

The state of meditators, action, and the greatness of Buddha—
these three inconceivables are the inconceivable realm of
consciousness.

The future and the past, nirvana, personality, counsel;
I tell of these in conventional term.

The ultimate truth, however, is beyond speech.

Followers of the Nikayas and philosophers rely on the same view;
unaware it is only thought, they imagine external being.

Individual awakening, Buddhahood, sainthood, the vision of

Buddha:

it is a hidden seed that grows in wakefulness and in sleep.

Where, for whom, how, why, and for what purpose, tell me,
is the thought of doctrine partial to being or nonbeing silenced by
me?

The doctrine that illusion does not exist or does is only in the thought
of the confused:

what has origination and dissolution is apart from described and
description.

Imagination is intellect, indeed, along with the five consciousnesses.

The seed of thought issues in the beginning like the water of a stream of images.

When thought, intellect, and consciousness are not in motion, then one obtains the mental body and the stage of a Buddha.

Conditions, elements, clusters,
and inherent characteristics of phenomena,
representation, personality, thought,
are analogous to dreams and illusions.

Seeing the world analogous to an illusion or a dream, one should resort to truth;
for truth is free of attributes, without motive or cause.

One should always remember the abode of the wise must be known first hand.

The world is deluded by motive and cause; one should bring it to rest in truth.

By cessation of all elaboration, confusion does not go on;
as long as intelligence is imagining, so long does confusion go on.

Naturelessness, being, void, and permanence and impermanence—
these are the view of those who speak of an origin, not of those who
say there's no origin.

Oneness, otherness, or both; from the Lord;
spontaneously; from time and primary matter;
and in terms of other conceptions
is the world imagined.

The seed of the common flow being consciousness,
it is occupied with the perceptible,
as with a picture on the wall;
it disappears through knowledge.

The death and birth of humans happens as of a phantom;
so too does the bondage and liberation of the simple occur due to
confusion.

Of two kinds, inner and outer, are phenomena and conditions;
contemplating this, a yogi stands in the imageless.

Mind is not altered by impressions,
nor is mind accompanied by impressions;
the unaltered mind is veiled by impressions.
Like grime is the residual impression
whose origin is cognitive consciousness;
the mind that is like a spotless white cloth
does not show clearly because of residual impressions.

Just as I say space neither exists nor is nonexistent,
so too is the receptacle [consciousness]
neither existent nor nonexistent in the body.

The mind liberated from cognitive consciousness is rid of opacity;
I say the mind is enlightened by knowledge of all things.

Discontinuous, neither real nor unreal,
free from the four extremes,
existence is ever like illusion.

Seven stages, of mental origin, are of two natures;

the rest of the stages and the stage of Buddha are complete.

The realm of form and the formless realm,
the realm of desire and tranquility
in this body is all said to be the sphere of mind.

When and as long as it is seized upon, confusion proceeds;
through understanding one's own mind, confusion neither proceeds
nor ceases.

When there is no origin, there is no primary cause;
in existence is the experience of the common flow.
Seeing it as like illusion and such,
one will not fabricate description.

To the simple and slow-witted I teach
three vehicles, one vehicle, and no vehicle;
to the wise, detachment.

For me there are two kinds of occurrence, attributes and their
perception,

fourfold principles of guidance, conclusion and logical instruction.

Confusion is constructed seeing in terms of difference in shape and form;

being detached from name and form, essence is the sphere of the wise.

Whatever is constructed by imagination is a fabricated description.

Being without imaginative thinking, essence is the sphere of the wise.

Permanent and eternal is the field of reality that is the essence of things.

Verity is independent of thought, and without fabrication.

Whatever is a reality, none has purity or defilement;

since mind is purified, and defilement is evident,

then truth must be a reality, the pure domain of the wise.

The world produced by conditions is apart from imagination;

seeing it as like a dream, an illusion and such, one is liberated.

Various valueless impressions, combined with thought,
appear external to people; they are not the essence of mind.
The essence of mind is pure; mind is not a product of confusion.
Confusion is made of misjudgment; because of it mind is not seen.

Truth is not more than confusion; truth is not found elsewhere;
not in mental formation, nor elsewhere, but from seeing mental
formation.

When one sees the fabricated without anything definable or any
definition,
it will thus be relinquished, seeing the world as subjective thought.

Having attained to mind alone, one will not imagine an external
object;

focused on verity, one will transcend mind alone.

Having gone beyond mind alone, one will transcend the imageless;
a yogi stationed in the imageless does not see the Great Vehicle.

The effortless state is tranquil, purified by vows;
one does not see the best selfless knowledge in the imageless.

One may see an object of thought, one may see an object of knowledge;
by insight one may see an object without getting infatuated with appearance.

The truth of suffering pertains to the mind; accumulation is an object of knowledge.

The [other] two truths, and the stage of Buddha, are where insight operates.

Attainment of results, nirvana, and the eightfold path as well—enlightened knowledge is clarified by understanding everything.

Eye, form, light, and space, as well as intellect:

Humans' consciousness, originating in the receptacle, is produced by these.

There is nothing to grasp, no grasping, no thing grasped: name is without reality.

Yet those who think imagination causeless are not wise.

A name is not inherent in an object, nor an object in a name,
likewise;
one should not imagine mental construction to occur with or without
a cause.

The self-existence of all things being unreal, speech likewise is
untrue;
not seeing emptiness or the meaning of emptiness, the ignorant run
hither and thither.

Viewing representational instruction as settled truth
is making oneness five-fold—truth is lost.

The destructive force of conceptual elaboration is to be broken;
one must transcend existence and nonexistence.

The wish that the world not exist
is a false conception from the notion of selflessness.

Perpetual, along with the creativity set in motion by speech alone,
ultimate truth cannot be spoken, perception of truth in a state of
restraint.

Intellect operates based on the receptacle,
consciousness operates based on mind and intellect.
Attribution s attributed; verity is the essence of mind.
Contemplating this, a yogi will gain knowledge of mind alone.
He does not consider intellect, appearance, object,
or permanence or impermanence;
the yogi in yoga does not consider origination nonorigination.

They do not constitute two things—consciousness arises in the
receptacle.

One thing that is both, its origin is not known by the thought of two.

There is no speaker and nothing to say, nor a void, when seeing the
mind;
the net of views begins from failure to see one's own mind.

There is no advent of conditions, or any sense faculties,
no elements or clusters, no passion, nor anything constructed.
There is no fire of action, primordial, created, or constructed;
no end and no power, no liberation and no bondage.

There is no thing indeterminate, nor indeed any merit or demerit,
neither time nor nirvana, nor is even essence found.

No Buddha either, no truths, no result, and no causes,

No error or nirvana; no origin or destruction.

The twelve-member [causal chain] does not exist, nor is there an
end or no end.

I speak of mind only for the abandonment of all views.

Afflictions, paths of action, the body, agents, and results too
are mirages, dreamlike appearances, like castles in the air.

From the standpoint of mind only, the appearance of existing
disappears;

from the opposite of mind only, there is a view of eternity or
annihilation.

The clusters do not exist in nirvana; nor does a soul, or a
characteristic—

by entry into mind only, one abstains from grasping liberation.

The fallacy causing the appearance of existence seems external to
humans;

mind is invisible, so mind is not seen.

Impressions in people appear as body, property, and abode;
mind is not existent or nonexistent; it does not show in impressions.

For grime shows on white, grime does not show white.
like the sky when cloudy, thus the mind is not seen.

Karma is accumulated by mind, and removed by knowledge.
And by insight one attains the imageless, and power.

Thought is bound to objects, knowledge operates in thought,
and insight deals with the imageless essence.

Mind, intellect, consciousness, and even perception are without
construction;

those who have attained the essence of things that has no
conception

are hearers, not heirs of the Victorious..

From patience, from superior patience indeed,

pure knowledge arrived at reality appears,
a superior aim without a motive.

Imagined nature is there, the relative is not found;
the imagined is grasped by confusion, the relative is not imagined.

For mind is not made of elements; mind is not seen at all.
Impression appears to people as body, property, and abode.

Everything material is not form; form is immaterial.
For immaterial mirages are castles in the air, dreams, illusions.

Insight is whereby the wise one is empowered: it is of three kinds to
me.

Mind is not made of objects, so mind is not seen.

Impression is known to people as body, property, and abode;
it is that whereby definition is created, and what describes natures
too.

Insight is not connected to the two vehicles, for it is beyond the imageless;
it functions in hearers by immersion in existence;
by entry into mind only, insight is veritable and pure.

If the true or untrue came about by conditions,
the notion of oneness and otherness
would inevitably come with them.

Just as a magic illusion is not sustained when various conjurations
are stopped,
so cause construed as evident cannot be proven.

Bondage originating in thought consists of misjudgment of the
apparent;
for the relative conceived by the unknowing is entirely imaginary.

What is construed as a thing, that is the relative;
the relative is imagined arranged in apparent variety.

Convention and ultimate truth—there is no efficient third.

What is made up is called convention;
the realm of the wise is reached by separation from that.

Just as variegated matter appears one to yogis,
for there is no variety there,
so it is with imagined description.

Just as the vision of a form is construed differently by those with dim
eyesight,
the dimness neither form nor formless, so is the relative by the wise:
as it were gold, like pure water with no pollution, the sky without
clouds,
so is it imagined pure.

For me there are three kinds of hearers:
projected; born of vows;
hearers produced by the teaching,
detached from passion and hostility.

Bodhisattvas are also of three kinds,
while Buddhas have no description:

but in every thought of beings
an image of Buddha appears.

Nothing imagined exists, but the relative is there;
yet imagination attributing or denying does not vanish.

If what is imagined were nonexistent in terms of its relative nature,
there would be being without being, and being would come from
nonbeing.

The relative is found by recourse to the imagined;
the imagined is produced from the connection of sign and name.

What originates from an other by imagination can never be absolute;
then the pure ultimately true nature is known.

The imagined is of ten kinds, and the relative of six kinds.
But verity is first hand realization, hence has no distinction.

Reality has five elements, and there are three natures;
contemplating this, the yogi does not violate verity.

Like stars or clouds, like the moon and sun,
thought appears to humans like objects, born from impressions.

These are not found to exist of themselves; nothing definable and no
definition at all:

if elements in everything are made of elements, then form is
material.

Without the major elements coming together, there is nothing
material in the elements.

For the cause is the main elements, and the effect is earth, water,
and so on.

Form as representation of substance is likewise made of illusory
properties;

the form of a dream, an illusion, a mirage, a fifth limb.

There are five kinds of incorrigible, and five families too.

Five are the vehicles, including no vehicle; nirvana can be of six
kinds.

The distinctions of the clusters are twenty-four, and form can be of eight kinds;
the Buddhas are twenty-four, and two kinds of successors of the Victors.

There are one hundred and eight doctrines, and three hearers too.
The field of the enlightened is one, and so the enlightened state too is one.

Liberations are also three, mental streams are of four kinds.
Selflessness is of six kinds to me, and information of four kinds.

Unconnected to causes, free of the failings of opinion,
to be known first hand, imperturbable, the Great Vehicle is unsurpassed.

Origination and nonorigination are eightfold and ninefold;
the aim to be achieved, realized at once or gradually, is one.

The formless realm is of eight kinds, divisions of meditation six kinds;

the emancipation of individual successors of the Victors is seven-fold.

The three times are not even there;
permanence and impermanence don't exist;
occupation, work, and reward
are like actions in a dream.

The Buddhas have no end or beginning, and hearers, heirs of the Victors too;
thought detached from objects is always like an illusion:
in the womb, in the dominion, leaving the caste, in the abode of satisfaction,
they appear to have gone to all lands too, but not those born from the womb.

Procedure, pathway, wisdom, instruction, and extinction,
truth and enlightenment of a realm too
must be directed by needs, according to conditions.

Worlds, soma, a continent of the terrestrial world,

the sacred path of selflessness, meditation, vehicles,
receptacle, attainment, the inconceivable realm of reward,
the moon and families of stars, families of kings,
the abode of the gods, families of demons and angels,
are born of action, originating in craving.

Inconceivable transformation death is related to impressions:
with the nonexistence of death of what has been cut off,
the net of afflictions is destroyed.

Money, grain, and gold, land and property, are falsely imagined;
cattle and sheep too, and servants, as well as horses and elephants
and so on.

One should not sleep on a bed of nails, or smear on earth;
one should not have a bowl made of gold or silver, brass or copper.

The yogi should always dye white cloth indigo,
or reddish-brown with cow dung, or cardamom fruits and leaves.
Let a yogi keep a bowl made of stone, clay, iron, conch shell, or
quartz.

A curved knife for cutting things should be four fingers' breadth long.

A yogi whose principal object is yoga should not study arts and sciences.

Buying and selling should not be done by a yogi practicing yoga; I say this duty should be done by caretakers.

Senses guarded, knowing the meaning accurately in scripture and discipline,
not involved with householders—that I call a yogi.

A yogi should arrange a dwelling place in an empty house, or a graveyard, under a tree or in caves, in straw or out in the open, always covered with three garments, in a graveyard or anywhere else.

Whatever is donated should be used gratefully for a garment.

One intent on begging looks ahead the length of a yoke; one should practice begging the way bees treat flowers. To be in a crowd, or involved in a group, or among nuns, that is social intercourse; it is not suitable for yogis.

A yogi whose principal object is yoga should not instruct kings, princes, statesmen, or magnates for the sake of food.

The food of a house where a birth or death has taken place, full of the affection of friends, with monks and nuns gathered together, is not suitable for yogis.

Even in a monastery where cooking is always done according to rule, anything made on demand is not suitable for yogis.

A yogi should contemplate the world as free from origination and dissolution, apart from ideas of being and nonbeing, at once the described and description.

A yogi who does not conceive an origin will soon be endowed with concentration and power, superknowledges and masteries too.

One should not think in terms of the agencies

of atoms, time, or primal matter or spirit:

a yogi should not imagine the world

as coming from causes and conditions.

The evident world construed by subjective imagination is produced
from impressions;

the yogi should always see the world as analogous to illusion or a
dream.

Always seeing without denial or attribution,

one should not imagine the triple world as body, property, and
abode.

Prepared food is assured keeping the body erect,

having repeatedly paid respects to Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Drawing truth like a yogi from discipline and the expedients in
scripture,

one should perceive the subjective thought of the five elements, and
selflessness.

The stages and Buddhahood are inherently pure;
let the yogi recognize this, and be consecrated on a giant lotus.

Having wandered through all ways of life,
one sorrowful in mind on account of the world
begins yogas, having gone to a suitable quiet place apart.

The yogi sees the form of moon and sun
together with rays of light like lotus leaves,
bright as fire in the sky.

But wondrous appearances lead to cultism;
they cause a fall into discipleship
in the domain of individual victors.

Having cleared all these away,
when one is beyond the range of the senses,
then sunbeams from Buddhas' hands
come together from all lands
corresponding to verity,
and clean one's head, the causal ground.

There is formless being apart from eternity and annihilation;

those who abstain from assertions of reality or unreality
will construe it as the middle.

They construct a notion of purposeless annihilation in a doctrine of
causelessness;

by not comprehending external existence, they will negate the
middle.

They will not be free of grasping being as long as they maintain a
notion of annihilation;

they will teach the middle with attribution and denial.

Detached from external things by knowing they're only thought,
the way of cessation of false imagination—*that* is the middle.

As mind alone, they are not seen; without objects, it is not born:
this is the middle way taught by me and others.

Origination and nonorigination, being and nonbeing too are
emptiness;

the essencelessness of things should not be construed as two.

Using the function of imagination, the ignorant do not consider being as liberation; grasping duality is not relinquished by understanding with the function of thought.

Grasping duality is relinquished by recognizing objects of subjective thought,
for relinquishment is comprehension that does not annihilate imagination.

By perfect understanding of subjective thought, false imagination does not go on;
verity without the activity of false imagination is apart from thought.

When manifestation is seen without the errors of dogmatics,
that is abstention from externalizing by the knowledgeable, not due to annihilation.

Buddhahood comes from realizing this, it is taught by me and the Buddhas;
thinking otherwise is a consequence of dogmatism.

Procreated beings are unborn, and the permanent perish;

the reflection of the moon in water is seen at once in millions of lands.

Unity being multiple, they rain and they burn;
mind being made of thought, they bespeak the content of mind.
'Thought alone' in thoughts too is an ignorant product of thought:
the various appearances of form come to be in the content of mind.

In the forms of Buddhas, of hearers, like solitary victors,
and various other forms, they speak of the content of mind.
The form of the formless, by states without form,
and the infernal form of hells are shown to people
as evidence of the content of mind.

The detached attain magic-like concentration,
and also a mental body, the ten stages and the masteries.

By delusions of subjective thought, also quickened by elaboration,
the naïve are bound by conception to what is seen, heard, thought,
and cognized.

Appearance is relative; what name is there is invented;
imagined appearance is produced from the relative.

When examined intelligently, there is neither relative nor imagined;
and there is no absolute existence—how could it be invented by
intelligence?

Reality is experienced as absolute apart from being and nonbeing;
how can the two natures exist without being or nonbeing?

It is in imagined nature that the two natures are established;
the imagined appears diverse, the realm of the wise pure.

For an artificial variety is imagined in the relative;
imagining otherwise would be based on dogmatic doctrine.

Creating in the mind is called fiction by discernment coming from
motivating impulses; what's independent of the two fabrications, that
is the absolute.

A land and Buddhas are projections, one vehicle and three as well,

no great nirvana; all are empty, without origin.

The thirty-six kinds of Buddhas, each with ten divisions,
are flows of people's thoughts, not related to lands.

Just as imagined existence seems to appear diverse without
diversity in it,
so does the Buddhas' teaching seem to the world.

The Buddha is the reality Buddha; the rest are its emanations.
People see the continuum of subjective seeds as visions of Buddha.

Imagination starts from fixation on appearances due to confusion;
imaginings and actuality are not other,
nor are reasons and assumptions.

The Buddha as inherent, as perfect enjoyment,
as the projected that is projected as five,
as the group of thirty-six Buddhas,
must belong to the inherent.

In blue, red, and salt, shell, milk and cream,
are rays of light like fragrant fruits and flowers in the sun.

Like waves and the ocean are not different yet not not different,
thus are the seven consciousnesses connected with mind.

That variety in the waves is alteration in the ocean;
thus does the receptacle function variously, known as
consciousness.

Mind, intellect, and consciousness are distinguished for the purpose
of description;
the eight are undivided, neither the defined nor the definition.

Just as there is no difference in the waves of the ocean,
no alteration of the consciousnesses is found in the mind.

Habit is accumulated by the mind, and dissolved by the intellect.
By consciousness one distinguishes the perceptible, divided into
five.

Consciousness appears to people as blue and red;

tell me, great sage, whence is the similarity of waves and thoughts?
For blueness and red are not in the waves;
activity in the mind is described to the ignorant for the purpose of
definition.

No function belonging to it can be found:
one's own mind is apart from what is grasped.
If there is the grasped,
grasping is substantiated with the waves.

Consciousness appears to people as body, property, and abode.
Thus its function is perceived as in the case of waves:
the ocean appears to be dancing because of the presence of the
waves;
how could the function of the receptacle thus not be taken for an
ocean?

It is on account of the weakness of understanding of the simple
that the receptacle as like the action of the waves of the ocean
is adduced as an example.

Just as the sun rises equally on people low and high,
thus do you, illuminator of the world, teach truth to the ignorant.

Having made it an abode in the midst of phenomena, why do you not
declare the truth? If you declare the truth, indeed, truth is not found
in thought.

Like waves of an ocean, as in a mirror, in a dream,
they are seen all at once, so is mind in its own domain;
it is due to lack of horizons that gradual development takes place.

One discerns by consciousness, and then thinks by intellect;
what is perceptible to the five senses united has no successive
order.

Just as a teacher of painting, or some student of painting
will direct the coloring for the purpose of the picture, so is my
instruction.

The picture is not in the color,
or in the surface or object it's on;

a picture is constructed of colors
in order to attract people.

Instruction varies, while truth is beyond words.

On the basis of principle, I point out truth to yogis.

Truth attained first hand apart from the contrived and contrivance
I teach to heirs of the Victor; instruction of the ignorant is otherwise.

Just as illusion seems diverse but isn't actually there,
so does instruction seem diverse, varying in usage.

For what is instruction for one is not instruction for another.
Just as one administers medicine for each particular illness,
so do Buddhas tell people the content of mind.

Imagination starts with the seed of external impressions;
the relative is whereby it grasps; what it grasps is artificial.

A graspable external object comes about depending on mind:
confusion operates in two ways; there is no third cause.

Since confusion occurs, so does what it depends on;
I speak of mind as six-fold, twelve-fold, and eighteen-fold.

Being connected to what is grasped of subjective seeds, grasping of self disappears;
by penetration of thought construction, grasping of phenomena disappears.

The consciousness that operates is the receptacle consciousness, for the seat of sense must be internal, which appears external.

Like seeing spots before the eyes, like a form in a dream to the unawake,
created and uncreated are always imagined but not found to be there.

As a castle in the air, a magic illusion, and water in a mirage are apparent without really existing, so is the relative.

Self, senses, and behavior I point out in terms of threefold mind:

thought, intellect, and consciousness have no self-definition.

Mind, intellect, consciousness, and twofold selflessness,
the five elements and three natures too—this is the sphere of
Buddhas.

What is triple in appearance is one, caused by impressions,
even as one color appears diverse on a wall.

Two-fold selflessness, thought and cognitive consciousness,
the five elements and natures too—they do not exist in my field.

One who is free of thought-up descriptions,
detached from consciousness and intellect,
will attain the field of the realized,
where there is no inherent nature of things.

There is not made pure by the body, speech, or intellect;
the field of the realized is pure without practice.

Purified by superknowledges and masteries,

adorned with concentrations and powers,
the mental body, the mind field of the realized, is pure.

Known first hand, undefiled, without apparent cause,
the eighth stage to the stage of Buddha is the field of the realized.

Far Going, Good, Clouds of Teaching, and Realized—
This is the field of the Buddhas;
the rest are conveyances of the two vehicles.

The seven stages where mental control is attained
are taught by the Buddha to the ignorant
due to distinction in people's mentalities,
and for the sake of definition.

Depravity of body, speech, and mind does not take place in the
seventh.

In the eighth, one's sense is like having crossed a torrent in a dream.

In the eighth and fifth stages heirs of the victors
master arts and sciences, and leadership in the world.

One should not imagine origination or no origination, empty or not empty;
inherent essencelessness is not found in the content of mind.

If one imagines, 'This is true, this is true, this is false,'
it is instruction for solitaries and hearers, not for heirs of the Victors.

As long as there is being and nonbeing,
there is nothing momentary, not even an appearance;
if representation has concrete existence,
it cannot be found, not even in the content of mind.

Things are there conventionally; they are not existent in an ultimate sense.

Confusion about things with no inherent nature must be conventional reality.

Whereas all phenomena are unreal, representation is made by me;
the expression and usage of the ignorant is divorced from reality.

A thing in a word seems to be a concrete object;
when seeing a thing in a word, it is found not to be.

Like a picture with no wall, a shadow without a post,
so the pure receptacle does not appear in a wave.

Thought behaves like a dancer, intellect is like a jester;
together with five-fold consciousness, it arranges the perceptible like
a stage.

Teaching, reality, resulting, and emanated from the result:
these Buddhas are the originals—the rest are projected forms.

Mind is not there as an object: mind is confused by objects.
The receptacle appears to people as body, property, and abode.

The Guides speak of thought, intellect, and consciousness,
nature, five elements, and pure twofold selflessness.

The realm of first hand realization that the leaders teach
is not in the domain of logicians, nor even of listeners.

The connection of long and short and so on
comes about from mutual relativity;
the complement of existence is nonexistence,
existence is the complement of nonexistence.

Analyzing a thing into atoms, one cannot construe a form;
the basis of the content of mind is not clarified by unwarranted ideas.

Don't imagine emptiness, or that it is empty too.
This is inventing existence and nonexistence;
the object thought up isn't there.

Form is imagined by the unsophisticated
as combinations of qualities, atoms, and substance.
An atom does not exist individually,
so a concrete thing cannot be found either.

Subjective thought resembling an object of perception appears
external to people;
the perceived is not found outside, hence there is no concrete thing.

A picture, an optical illusion, a magic trick, a dream,
a castle in the air, a circle of fire, and a mirage,
appear to people without really existing.

Permanent or impermanent, as well as oneness, both, and neither
too,
deluded fools imagine, stuck to beginningless error.

There is no difference of vehicles; I say the vehicle is one.
I speak of distinction of vehicles to lead the ignorant.

The three liberations likewise, and the selflessness of phenomena,
are abandoned by emancipation, as affliction with knowledge of
sameness.

As a piece of wood is carried away by the waves of the sea,
so is a deluded listener carried away by appearance.

That is not a final attainment, but one doesn't retreat from it
anymore;

having acquired the body of concentration, to the end of time one does not awaken.

Those bound by impressions and afflictions,
fettered by obsession, intoxicated by the wine of concentration,
stay in the realm void of impulse.

As a drunken person wakes up when there is no alcohol,
thus will they attain the body of mine known as the enlightened state.

Just as an elephant sunk in mud does not run here and there,
so do hearers remain sunk in the intoxication of absorption.

The empowerment of the human lords is purified by vows,
from consecrating concentration, of the first and tenth stages.

As space, rabbit horn, and a barren woman's son
are spoken of though nonexistent, so imagination in regard to things.

The world caused by impressions is not nonexistent, not real or
unreal at all;

those who see are liberated, familiar with the selflessness of phenomena.

What is imagined as self-existent is only a name;
relative being is dependent;
the absolute I always call verity,
in every scripture.

Specification, word group, and especially name—
the ignorant and stupid sink like huge elephants in the mud.

The celestial vehicle, the Brahma vehicle, and that of hearers too,
that of the realized and the solitary—I speak of these vehicles.
There is no fixity of vehicles as long as thought operates;
but when thought has disappeared, there is neither vehicle nor
travelers.

Thought, imagination, perception, intellect, and consciousness too,
the receptacle, the mover of the triple world—these are synonyms
for mind.

Life, warmth, consciousness, and dwelling, the capacity to live, intellect and cognitive consciousness, variously describe imagination.

The body is maintained by the mind;
the intellect always thinks.

Consciousness as the domain of thought
is separate from the sense consciousnesses.

Craving is called the mother, ignorance likewise the father;
by understanding objects, consciousness is called awakened.

The 'saints' are aggregated inclinations, the 'community' is the five
clusters;
by constant cutting off, the result of action becomes immediate.

The pair of the selfless and afflictions, and the two obstructions—
those who attain inconceivable disappearance by transformation are
the realized.

The end and the method and individual instruction—

those who see with knowledge of distinctions
are not overcome by speculative thought.

Being is not found to be real as imagined by the naïve;
how do thinkers not seek liberation by nonbeing?

By viewing the constructed as having origin and dissolution,
they nurture the twofold notion but don't know the reasons.

Truth is one, nirvana, beyond understanding;
the world as imagined one should see
as like a pithless tree, a dream, a magical illusion.

There is no passion, hostility, delusion, or personality;
the clusters produced by craving are there like a dream.

Between the night of realization and the night of complete
emancipation,
nothing whatsoever has been proclaimed by me.

It is in reference to the stability of first-hand truth that I have spoken;

so have other Buddhas, no differently from me.

The self seems there like a thing; the clusters are out of sight.

The clusters seem there by thinking; self is not found in them.

By perceiving the beginning by afflictions associated with
humankind,

one is liberated from all miseries by seeing the world as subjective
thought.

Those to whom the world is produced by causes and conditions
are attached to the four extremes; they are not experts in my
teaching.

The world does not come to be real or unreal;
neither is it nonexistent, or true or false at all.

How can it be imagined by the simple
in terms of causes and conditions?

When one sees the world as neither existent nor nonexistent,

neither real nor unreal, then thought ceases and one attains selflessness.

Unoriginated are all things, since they're produced from conditions, for effect is all conditions; being is not born from effect.

Effect does not produce effect; duality in effect would follow; yet the nonexistence of effect is not obtained by the consequence of duality.

When one sees the constructed as an object without support, as appearance is only thought, I call it the content of mind.

The inherent formation of matter is due to conditions, without a true state;
the supreme ultimate existence, Brahma, I say is this matter.

The self is really representation; it is not there as a thing.

The nature of the clusters as clusters is also representational, not substantial.

Equality is of four kinds: appearance, cause, receptacle,
and equality of selfless is the fourth for practitioners of yoga.

The cessation of all views, beyond the fabricated and fabrication,
I say mind alone is inconceivable and has no production.

Not being, nor yet nonbeing, being being and nonbeing,
mind alone freed of thought I call verity.

Verity, emptiness, the limit, nirvana, the realm of reality,
the mental body, thought, I call mind alone.

Bound by influences of imagination, diverse, produced by thought,
humans' worldly thought construction grows outward.

The perceived is not there outside; the diversity of thought appears.
The appearance of body, possession, and abode I call the content of
mind.

Listeners' knowledge of extinction,
the source of the birth of Buddhas,

of individual illuminates and heirs of the Victors,
comes from having no afflictions.

There is no external form; subjective thought appears outside.
Not understanding their own thought, the naive conceive it concrete.

External substance, a view of the variety of subjective thought,
is covered by rationalization by the unknowing,
the deluded, who apply the four extremes.

When the learned know subjective thought is imaged as objects,
it is not a matter of reasons, nor points of argumentation,
nor examples and elements of a syllogism.

One should not construe an imagined description by imagination,
for imagination proceeds based on what is construed.

Because of unbroken mutual connection, things make a single
impression;
because of immersion, notice of anything else does not occur to
people.

Imagination following thought and mental factors,
and what appearances of things occur in the triple world,
this is imagined as self-existent.

I explain the twelve sense media as from the combination of
appearances and seeds,
the process of formation as from the combination of subject and
object.

Like an image in a mirror, or eye floaters of the visually impaired,
so do the ignorant see mind covered by impressions.

For imagination starts when an object is fabricated by subjective
imagination;
the thing is not there externally as imagined by dogmatists.

As the ignorant unknowingly take a rope for a snake,
not knowing it is an object of subjective thought they imagine an
object external.

So the rope and rope-ness are neither one nor other,

but it is an error of subjective thought by which the rope is imagined.

For what is not imagined by any idea is not perceived,
but it should not be understood not to exist;
this is the essential nature of phenomena.

Nonexistence presupposes existence,
existence presupposes nonexistence;
hence nonexistence is not accessible,
so one should not conceive of existence.

What the imagined is conceived as, that is not what it is in itself;
how can imagination go on after seeing it's not made of anything?

Form does not exist by the nature of form, like a pitcher, cloth, and
so on;
when the perceptible is not known, imagination is therefore born.

If that imagination is constructed in beginningless confusion,
how is the existence of things mistaken, tell me, o sage.

There is no thingness to things; the content of mind is perceived;
imagination goes on when not seeing one's own mind.

If the imagined doesn't exist as the ignorant one imagines,
it is otherwise, but is not understood by intelligence.

If it exists to the wise, that is not what's imagined by the ignorant.
That then is the falsehood of the wise; the wise are equal to the
foolish.

But the wise have no confusion, so their mind is pure;
The ignorant with unclarified streams of thought imagine the
imagined.

As a mother might pluck a fruit from the sky for her child,
'Here, child, don't cry, take it; there's plenty of this fruit,'
so do I teach all people a principle beyond assertion of reality or
unreality,
having enticed them with various invented fruits.

The becoming of what has not been is not commingled with
conditions;

the production of what has not previously come to be is by nature not apprehended.

The unproduced, by nature not apprehended, is nothing without conditions;

what being has come about as well is nothing without conditions.

Thus, seeing on the whole, it is not nonexistent, not real or unreal at all—

being is produced by conditions, unimaginable even by the learned.

Ignorant dogmatists make up statements of oneness and otherness; Due to assumptions they do not know the world as like an illusion, a dream.

The Great Vehicle, a vehicle in the domain of words, is unsurpassed; the aim is skillfully guided by me, but the ignorant don't understand.

Those guided by jealous listeners and dogmatists stray in their aim, whence they are directed by philosophy.

Appearance, object, form, and name—
imagination starts based on this four.

Those who are obedient to one or many deities,
those who feed the powers of the sun and moon,
are not disciples.

Those with ultimate insight have realized reality as is;
familiar with the unreality of conception,
they have reached the highest degree of consciousness.

These are the signs of liberated successors in my teaching;
free of being and nonbeing, they are detached from going and
stopping.

When consciousness of form is parted with,
action comes to naught;
one finds nothing invariable or impermanent,
and the common flow is not found to be there.

Form that perishes at the time of extinction disappears from location;

action remains in the receptacle without being affected by being or nonbeing.

What has fallen into destruction is form;
consciousness is in the receptacle of becoming;
attached to form and consciousness,
action does not vanish.

Hence people's action, with which they are bound, is nullified by them.

When the binding of action is destroyed,
there is no common flow and no extinction.

Hence, even if it has perished with them,
if it is born in the common flow,
form will be consolidated by it,
because of being uninterrupted.

Thought and form are neither undivided nor separate from imagination;

there is no destruction of things from rejection of assertions of reality or unreality.

The relative is also construed, as they're not mutually distinct; like impermanence in form, they produce each other.

Without other and not other, the construed cannot be conceived; how can nonexistence and existence come about, like impermanence in form?

Seen accurately in terms of the construed, the relative is not produced; seen in terms of the relative, the construed is verity.

If the construed disappears, my eye perishes; attribution and denial is made in my teaching.

Whenever there are such corruptors of truth, none of them are worth talking to, destroyers of my eye.

Those unworthy of being addressed by the knowledgeable will give up the duty of mendicants too;

the construed is what is negated by preachers of attribution and denial,
to whom it is like eye floaters and illusions, like dreams and castles in the air,
like the appearance of a mirage, because of notions of nonexistence and existence.

One who goes about in their company does not learn from the Buddhas,
for they have fallen into dual extremes and are destructive to others.

Yogis who see construed reality detached, however, without existence or nonexistence,
one may live in their company.

Like mines in the world producing gold and jewels,
the diverse elementary means of subsistence do not originate as hereditary professions.

Thus the races of people are irrelevant to occupation;
because there is nothing objective, there is no inborn profession,
and no way of life produced by profession.

Things have no existence as contemplated by the wise;
but things seem there as imagined by the naïve.

If things aren't there as imagined by the naïve,
in unreal states of people no one has any afflictions.

Due to affliction by the variety of things,
passage through a succession of states
takes place in the faculties; it goes on bound
by the ignorance and craving of living beings

In those to whom being is not as imagined by the naïve,
there is no occupation of the faculties, nor in a yogi.

If there are no things found causing beings to pass through a
succession of states,
this will be emancipation thereby for the innocent, without doing any
religious practice.

How can there be a difference between the innocent and the wise,
given the nonexistence of being?

For the wise living the three liberations, there is no being.

It is to listeners that I speak of the clusters, personality, elements,
individual and common characteristics, conditions, and faculties.
To heirs of the Victorious I teach mind alone with no cause,
superhuman power, the stages, and pure first-hand reality.

In the future there will be corruptors of my teaching,
wearing the red-brown robe preaching occupation with being and
nonbeing.

Nonexistent things are there conditionally, in the perspective of the
wise;
imagined existence logicians will imagine nonexistent.

In the future there will be a class of ignorant atomists
with a false view preaching an untrue origin and ruining society.

They will teach a false notion; the world originates from atoms,
while atoms are causeless; nine elementary substances are
permanent;
that substance is made of substances, and qualities of qualities.
They will negate any truth other than the existence of existents.

The world would have a beginning
if it originated after not having existed,
but I say there is no starting point
to passage through successive states.

If the triple world, including everything, came about from
nonexistence,
there could be horns on dogs, camels, and donkeys too, no doubt.
If eye, form, and consciousness came about from nonexistence,
then a straw mat, a diadem, a piece of cloth, and so on, might be
made of a ball of clay.

There is no straw mat made of cloth, and no cloth made of straw;
why does one not occur in the place of another by conditions?

That life, that body, that comes to be from nonexistence—
these have all been declared by me to be what others say.
It is after the presupposition is pronounced that their opinion is
refuted;
their opinion having been refuted, I make my own point.
Hence the design of dogmatic doctrines is elicited by me;

my students should not stick to a deluded notion of true or untrue.

That the world comes about from unevolved matter
is a misconception in the mind of Kapila;
and he tells students that changes pertain to qualities.

There is no actual reality, nor yet nonexistence, nor conditions due to
conditions;
when they don't actually become conditions, nonexistence does not
occur.

Without propositions of real or unreal, without cause and conditions,
detached from origination and dissolution, my own point is beyond
the describable.

When always seeing the world as like an illusion or a dream,
without cause and conditions, groundless, imagination does not go
on.

When always seeing existence as like a castle in the air,
a mirage, like an eye floater, neither real nor unreal,

without cause and conditions, groundless,
the stream of thought is cleared.

When seeing there is no real substance found, mind alone isn't
found;

how does insubstantial thought not belong to mind alone?

Thought occurs in people having made something an object;
how does groundless thought not belong to mind alone?

Verity and mind only apply to the ultimate principle of things;
those for whom it is there or not there are not experts in my doctrine.

If thought goes on with attachment to grasped and grasper,
this is worldly thought; mind only is not applied.

If the appearance of body, property, and abode occurs like a dream,
duality of mind would be implied, but mind has no duality.

Just as a sword cannot cut its own blade,
and a finger cannot touch its own tip,

so too the mind in the matter of seeing itself.

There is no other and no depending, or construed substance either; the five elements and dual thought do not exist where there are no images.

There are two descriptions of things; producing and produced—it is in reference to the producing that I speak of selflessness.

Hence if imagination about the appearance of variety occurs, then space and rabbit horn will seem like actual things.

If a thought seems to be a thing,
that thing is not what's imagined;
for a thing is not constructed of thought,
other than being spoken of.

In beginningless passage through successive states
there is nothing substantial anywhere;
when thought is not nourished,
how can the appearance of substance occur?

If there were development by a nonentity, it would be in rabbit horn too;

but imagination does not begin nourished by a nonentity.

Just as it does not exist now, that did not exist before;

where there is no substance, how can thought attached to substance go on?

Verity, emptiness, the limit, nirvana of the reality realm,

and the nonorigination of phenomena pertain to ultimate truth.

The unsophisticated are fallen into negation and affirmation

by ideas of cause and conditions,

not having realized the world is groundless and unoriginated.

A perception is thought; there is no perceived object separate

based on a beginningless ground;

where there is no beginning, there is no substance;

how can an individual entity occur?

If there were fulfillment by a nonentity, the poor would be rich;

tell me, Sage, how thought occurs in the absence of an object.

This is all groundless, neither mind nor object;
and thought is not nurtured; the triple world is inert.

The meaning of origination and passing away is proof of
nonorigination;

I teach that there is no primary cause, but not as conceived by the
naïve.

This is all unoriginated, but it's not that things don't exist.

Things are there like castles in the air, dreams and illusions,
groundless;

why do you tell me they are unoriginated and essentially empty?

When a thing is not apparent apart from convention,
then I say its essential nature is empty and unoriginated.

Dreams, eye floaters, magical illusions, castles in the air, mirages—
even though groundless, they are seen; so too the variety of the
world.

Not one is there like the convention, because of the nonexistence of the object perceived. But there is no annihilation as conventional in dogmatic views.

Nonorigination is established by the explanation of ungraspable absence of grounds;
they are proven without origins—my eye does not perish.

When told there is no primary cause, dogmatists get scared;
how, by what means, whence and where, can existence be groundless?

When the learned see the groundless is not groundlessness,
then the view repeating origin and dissolution disappears.

How can the appearance of original occurrence be nonexistent and have no origin?

So is the name of a thing without meaning, pray tell?

Nonorigination is not a thing, nor a description of an idea;

it is not the name of a thing either, but the term is not meaningless.

Inaccessible to listeners, solitary illuminates,
dogmatists, and those in the seven stages—
that is a description of nonorigination.

Excluding cause and condition, denying agency,
the condition of mind alone I call nonorigination.

The groundless character of things, without construed or
construction,

I say nonorigination is beyond propositions of being or nonbeing.

Liberated from mental objects, detached from the two natures,
revolution of the mental basis I call nonorigination.

Not external existence of things, and not the dominion of mind,
relinquishment of all views is characteristic of nonorigination.

Thus one should contemplate all as empty, without independent
existence to begin with;

not empty by dint of voidness, though, but empty as unoriginated.

It is the bundling of conditions that starts and stops;
nothing comes about or disappears separately from the bundle.

For nothing is there separately apart from the bundle,
with individuality or separateness as imagined by dogmatists.

Nothing is produced, real or unreal, nor is nonexistent,
nor true or false at all, other than in this bundle starting and stopping.

This is only a convention, from a mutual collection of connections;
there is no substance produced from a collection of separate
conditions.

The nonexistence of anything produced is nonorigination,
removed from the errors of dogma;
I point out there is only collection, but it is not perceived by the
ignorant.

Anyone for whom there is anything produced separately from collection should be known as claiming there is no cause, a denier of collection.

If collection made things manifest like a lamp, whatever there is would be separate from collection.

Anything construed by the unenlightened as existing separately from collection has no inherent existence of its own, by nature like space.

Other than this nonorigination is the objective nature of the attainment of the wise, for whom nonorigination is the acceptance of nonorigination.

When one sees this whole world as a collection, this being only a collection, the mind is then composed.

Ignorance, craving, compulsive activity, and so on, are the internal collection;

stirring, clay, stick, potter's wheel, etc., seeds and elements, etc., the external.

If anyone supposes anything is produced by conditions otherwise, this is not just collection; they are not established in the science of reasoning.

If there is no thing to be produced, based on what is there discernment?

These are conditions of each other; that's why they are known as conditions.

Phenomena are imagined by the naïve in terms of heat, fluidity, motion, and solidity. This is a bundle; there's no thing: absence of inherent nature is for this reason.

Just as a physician distinguishes the treatment according to the illness,

while there is no distinction in the science, but there is distinction of diseases,

so do I, on account of the mental disposition of people

suffering from the illnesses of afflictions:

I guide the ignorant after determining the strength of their faculties.

My teaching is not divided by distinctions of afflictions and faculties;
the vehicle is just one, the peaceful eightfold path.

The nonexistence of rabbit horn is by the same reasoning of a
vessel, cloth, and horn;
you should understand that whatever comes about from conditions
does not exist.

Nonexistence is the complement of existence;
nonexistence does not follow from nonexistence,
for existence is necessary to nonexistence,
as a mutually relative cause.

If anything is thought to appear depending on something,
is something depending on what is causeless also causeless or not?
Then something else appears dependent on something other than it;
that would result in infinite regression, and nothing would be
anything.

Just as a magic illusion is effected based on leaves, sticks, and so on, variety appears to people asserting substance to be so.

The deception of the illusion is not leaves, nor sticks, nor pebbles; it is seen by the simple as magic, and by the magician as a prop.

Then if anything passes away relative to a thing, at the time perceived there are no two—how can it be distinguished as anything?

What is imagined by false imaginings doesn't exist, and imagination is not to be found.

Where imagination isn't found is neither a succession of states nor cessation.

Where imagination isn't found, there imagination does not develop; how could absence of manifestation be thought—mental matter does not apply.

There is no conviction in the teaching because of division into multiple designs;
since there is no conviction, there is no liberation, and no variety of people.

The perceptible is not external as imagined by the simple.
Thought appears like images, made to wander by impressions.

All things are unoriginated, without unreality or reality;
this is all just thought, but is abandoned on account of fictions.

Things are interpreted in terms of beliefs by the unsophisticated, but not by the learned; the peaceful mind of the wise is free of the thought of inherent existence.

The Samkhya, Vaisheshika, naked mendicants, priests,
and devotees of the lord of souls as well,
fall into notions of unreality and reality,
missing the meaning of detachment.

Essenceless, unoriginated, empty, like illusion, undefiled—

to whom are these descriptions in contraries taught by the Buddhas
and by you?

Yogis with purified minds are taught yoga
by Buddhas free of opinion and speculation,
and descriptions by contraries by me.

If this is all thought, where is the world situated?

How can the coming and going of people on the surface of the earth
be seen?

Propelled by fancy like a bird in the sky,
like walking on the earth with nowhere to rest, no support,
so do all living beings, propelled by fancy,
go about in their own thought like a bird in the sky.

The appearance of body, property, and abode you say is thought
going on;
how and why are appearance and manifestation only thought, pray
tell.

Body, property, and abode are appearances,
and manifestation is produced by impressions;
the manifestation of appearances of what have no connection
is produced by imaginations.

A thing is an imagined object;
thought is equivalent to object.

By comprehending the perceptible as thought,
false imagination does not develop.

When one sees the construed as a name without substance,
then one is liberated from the constructed,
which is devoid of intelligence or anything intelligible.

What would be intelligence is clear perception of an intelligible name
in substance. Those who understand otherwise are not enlightened
and do not enlighten.

The five elements, the essential natures, the eight consciousnesses
and twofold selflessness are all contained in the Great Vehicle.

When intelligence sees the world apart from the intelligible,
there is no name; imagination then does not go on.

Cessation of imaginations of actions and words comes from insight
into the mind.

False imagination starts from lack of insight into one's own mind.

Four of the clusters are formless;
their reckoning is not to be found.

Form is due to elements of different characteristics;
how is there multiplicity of forms?

By relinquishment of description, there is no element or elemental;
so why is form not produced by the clusters with different
characteristics?

When one sees the clusters free of the media of sense have no
appearances,
then thought ceases, by seeing the selflessness of phenomena.

By distinction of object and sense, consciousness occurs, eightfold:

the three are by definition; where there are no images it ceases

The receptacle is self to the intellect, knowledge is as it were possession;

this starts from grasping these two, ceases by comprehension.

When one sees it without other or not other, not belonging together, then the pair is not construed as self and possession.

What has not begun does not develop

and is not a cause of consciousness;

apart from effect and cause, extinction does not occur.

Tell me how the world is imagination, and only thought,

unrelated to causes, without indicated or indicator.

Subjective thought appears as a picture:

the appearance of objects is imagined,

different from bringing together mind and things

not knowing they are objects of thought.

The notion of nonexistence occurs

when one does not see with the faculty of perception;
then why does existence not come about
from grasping the thought of it?

Imagination is not something, yet not nothing,
hence existence does not occur;
by knowing it is an object of thought,
imagination does not develop.

Deactivation of imagination is an independent revolution,
excluding the four propositions if things have causes.

How distinction within perceptions is made is not established;
it must be their entry into relationship with objects, or else begin from
an origin.

By the combination of causes and conditions, disallowing an origin,
the error of permanence is refuted, if conditions are impermanent.

There is no becoming or destruction due to simple impermanence,
for nothing at all is seen passing away or functioning as an origin.

Why and how is the unseen not impermanence become being?

One should protect people by the means of integration and control them by discipline.

One should negate opinion by insight, and promote growth by liberations.

All that is taught in vain by dogmatists is materialism.

My aim is not found by the view of effect and cause as real;
I teach disciples a single aim without effect or cause, without materialism.

Being only thought, there is no object; mind is seen divided by the notion of grasped and grasper, without permanence or annihilation.

As long as thought goes on, so long is it materialism;
false imagination is inactive in one seeing the world as subjective thought.

Coming about is the accomplishment of effects,
passing away is a view of an effect;

by comprehension of coming about and passing away
false imagination does not develop.

Permanent, impermanent; created, uncreated; prior, posterior—
all such notions are materialism.

Deities, antigods, and humans, animals, ghosts, and hells;
the ways of life where living beings are born are reckoned to be six.
One is born in them by lower, higher, and middling action,
or, by guarding all good, there is even individual emancipation.

Tell me the meaning of the death and birth moment to moment
taught by you to the mendicants.

Like a form changing into another, thought dissolves once it occurs,
so I point out to students the continuous succession of momentary
births.

In each form, becoming and dissolution pertain to imagination;
imagination must be the offspring; no other imagination can be
found.

What is not connected moment to moment
is spoken of on the basis of assumption;
without grasping form, there is no production,
nor does it dissolve.

Conditions and results of conditions, ignorance and verity, et cetera,
suggest duality in phenomena; verity must be nondual.

If phenomena are distinguished into conditions and results of
conditions,
permanence and so on would be effect; condition would be cause.

This statement of yours and the Buddhas
would be no different from dogmatists,
because of grasping effect and cause,
and thus not worthy, Great Sage.

In the body, though a fathom in size, is a world, indeed a total world;
it is the path to extinction, I teach the heirs of the Victors.

Ordinary people with false notions of grasped and grasping
imagine mundane and transmundane phenomena by grasping the
three natures.

Hence grasping nature is done by presupposition;
in order to avoid opinions, nature should not be imagined.

Neither restraint nor thought begins from defect or fault;
verity would be none other than the two behaviors.

Ignorance, craving, action, consciousness, et cetera,
are not born from the womb;
as it would imply an uncertain assumption,
the world is not produced by being created.

The destruction of things is said by the unwise to be fourfold;
the being and nonbeing of dualistic imagining isn't there;
what is beyond the four extremes is free from duality of view.

If there is dualistic imagination it doesn't go on after seeing,
due to the arising of discernment where things are not originated.

Where things are not originated,
don't construe that as due to mental construction;
tell me the reasoning, O Leader,
by excluding dualistic notions.

Like me, others should never construe nonexistence and existence
as totally separate,
and not be involved in dogmatism, aloof from listeners, victorious
as heirs of the Victor not destroying the Victor's realization and
practice.

Cause and absence of cause of liberation
have the same characteristic of nonorigination;
they cause perplexity by figures of speech—
this is always to be avoided by the wise.

Resembling clouds, tricks, rainbows,
like mirages, eye floaters, illusions,
all things originate in subjective imagination;
dogmatists imagine the world in terms of their own principles.

Nonorigination, verity, the limit of existence, and emptiness—
these are terms for form: one should not imagine it nonexistent.

As in the world a hand is a hand,
and a powerful lord is a destroyer of strongholds,
so one should not imagine the nonexistence of all things.

Emptiness is none other than form, and nonorigination likewise;
one should not divide them, because of not being different,
or the defect of views will result.

Conception and imagination come from grasping the appearance of
objects;
the circularity of long and short and so on comes from grasping
imagination.

For thought is conception, intellect imagination likewise;
there is no defined or definition in fanciful cognitive consciousness.

When what is construed as nonorigination by dogmatists
and what by those with the insight of my guidance

are not distinguished, the defect of opinion results.

Those who know nonorigination as a means
and the use of nonorigination too,
know the proper application—
they understand my guidance.

Nonorigination without abode is a means of shutting down opinions;
I speak of nonorigination out of comprehension of two uses.

Are things found to be unoriginated or not?

Tell me, Great Sage.

Nonorigination proposing no cause
is an inclination of dogmatic philosophy.

Nonorigination proposing no cause is an unbalanced dogmatic view.
I say mind alone is free of affirmation and negation.

Nonorigination as a production should be shunned
as having a view for a cause;

given nonorigination as a production in the doctrine of
causelessness,
this is the causal basis.

There is no effortless action; action is mixed with views:
tell me the view that goes with expedients, vows, and so on.
How does society come about with the absence of beings in
phenomena?

There is neither activity nor cessation when detached from grasped
and grasper;
thought comes up together with opinion from one state of mind to
another.

The nonorigination of phenomena—how is that, pray tell.
People don't understand, so this is elucidated.

Please explain the whole contradiction preceding and following,
free from the fault of dogmatics, excluding imbalanced denial of
cause.

Tell me about nonoccurrence and cessation, Best of Speakers,
apart from is and is not, without denying effect and cause.

Describe to me the principles of the arrangement of the steps of the
stages.

The world is fallen into two extremes, confounded by opinions.

The cause of tranquility is not realized
because of nonorigination, production, and so on.

I have no circle, and I do not teach reality.

If there is duality, it must be an error;
duality is cleared away by the Buddhas.

For things that are empty and momentary
have no inherent existence of their own,
are not something born.

They are construed by those who are veiled
by philosophies with false views,
not by those who have arrived at verity;
tell me the beginning and end of imagination.

In whatever way and in whatever mode
an object of sense occurs, the beginning
is from the conjunction of a multitude of qualities
assembled by conceptual elaborations.

Imagination starts from seeing form as external;
by comprehension of that itself,
by seeing things as they really are, as typical of the wise,
thought does not go on.

The origin of existence is not to be found,
even for the purpose of denying existents.

Thought appearing as things
should always be considered unoriginated.

Don't construct imagination, for the learned have no false
imagination.

When constructing imagination, it is duality on one's part, not
cessation.

To one who acknowledges nonorigination, illusion too appears as instruction;
the origin of illusion without cause describes the conclusion of negation.

Thought appears like images, produced by beginningless ideation.
There is the appearance of substance, not substance; one should recognize it as is.

For as a form in a mirror appears without sameness or otherness,
yet it is not nonexistent, so too the appearance of origination.

Just as castles in the air, illusions, and so on
are descriptions of causes and conditions,
so is the occurrence of all things
not without a source.

Imagination in human form operates with twofold usage,
including metaphors for self and phenomena,
but it is not realized by the ignorant.

Even a listener, including a saint, who relies on broad understanding will lead the fifth listener who relies on his own power, subordinate to the victor..

As the interruption of time, as annihilation, absolutely and relatively, the ignorant and unsophisticated imagine impermanence of four kinds.

The ignorant fall into two extremes
by reasoning in terms of qualities, atoms, and nature;
they do not recognize an expedient means of liberation
because of attachment to propositions of real and unreal.

Just as fools mistake the fingertip for the moon,
so those attached to words do not realize my truth.

Acts of perception present initiate the appearance of form;
this is the impression of existents, not material made of elements.

Form is burned by fire, water wets, form is scattered by wind;
how can it come about by means of elements?

The cluster of form and consciousness are a pair; this is not fivefold.
I teach a hundred different synonyms for the clusters.

Presence goes on by distinction of thought and mental factors;
distinguished forms are thought; form is not material.

White contrasts with blue and so on, blue is in contrast to white;
producing effect and cause, emptiness is and is not.

Proof, prover, and proven, cold and heat, defined and definition—
such as these are all not proved by logicians.

Mind, intellect, and the other six consciousnesses are of themselves
connected,
without oneness or otherness; this is the receptacle operating.

The Samkhya, Vaisheshika, naked mendicants, logicians, and
theists
have fallen for propositions of real and unreal,

strayed from the meaning of independence, the purpose of detachment.

Differentiation of figure and shape belongs to the elements but is not material;

dogmatists say birth pertains to elements and to matter.

Whatever else dogmatists construe causes other than unoriginated, they do not understand, because of delusion based on propositions of being and nonbeing.

Connected with mind, disconnected from intellect and the rest, pure essence abides with knowledge.

Action and whatever form comes about are causes of the domains of the clusters; but people without acquisitiveness do not stay in the formless.

Realistic selflessness is a logical consequence

of the nonexistence of entity;
extinction, to those who preach selflessness,
is the nonexistence even of consciousness.

A square is established; how could it be, if there were no form?
If there is no inside and outside, consciousness does not operate.

As speculative thinkers seek clusters in intermediate existence,
so does the existence of one who has attained the formless states
have no form; or does it?

Liberation would be effortless without life and consciousness;
it is a dogmatic doctrine no doubt, but thinkers don't understand.

Though form is there, there is no vision in the formless realm.
Its absence is not the aim, nor the vehicle, nor the journey.

Consciousness connected to the sense faculties comes from
impressions;
they do not apprehend one locus eightfold in a moment in time.

When form does not continue, neither do the senses, through the faculties;
hence the Blessed One teaches the faculties and so on are momentary.

How can form initiate consciousness without being particularized?
How can knowledge that is not occupied produce passage through successive states?

The guides do not teach dissolution immediate upon occurrence, uninterruptedness does not pertain to things in a state animated by imagination.

The senses and objects of the senses are not teachers to the deluded;
the ignorant apprehend by name, but the wise are expert in meaning.

The sixth sense has no appropriation; it is not apprehended with appropriation.

Those detached from the ills of existence tell the wise it is indeterminate.

Speculative philosophers without knowledge are alarmed by eternity and annihilation;
the ignorant do not distinguish the uncreated essence of the created.

Communication is in oneness, and also in otherness too;
oneness with thought, otherness with intellect et cetera.

When communication is ascertained, thought is expression of mental process;
how can it be ascertained by oneness through appropriation?

Proprietary acquisition is accomplished like fire
by people like and unlike in heredity, birth, and occupation.
Just like fire burns at once in the burned and burner,
so is the acquisitive ego; why is it not grasped by thinkers?

Whether with origination or nonorigination, the mind is always shining;

why don't thinkers trying to prove the self make an example?

Confused thinkers without guidance are in the cave of consciousness,
running hither and thither seeking to explain the self.

The pure self has to be realized first hand;
that is the matrix of realization,
inaccessible to speculative thinkers.

If one knows the character of both appropriation and appropriator,
as well as both inheritance and accumulation,
accurate knowledge comes about.

The idea of the receptacle in the form of the matrix as described by dogmatists

is connected with self, and phenomena are not mentioned.

Liberation by differentiating these is vision of truth;
this can clear away afflictions whose objectivity as existents is to be rejected.

The mind is naturally shining; the matrix of realization is pure.

People's appropriation, indeed, neither ends nor is endless.

Just as they see the true brilliant beauty of gold by clearing away the gravel,

so it is with the receptacle and the clusters.

Buddha is not a person or the clusters; knowledge has no impulsion.

Contemplating eternal peace, I go for refuge.

The Best of Speakers points out that the naturally shining mind is connected with self by derivative afflictions, by intellect and so on.

The mind is naturally shining; intellect and so on are otherwise—the actions accumulated by them are why they both are afflicted.

The shining self is defiled by adventitious afflictions without beginning;

and when in that condition is cleaned like a garment.

Just as clothing, or gold, freed of defect by the absence of impurity

do not disappear but remain, likewise the self without faults.

As the inexperienced might seek some concord of sweet sounds
in lute, horn, and kettle drum, so too a person in the clusters.

Like jewels in deposits and water in the earth,
while there, are not seen, so too the person in the clusters.

The inexperienced do not apprehend bundles of thought and mental
processes,
connected in clusters having their own qualities; so too person in the
clusters.

For just as the fetus is in the pregnant woman but is not visible,
likewise one without right knowledge does not see the self in the
clusters.

Like the potency in medicinal herbs or the fire in fuels,
similarly those without right knowledge do not see the person in the
clusters.

Just as the unawake do not see impermanence present in all things,
or emptiness, likewise the person in the clusters.

The stages, masteries, and superknowledges,
and the supreme consecration as well as the special concentrations,
do not exist if the self is nonexistent.

If a nihilist should go and say, 'If it exists, let it be shown,'
that clever one should be told, 'Show your own imagination.'

Preachers of selflessness are not worth speaking to;
abandon the occupations of mendicants
who hinder the teachings of Buddha
having biased views of the real and unreal.

This explanation of self, standing out like the blaze at the end of an
eon,
outshines the forest-fire of selflessness freed from the faults of
dogma.

In molasses, sugar cane, granulated sugar, honey, and such,

and yogurt, sesame, ghee, and such,
there is a particular flavor;
none unpalatable is found among them.

Even as it is apprehended five-fold, the self in the multitude of
clusters
the unknowing one does not see; the knowing, seeing, is liberated.

Mind is not exactly understood by sciences and examples;
the where, whence, and why is not completely understood.

For phenomena admit no exact definition; thought is not
apprehended the same.

Thinkers' negation of cause and negation of process would be the
logical result.

The yogi who contemplates mind does not see mind in mind.

The perceiver is visible in the perceived; what is the cause of what is
perceived?

I am of the lineage of descendants of Kati, emerged from a purified state;

I teach people how to go to the fortress of nirvana.

This path is ancient; I and other realized ones conveyed nirvana with three thousand scriptures.

It is not in the realm of desire, or even the formless realm, that a Buddha awakens;

it is at the peak of existence in the realm of form where desire is gone that one awakes.

Objects are not the cause of bondage; the cause is attachment to objects.

Afflictions are to be destroyed by knowledge; this is a discipline like a sword blade.

If there is no self, how can phenomena such as illusion be or not be?

How could the perception of the ignorant as such not be void of self?

For there is no originating cause, artificially or naturally;
this is all unoriginated, but that's not recognized by the ignorant.

Causes of creation that never occurred
are artificial, and are assumptions;
since these two don't produce anything,
how could they be construed as causes of creation?

Speculative thinkers describe cause
as prior, posterior, and simultaneous;
the production of all things is spoken of
in terms of light, a vessel, a student, etc.

Buddhas are not characterized by attributes that are developed;
for these are qualities of monarchs, these are not proclaimed of
Buddhas.

The attribute of Buddhas is knowledge free of the defects of opinion,
attaining first-hand insight destroying all errors.

Vedic study is not found in the deaf, the blind,

the one-eyed, the mute, the elderly, the hostile,
and especially the foolish.

Monarchs are invested with clear indicative celestial signs;
some go forth as speakers, some do not.

Vyasa, Kanada, Ṛishabha, Kapila, Leader of the Shakya—
after my passing away there will be these and others.

When I have been gone for a hundred years,
there will be Vyasa, and Bharata too;
the Pandavas, the Kauravas, Rama,
and afterward the Mauryas.

The Mauryas, the Nandas, the Guptas,
and then the foreigners, the worst of rulers;
at the end of foreign rule, the violent shock of weaponry;
and at the end of the weapons, the age of strife.
At the end of the age of strife,
truth will not be recognized by people.

With such events having gone on, the world revolves like a wheel;
by the union of flowing water and the sun, the realm of desire is torn
apart.

The sky will be restored, and the world will commence therein,
four castes and kings, sages and religion.

The Vedas, devotion, charity, and law-abiding will proceed again,
by narratives, legends, and so on, presented in easy prose.

The world will be confused by 'Thus have I heard' and so on.

Having dyed it deeply so nothing stands out, afterwards fade it;
or color the cloth with indigo, cardamom, and cow dung;
the body distinguished by all garments
has no marks of a religious leader.

Let the yogi teach; this is the mark of the enlightened.

Let him drink water filtered through cloth, and wear a waistband;
there is nothing socially or morally objectionable about begging
when done according to the rules at the proper time.

He is born in heaven, and from heaven in two other human
existences,

a precious lord of the world of most excellent birth.

A code of law governs the four continents like heaven;
after governing the continents for a long time, it perishes due to
greed.

The golden age, the silver age, the age of uncertainty, and the age of
strife;

I and others were in the golden age, the lion of the Śākya in the age
of strife.

Siddhartha of the Shakya family, Vishnu, Vyasa, Maheshvara:
there will be religious leaders such as these when I've passed away.

'Thus have I heard' and so on will be the teaching of the lion of the
Shakya,

ancient history will be that of Vyasa.

Vishnu and Maheshvara will teach creationism.

This and more will happen after I've passed away.

My mother is Vasumati, my father the sage Prajapati.

I am of the same lineage as Katyayana,
Dispassionate Victor by name.

I was born in Campa, and so were my father and grandfather.
Their name was Somagupta, being of the Soma race.

Gone forth in observance of a vow,
after imparting guidance expressed in a thousand ways
I will pass away completely,
having consecrated Mahamati.

Mahamati will give it to Dharma, Dharma will give it to Mekhala;
Mekhala will lose it at the end of the age due to weakness as a
student.

Kaśyapa, Krakucchanda, Kanaka the Guide,
I the Dispassionate, and all those others
are Victors of the golden age.

After the golden age there will be a guide by the name of Mati,
a great hero, teaching the five things to be known.

The birth of leaders of the world
does not take place in an age of uncertainty,
a silver age, or in a final age of strife;
they awaken in a golden age.

As long as it does not charm the sight, the outer garment may be
patterned
with spots like the eyes in a peacock tail, in sets of ten.
Ten fingers or three fingers should be between each spot.
Decoration otherwise would be attractive to fools.

Let the yogi always quell the fire of passion with the water of
knowledge;
let the yogi enact the three refuges diligently at dawn, noon, and
sunset.

When arrows, stones, sticks and such are impelled by a throw and
such,
one hits, one misses; so too good and bad.

One has no multiplicity, because of no diversity anywhere.

All recipients should be like wind, donors should be like land.

If one were multiple, all would be uncreated.

The annihilation of the created is a doctrine of speculative thinkers.

Like a lamp or seed, it should be homogeneous, so how could it be diverse?

That one is multiple is a doctrine of speculative thinkers.

Mung beans don't sprout from sesame seed,

rice does not produce barley,

wheat and corn are of different kinds;

how can one be multiple?

Panini will be the grammarian, Brihaspati the logician;

the founder of materialism will infiltrate the priesthood.

Katyayana author of treatises, and Yajnavalka too,

Mudhuka the astronomer and so on, will be in the age of strife.

Balin, by having done good works in the world for the welfare of creatures,
will become a king, a powerful lord of the earth, preserver of all laws.

Valmika, Masuraksha, Kautilya, and Ashvalayana
will be sages of great fortune in the future.

In a later time there will be Siddhartha the Shakya,
Bhutanta, Panchachudaka, Vagbaliratha, and Medhavi.

Standing on the forest ground, the great lord Brahma
gives an antelope skin, a wooden staff, and a belt.
There will be a great yogi named Virajas, a sage,
a teacher who guides to liberation,
this indeed the trademark of sages.

Brahma, together with hundreds of Brahmas and many deities,
having caused an antelope skin to fall from the sky upon me,
disappears on the spot, having that power.

Indra and the deities, and Virudhaka and others
give me garments of all colors and a begging bowl on the forest
ground.

What is valid as a reason for the doctrine of nonorigination,
be it unproduced, or even if it is produced,
will prove nonorigination, but only in terms of words.
Its cause is absence of knowledge, theirs the activation of thoughts;
what condition is that in between, as long as it doesn't produce
form?

As soon as one has passed away, another thought starts;
no form remains at all—based on what will it start?

Whence and wherever it starts,
thought is a cause of error;
when it has not been actualized,
how can its instant dissolution be determined?

The attainment of yogis, gold, relics of Victors,
and properties of light cannot be destroyed by a worldly means.

The attainment and qualities of Buddhas,
their fulfillment of knowledge, are stable;

how can mendicancy, practice, and realization
be seen momentary?

How can forms of castles in the air, magical illusions, and the like be
momentary? Nonentities and actualities both come from
somewhere.

The thought that causes ignorance is a beginningless accumulation
of ideas;
it is imagined by thinkers to be bound to origination and dissolution.

The explanation of Samkhya is twofold;
what evolves is from primary matter;
in primary matter is found cause,
cause fulfills itself.

Primary matter is said to differ in quality along with the thing;
diversity of effect and cause is not found in evolution.

Just as quicksilver is pure, not polluted by contaminants,
so is the receptacle pure, the subject in all creatures.

The smell of asafetida, and onion too,
the pregnant woman's appearance of pregnancy,
the saltiness of what's salted—
what does not work like a seed?

Where there is otherness, it is in otherness to an other;
likewise both are not in both.
Existence without appropriation
is neither nonexistent nor created.

The self is to the clusters like a horse not being a cow.
It may be spoken of as created or uncreated,
but cannot be said to have inherent existence.

Tarnished by erroneous opinion and speculative opinion
from reasoning and tradition, they say,
the self cannot be ascertained
in the act of appropriation, nor otherwise.

For it is their false definition,

the self imagined in terms of the clusters;
speculative thinkers do not understand them
either in terms of oneness or its otherness.

As a reflected image appears in a mirror, in water, in an eye,
without being the same or different, so is the person in the clusters.

What is to be perceived by the meditator with clear ascertainment
is the path, truth, and insight.

Those who discover these three are liberated from false views.

Seen and gone like lightning, like a car past a crack in the wall,
the evolution of all phenomena should not be construed as it is by
the ignorant.

The nirvana of the ignorant, by negation of things, deludes the mind
due to the assumption of the reality of ultimate insight
regarding it as a fixed condition.

One should consider evolution apart from origination and dissolution,

apart from existence and nonexistence, not bound by description of the described.

One should consider evolution without dogmatism, apart from name and form, hidden in inner vision.

Both perception of divinities and torments of hells are not there as entities in intermediate existence; they are begun by consciousness.

Beings born by maturation, hatched from eggs, fostered by moisture, etc., coming from intermediate existence, should be considered diverse bodies of life energy in a state of coming and going.

Discourses of dogmatic views opposed to reason and study should not be put into practice by the intelligent who are unafflicted and who bring about the destruction of suppositions.

The self is ascertained in the beginning; one must distinguish it from the act of appropriation.

Others define without ascertainment;
it is distinguished as a barren woman's son.

I see beings supernaturally as the embodiment of all creatures,
detached from the flesh by insight, liberated from the clusters
passing through successive states.

It is seen in the ugly and the beautiful, as liberated or not liberated,
as divine, as without education, as a ground of education.

Embodied in association with ways of life, beyond the ken of
thinkers,

I have transcended the human state, not others, false thinkers.

The idea that there is no self occurs; where does this start from?
Why is its emergence not spoken of like a river, a lamp, a seed?

When consciousness has not come about, there is no ignorance et
cetera;

in its absence there's no consciousness—how could it occur as a
continuity?

The three times, the timeless, and an inexpressive fifth—
this is mentioned by thinkers as known to the Buddhas.

Knowledge inexpressible by training and education
is the cause of training and education;
it grasps knowledge in training and education
as voiced by training and education.

‘Where this is so, so is this’—these are conditions and not causes;
they are spoken of for clarity; without that there is no agency.

Wind makes fire burn as a driving force, not its origin;
and fire is blown out by the wind—how can they be proofs of reality?

The created and uncreated may be said to be beyond appropriation;
how can fire be imagined by the ignorant to be proof of that?

Fire is produced among humans by a mutual contribution of forces;
being is ongoing—how can its provenance be construed as like fire?

The summoning by the intellect and such
of the collection of clusters and elements,
without a soul, indeed, goes on constantly
along with thought like a caravan.

These two luminosities are always apart from effect and cause;
fire is no proof of them, but thinkers don't understand.

Mind, energies, and nirvana are luminous by nature;
obscured by beginningless errors, they are unaltered, like space.

Those who sleep like slumbering elephants,
encrusted with dogmatic opinion,
shrouded by conceptual consciousness
are purified by fire and such.

When they have seen them as they are, afflictions are torn apart;
leaving the thicket of analogy, they've gone to the realm of the wise.

Once otherness is construed
by distinction of the knowing and the known,

the stupid do not understand,
and it is called inexpressible.

Like the case of a sandalwood kettle drum,
where the unsophisticated consider the appearance
of sandalwood and aloe wood no different;
so is knowledge with poor thinkers.

What is eaten on rising is no more than a bowlful.
The meal should be free of unwholesome elements,
things injurious to the mouth and so on.

One who keeps this rule properly,
pure, intent on discipline, free of fancy,
independent, intent on purpose,
will illumine the golden religious life.

His delusive creation of suppositions of being and nonbeing,
a web of false views, with its impurity, disappears
along with passion, depravity, and wrath;

free of embellishment, he is also anointed by the hands of the Buddhas.

Some dogmatists are confused about the location of cause, others are agitated by assumptions, others stand by annihilation as ultimate by supposing causeless being.

Maturation and evolution pertain to consciousness and intellect; intellect originates in the receptacle, consciousness is in the intellect.

All thoughts start from the receptacle, like waves; caused by impressions, they occur in conformity with assumptions.

Bound into collections that instantly dissolve, holding forms of things thought of, shape, appearance, and form conform to the intellect, eye, and so on.

Bound up with beginningless error, the semblance of objects elicited by impressions,

thought appears external,
the barrier of dogmatic views.

Caused by one, another starts based on it;
when a notion occurs, passage through successive states begins.

Things are like illusions, dreams, analogous to castles in the air;
one should consider one's own imagination like a mirage,
like the reflection of the moon in water.

Verity is found by distinction from conventional usage;
accurate knowledge is based on that,
and so are the supreme concentrations
such as the magical and the heroic progress.

From entering into the stages one gains superknowledges and
masteries,
and a blissful consecrated state of knowledge like magic.

When thought ceases,
seeing the world at rest,

one attains the stage of Joy,
and they attain the stage of Buddha.

By cessation of dependence,
like a jewel reflecting all colors
one does the tasks people need do
like a reflection in water.

Free of suppositions of reality or unreality,
being or nonbeing, or both or neither either,
the seventh stage is beyond
listeners and solitary illuminates.

Those who have seen the truth first hand
should be shown the Great Vehicle
by which the actual stages are purified,
free of externalist dogma.

Disappearance of imagination without falling into nihilism,
a principle like rabbit horn, turtle hair, a wish-fulfilling pearl,
should be taught to the liberated.

If it is as right by reasoning as it is text by the book,
then the reasoning must be right and should not be construed
otherwise.

Sight, action, and craving are so
based on ignorance;
intellect in sight and form as such
is the intellect of one confused.

Notes

Aids to enlightenment

4 points of mindfulness, 4 right resolutions, 4 bases of mystical powers, 5 faculties, 5 powers, 7 element of enlightenment, and the 8-fold path:

4 points of mindfulness: mindfulness of the body as impure, sensation as irritating, mind as inconstant, and phenomena as ungraspable.

4 right resolutions: resolve not to allow occurrence badness that has not yet come about; resolve to stop badness that has come about; resolve to produce goodness that has yet to come about; resolve to increase goodness that has come about.

4 bases of mystical powers: will, energy, attention, contemplation.

5 faculties and 5 powers: faculties and powers of faith, energy, recollection, concentration, wisdom.

7 elements of enlightenment: mindfulness, investigation of things, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, equanimity.

8-fold path: right thinking, seeing, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration.

Cancamanavika, Sundarika Pravrajika, and the empty begging bowl

These collectively allude to the so-called Nine Annoyances of Buddha, incidents of hardship, opposition, oppression, and defamation suffered by Buddha even after his attainment of enlightenment acknowledgement as a Buddha.

Clusters, elements, and media

This recurrent expression is a summary reference to an analytic conception of sentient experience. The (five) clusters are form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. The (twelve) media are the six sense organs and six corresponding fields of data. The (eighteen) elements are the twelve media and the six kinds of consciousness corresponding to the six sense organs.

Five clusters

Text: “There are five clusters. What are they? Form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness. Of these, the four immaterial clusters are sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness.

Five elements

Text: “[The five elements are] name, appearance, imagination, true knowledge, and verity, entry into ultimate first-hand attainment of the Realized; beyond notions of eternity and annihilation, reality or unreality, the pleasure-ground of attainment of bliss in the present, it becomes evident to practitioners in accord.”

The term *five elements* is also used in some contexts to refer to an ambient idea of five fundamental elements composing the material universe.

Four analytic sciences

Analysis of doctrines, principles, terminology, and eloquence.

Four meditations

An ancient meditation system, also used by early Buddhists.

The first meditation is characterized by consideration, examination, joy, bliss, and single-mindedness.

The second meditation is characterized by inner purity, joy, bliss, and single-mindedness.

The third meditation is characterized by equanimity, recollection, insight, bliss, and single-mindedness.

The fourth meditation is characterized by equanimity, neither pleasure nor pain, recollection, and single-mindedness.

Immeasurables

States of mind specially cultivated as preparatory for bodhisattva practice:

Immeasurable goodwill, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

Integrative methods

The four integrative methods of bodhisattvas: charity, kind speech, beneficial action, sharing concerns.

Kasyapa, Krakucchanda, Konakamuni (Kanakamuni)

Names of Buddhas before Gautama Buddha. Early accounts name seven ancient Buddhas; later accounts reckon twenty-four, thirty-six, or Buddhas beyond count. This multiplicity of Buddhas represents the idea that Buddha-nature is inherent in all people and true reality, or real truth, is not a historically conditioned construct.

Masteries

1)

Mastery of freedom from false imagination.

Mastery of purification of lands.

Mastery of knowledge.

Master of action

2) ten masteries of bodhisattvas

Mastery of life, mind, self-discipline, action, appearance, confidence, doctrines, vows, psychic powers, and knowledge.

Net of Indra

This is a classical symbol of universal interrelation. According to a representation in *Return to the Source* by Huayan master Fazang, “In the contemplation of the net of Indra, principal and companions reflect each other. This means that with self as principal one looks to others as companions; or else one thing or one principle is taken as principal and all things or all principles become companions. Or one body is taken as principal and all bodies become companions.

Whatever single thing is brought up, immediately principal and companions are equally contained, multiplying infinitely. This represents the nature of things manifesting reflections multiplied and

re-multiplied in all phenomena, all infinitely. This is also the infinite doubling and redoubling of compassion and wisdom.”

Powers

The ten powers attributed to Buddhas are powers of knowledge: knowledge of what is so and what is not; of results of actions; of all kinds of interests; of all kinds of realms; of all kinds of different faculties; of all destinations; of all meditations states and associated techniques; of past states; of conditions of death and birth of others; of the end of impulses.

Vaisesika

A school of Indian philosophy according to which the universe is reducible to a finite number of atoms.

Vajrasattva

Vajrasattva means Adamantine Being, and represents a guardian spirit of Buddhism.

Samantabhadra

An archetypal bodhisattva, representing the totality of the activity of bodhisattvas. Samantabhadra, Universal Good, is one of the main figures of the *Avatamsaka-sutra* or Flower Ornament Scripture.

Sankhya

Sankhya (Samkhya) is an ancient school of Indian philosophy, according to which the universe consists of person and nature; person is attached to nature in life by desire, and liberation is detachment of person from nature.

Srimala Devi

This refers to a Buddhist scripture called The Lion's Roar of Queen Srimala, which treats the teaching of the matrix of realization, also expounded in this Lankavatara sutra.

Superknowledges

Psychic vision, psychic hearing, knowledge of others' thoughts, recollection of the past, mystical powers, and knowledge of the end of impulse.

The first five of these are considered worldly; the last one is considered one of the distinguishing marks of "Buddhism" in the

sense of seeking enlightenment and not “godhood,” as noted in this sutra. According to the *Avatamsaka* sutra, when bodhisattvas cultivate the bases of superknowledges or mystical powers, they do so “based on dispassion, based on extinction, given to relinquishment.” This may be why research for military applications of so-called extra-sensory perception carried out in the 20th century was unsuccessful.

Ten noble families

This refers to the people in the ten stages of enlightenment, as outlined in the Ten Stages book of the Flower Ornament Scripture, and also represented in the vision of the Tower of Maitreya, the Future Buddha, in the final book of the same scripture, wherein each successive story of the tower is inhabited by bodhisattvas in one of the stages, in ascending order.

Triple(x) world

This is used as a general reference to the whole range of mundane experience, including the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of the formless. The formless realm refers to states of

concentration such as absorption in infinite space, infinite consciousness, infinite nothingness, and so on.

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