

Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana Shastra

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THE AWAKENING OF FAITH IN MAHAYANA

(Mahayana-Sraddhotpada Shastra)

Attributed to Asvaghosha

Translated by Yoshito S. Hakedas

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I take refuge in the Buddha, the greatly Compassionate One, the Savior of the world, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, of most excellent deeds in all the ten directions; And in the Dharma, the manifestation of his Essence, the Reality, the sea of Suchness, the boundless storehouse of excellencies; And in the Sangha, whose members truly devote themselves to the practice, May all sentient beings be made to discard their doubts, to cast aside their evil attachments, and to give rise to the correct faith in the Mahayana, that the lineage of the Buddhas may not be broken off.

The Contents of the Discourse

There is a teaching (dharma) which can awaken in us the root of faith in the Mahayana, and it should therefore be explained. The explanation is divided into five parts. They are (1) the Reasons for Writing; (2) the Outline; (3) the Interpretation; (4) on Faith and Practice; (5) the Encouragement of Practice and the Benefits Thereof.

PART 1. The Reasons for Writing

Someone may ask the reasons why I was led to write this treatise. I reply: there are eight reasons.

The first and the main reason is to cause men to free themselves from all sufferings and to gain the final bliss; it is not that I desire worldly fame, material profit, or respect and honor.

The second reason is that I wish to interpret the fundamental meaning of the teachings of the Tathagata so that men may understand them correctly and not be mistaken about them.

The third reason is to enable those whose capacity for goodness has attained maturity to keep firm hold upon an unretrogressive faith in the teachings of Mahayana.

The fourth reason is to encourage those whose capacity for goodness is still slight to cultivate the faithful mind.

The fifth reason is to show them expedient means (upaya) by which they may wipe away the hindrance of evil karma, guard their minds well, free themselves from stupidity and arrogance, and escape from the net of heresy.

The sixth reason is to reveal to them the practice of two methods of meditation, cessation of illusions and clear observation (samatha and vipasyana), so that ordinary men and the followers of Hinayana may cure their minds of error.

The seventh reason is to explain to them the expedient means of single-minded meditation (smriti) so that they may be born in the presence of the Buddha and keep their minds fixed in an unretrogressive faith.

The eighth reason is to point out to them the advantages of studying this treatise and to encourage them to make an effort to attain enlightenment. These are the reasons for which I write this treatise.

Question: What need is there to repeat the explanation of the teaching when it is presented in detail in the sutras?

Answer: Though this teaching is presented in the sutras, the capacity and the deeds of men today are no longer the same, nor are the conditions of their acceptance and comprehension. That is to say, in the days when the Tathagata was in the world, people were of high aptitude and the Preacher preached with his perfect voice, different types of people all equally understood; hence, there was no need for this kind of discourse. But after the passing away of the Tathagata, there were some who were able by their own power to listen extensively to others and to reach understanding; there were some who by their own power could listen to very little and yet understand much; there were some who, without any mental power of their own, depended upon the extensive discourses of others to obtain understanding; and naturally there were some who looked upon the wordiness of extensive discourses as troublesome, and who sought after what was comprehensive, terse, and yet contained much meaning, and then were able to understand it. Thus, this discourse is designed to embrace, in a general way, the limitless meaning of the vast and profound teaching of the Tathagata. This discourse, therefore, should be presented.

PART 2. Outline

The reasons for writing have been explained. Next the outline will be given. Generally speaking, Mahayana is to be expounded from two points of view. One is the principle and the other is the significance. The principle is "the Mind of the sentient being". This Mind includes in itself all states of being of the phenomenal world and the transcendental world. On the basis of this Mind, the meanings of Mahayana may be unfolded.

Why? Because the absolute aspect of this Mind represents the essence (svabhava) of Mahayana; and the phenomenal aspect of this Mind indicates the essence, attributes (lakshana), and influences (kriya) of Mahayana itself. Of the significance of the adjective maha (great) in the compound, Mahayana, there are three aspects: (1) the "greatness" of the essence, for all phenomena (dharma) are identical with Suchness and are neither increasing nor decreasing; (2) the "greatness" of the attributes, for the Tathagata-garbha is endowed with numberless excellent qualities; (3) the "greatness" of the influences, for the influences of Suchness give rise to the good causes and effects in this and in the other world alike. The significance of the term yana (vehicle) in the compound, Mahayana: The term yana is introduced because all Enlightened Ones (Buddhas) have ridden on this vehicle, and all Enlightened Ones-to-be (Bodhisattvas), being led by this principle, will reach the stage of Tathagata.

PART 3. Interpretation

The part on outline has been given; next the part on interpretation of the principle of Mahayana will be given. It consists of three chapters: (1) Revelation of the True Meaning; (2) Correction of Evil Attachments; (3) Analysis of the Types of Aspiration for Enlightenment.

CHAPTER ONE Revelation of True Meaning

I. One Mind and Its Two Aspects

The revelation of the true meaning of the principle of Mahayana can be achieved by unfolding the doctrine that the principle of One Mind has two aspects. One is the aspect of Mind in terms of the Absolute (tathata; Suchness), and the other is the aspect of Mind in terms of phenomena (samsara; birth and death). Each of these two aspects embraces all states of existence. Why? Because these two aspects are mutually inclusive.

A. Mind in Terms of the Absolute

The Mind in terms of the Absolute is the one World of Reality (dharmadhatu) and the essence of all phases of existence in their totality. That which is called "the essential nature of the Mind" is unborn and is imperishable. It is only through illusions that all things come to be differentiated. If one is freed from illusions, then to him there will be no appearances (lakshana) of objects regarded as absolutely independent existences; therefore all things from the beginning transcend all forms of verbalization, description, and conceptualization and are, in the final analysis, undifferentiated, free from alteration, and indestructible. They are only of the One Mind; hence the name Suchness.

All explanations by words are provisional and without validity, for they are merely used in accordance with illusions and are incapable of denoting Suchness. The term Suchness likewise has no attributes which can be verbally specified. The term Suchness is, so to speak, the limit of verbalization wherein a word is used to put an end to words. But the essence of Suchness itself cannot be put an end to, for all things in their Absolute aspect are real; nor is there anything which needs to be pointed out as real, for all things are equally in the state of Suchness. It should be understood that all things are incapable of being verbally explained or thought of; hence the name Suchness.

Question: If such is the meaning of the principle of Mahayana, how is it possible for men to conform themselves to and enter into it?

Answer: If they understand that, concerning all things, though they are spoken of, there is neither that which speaks, nor that which can be spoken of, and though they are thought of, there is neither that which thinks, nor that which can be thought of, then they are said to have conformed to it. And when they are freed from their thoughts, they are said to have entered into it. Next, Suchness has two aspects if predicated in words. One is that it is truly empty (sunya), for this aspect can, in the final sense, reveal what is real. The other is that it is truly nonempty (a-sunya), for its essence itself is endowed with undefiled and excellent qualities.

1. Truly Empty

Suchness is empty because from the beginning it has never been related to any defiled states of existence, it is free from all marks of individual distinction of things, and it has nothing to do with thoughts conceived by a deluded mind. It should be understood that the essential nature of Suchness is neither with marks nor without marks; neither not with marks nor not without marks; nor is it both with and without marks simultaneously; it is neither with a single mark nor with different marks; neither not with a single mark nor not with different marks; nor is it both with a single and with different marks simultaneously. In short, since all unenlightened men discriminate with their deluded minds from moment to moment, they are alienated from Suchness; hence, the definition "empty"; but once they are free from their deluded minds, they will find that there is nothing to be negated.

2. Truly Nonempty

Since it has been made clear that the essence of all things is empty, i.e., devoid of illusions, the true Mind is eternal, permanent, immutable, pure, and self-sufficient; therefore, it is called "nonempty". And also there is no trace of particular marks to be noted in it, as it is the sphere that transcends thoughts and is in harmony with enlightenment alone.

B. The Mind in Terms of Phenomena

1. The Storehouse Consciousness

The Mind as phenomena (samsara) is grounded on the Tathagata-garbha. What is called the Storehouse Consciousness is that in which "neither birth nor death (nirvana)" diffuses harmoniously with "birth and death (samsara)", and yet in which both are neither identical nor different. This Consciousness has two aspects which embrace all states of existence and create all states of existence. They are: (a) the aspect of enlightenment, and (b) the aspect of nonenlightenment.

a. The Aspect of Enlightenment

(1) Original Enlightenment

The essence of Mind is free from thoughts. The characteristic of that which is free from thoughts is analogous to that of the sphere of empty space that pervades everywhere. The one without any second, i.e. the absolute aspect of the World of Reality (dharmadhatu) is none other than the undifferentiated Dharmakaya, the "Essence-body" of the Tathagata. Since the essence of Mind is grounded on the Dharmakaya, it is to be called the original enlightenment. Why? Because "original enlightenment" indicates the essence of Mind (a priori) in contradistinction to the essence of Mind in the process of actualization of enlightenment; the process of actualization of enlightenment is none other than the process of integrating the identity with the original

enlightenment.

(2) The Process of Actualization of Enlightenment

Grounded on the original enlightenment is nonenlightenment. And because of nonenlightenment, the process of actualization of enlightenment can be spoken of. Now, to be fully enlightened to the fountainhead of Mind is called the final enlightenment; and not to be enlightened to the fountainhead of Mind, nonfinal enlightenment. What is the meaning of this? An ordinary man becomes aware that his former thoughts were wrong; then he is able to stop (nirodha) such thoughts from arising again. Although this sometimes may also be called enlightenment, properly it is not enlightenment at all because it is not enlightenment that reaches the fountainhead of Mind. The followers of Hinayana, who have some insight, and those Bodhisattvas who have just been initiated become aware of the changing state (anyathatva) of thoughts and are free from thoughts which are subject to change [such as the existence of a permanent self (atman), etc.]. Since they have forsaken the rudimentary attachments derived from unwarranted speculation (vikalpa), their experience is called enlightenment in appearance.

Bodhisattvas who have come to the realization of Dharmakaya become aware of the temporarily abiding state (sthiti) of thoughts and are not arrested by them. Since they are free from their rudimentary false thoughts derived from the speculation that the components of the world are real, their experience is called approximate enlightenment. Those Bodhisattvas who have completed the stages of a Bodhisattva and who have fulfilled the expedient means needed to bring forth the original enlightenment to the fullest extent will experience the oneness with Suchness in an instant; they will become aware of how the inceptions of the deluded thoughts of the mind arise (jati), and will be free from the rise of any deluded thought. Since they are far away even from subtle deluded thoughts, they are able to have an insight into the original nature of Mind. The realization that Mind is eternal is called the final enlightenment. It is, therefore, said in a sutra that if there is a man who is able to perceive that which is beyond thoughts he is advancing toward the Buddha wisdom. Though it is said that there is an inception of the rising of deluded thoughts in the mind, there is no inception as such that can be known as being independent of the essence of Mind. And yet to say that the inception of the rising of deluded thoughts is known means that it is known as existing on the ground of that which is beyond thoughts [i.e., the essence of Mind]. Accordingly, all ordinary people are said not to be enlightened because they have had a continuous stream of deluded thoughts and have never been freed from their thoughts; therefore, they are said to be in a beginningless ignorance. If a man gains insight into that which is free from thoughts, then he knows how those thoughts which characterize the mind [i.e., deluded thoughts] arise, abide, change, and cease to be, for he is identical with that which is free from thoughts. But, in reality, no difference exists in the process of the actualization of enlightenment, because the four states [of arising,

abiding, etc.] exist simultaneously and each of them is not self-existent; they are originally of one and the same enlightenment [in that they are taking place on the ground of original enlightenment, as its phenomenal aspects]. And, again, original enlightenment, when analyzed in relation to the defiled state [in the phenomenal order], presents itself as having two attributes. One is the "Purity of Wisdom" and the other is the "Suprarational Functions".

(a) Purity of Wisdom.

By virtue of the permeation (vasana, perfuming) of the influence of dharma [i.e., the essence of Mind or original enlightenment], a man comes to truly discipline himself and fulfills all expedient means of unfolding enlightenment; as a result, he breaks through the compound consciousness [i.e., the Storehouse Consciousness that contains both enlightenment and nonenlightenment], puts an end to the manifestation of the stream of deluded mind, and manifests the Dharmakaya [i.e., the essence of Mind], for his wisdom (prajna) becomes genuine and pure. What is the meaning of this? All modes (lakshana) of mind and consciousness under the state of nonenlightenment are the products of ignorance. Ignorance does not exist apart from enlightenment; therefore, it cannot be destroyed [because one cannot destroy something which does not really exist], and yet it cannot not be destroyed [insofar as it remains]. This is like the relationship that exists between the water of the ocean [i.e., enlightenment] and its waves [i.e., modes of mind] stirred by the wind [i.e., ignorance]. Water and wind are inseparable; but water is not mobile by nature, and if the wind stops the movement ceases. But the wet nature remains undestroyed. Likewise, man's Mind, pure in its own nature, is stirred by the wind of ignorance. Both Mind and ignorance have no particular forms of their own and they are inseparable. Yet Mind is not mobile by nature, and if ignorance ceases, then the continuity of deluded activities ceases. But the essential nature of wisdom [i.e., the essence of Mind, like the wet nature of the water] remains undestroyed.

(b) Suprarational Functions

He who has fully uncovered the original enlightenment is capable of creating all manner of excellent conditions because his wisdom is pure. The manifestation of his numberless excellent qualities is incessant; accommodating himself to the capacity of other men he responds spontaneously, reveals himself in manifold ways, and benefits them.

(3) The Characteristics of the Essence of Enlightenment

The characteristics of the essence of enlightenment have four great significances that are identical with those of empty space or that are analogous to those of a bright mirror. First, the essence of enlightenment is like a mirror which is really empty of images. It is free from all marks of objects of the mind and it has nothing to reveal in

itself, for it does not reflect any images. Second, it is like a mirror influencing (vasana) all men to advance toward enlightenment. That is to say, it is truly nonempty; appearing in it are all the objects of the world which neither go out nor come in; which are neither lost nor destroyed. It is eternally abiding One Mind. All things appear in it because all things are real. And none of the defiled things are able to defile it, for the essence of wisdom [i.e., original enlightenment] is unaffected by defilements, being furnished with an unsoiled quality and influencing all men to advance toward enlightenment. Third, it is like a mirror which is free from defiled objects reflected in it. This can be said because the nonempty state [of original enlightenment] is genuine, pure, and bright, being free from hindrances both affectional and intellectual, and transcending characteristics of that which is compounded [i.e., the Storehouse Consciousness]. Fourth, it is like a mirror influencing a man to cultivate his capacity for goodness, serving as a coordinating cause to encourage him in his endeavors. Because the essence of enlightenment is free from defiled objects, it universally illumines the mind of man and induces him to cultivate his capacity for goodness, presenting itself in accordance with his desires [as a mirror presents his appearance].

b. The Aspect of Nonenlightenment

Because of not truly realizing oneness with Suchness, there emerges an unenlightened mind and consequently, its thoughts. These thoughts do not have any validity to be substantiated; therefore, they are not independent of the original enlightenment. It is like the case of a man who has lost his way: he is confused because of his wrong sense of direction. If he is freed from the notion of direction altogether, then there will be no such thing as going astray. It is the same with men: because of the notion of enlightenment, they are confused. But if they are freed from the fixed notion of enlightenment, then there will be no such thing as nonenlightenment. Because there are men of unenlightened, deluded mind, for them we speak of true enlightenment, knowing well what this relative term stands for. Independent of the unenlightened mind, there are no independent marks of true enlightenment itself that can be discussed. Because of its nonenlightened state, the deluded mind produces three aspects which are bound to nonenlightenment and are inseparable from it. First is the activity of ignorance. The agitation of mind because of its nonenlightened state is called activity. When enlightened, it is unagitated. When it is agitated, anxiety (dukkha) follows, for the result [anxiety] is not independent of the cause [the agitation contingent upon ignorance]. Second is the perceiving subject. Because of the agitation that breaks the original unity with Suchness, there appears the perceiving subject. When unagitated, the mind is free from perceiving. Third is the world of objects. Because of the perceiving subject, the world of objects erroneously appears. Apart from the perceiving, there will be no world of objects. Conditioned by the incorrectly conceived world of objects, the deluded mind produces six aspects. First is the

aspect of the discriminating intellect. Depending on the erroneously conceived world of objects, the mind develops the discrimination between liking and disliking. Second is the aspect of continuity. By virtue of the discriminating function of the intellect, the mind produces an awareness of pleasure and pain with regard to things in the world of objects. The mind, developing deluded thoughts and being bound to them, will continue uninterrupted. Third is the aspect of attachment. Because of the continuity of deluded thoughts, the mind, superimposing its deluded thoughts on the world of objects and holding fast to the discriminations of liking and disliking develops attachments to what it likes. Fourth is the aspect of the speculation (vikalpa) on names and letters [i.e., concepts]. On the basis of erroneous attachments, the deluded mind analyzes words which are provisional and therefore devoid of reality. Fifth is the aspect of giving rise to evil karma. Relying on names and letters [i.e., concepts which have no validity, the deluded mind] investigates names and words and becomes attached to them, and creates manifold types of evil karma. Sixth is the aspect of anxiety attached to the effects of evil karma. Because of the law of karma, the deluded mind suffers the effects and will not be free. It should be understood that ignorance is able to produce all types of defiled states; all defiled states are aspects of nonenlightenment.

c. The Relationships between Enlightenment and Nonenlightenment

Two relationships exist between the enlightened and nonenlightened states. They are "identity" and "nonidentity".

(1) Identity

Just as pieces of various kinds of pottery are of the same nature in that they are made of clay, so the various magic-like manifestations (maya) of both enlightenment (anasrava: nondefilement) and nonenlightenment (avidya: ignorance) are aspects of the same essence, Suchness. For this reason, it is said in a sutra that "all sentient beings intrinsically abide in eternity and are entered into nirvana. The state of enlightenment is not something that is to be acquired by practice or to be created. In the end, it is unobtainable [for it is given from the beginning]." Also it has no corporeal aspect that can be perceived as such. Any corporeal aspects [such as the marks of the Buddha] that are visible are magic-like products of Suchness manifested in accordance with the mentality of men in defilement. It is not, however, that these corporeal aspects which result from the suprarational functions of wisdom are of the nature of nonemptiness [i.e., substantial]; for wisdom has no aspects that can be perceived.

(2) Nonidentity

Just as various pieces of pottery differ from each other, so differences exist between the state of enlightenment and that of nonenlightenment, and between the magic-like manifestations of Suchness manifested in

accordance with the mentality of men in defilement, and those of men of ignorance who are defiled [i.e., blinded] as to the essential nature of Suchness.

2. The Cause and Conditions of Man's Being in Samsara

That a man is in samsara (birth and death) results from the fact that his mind (manas) and consciousness (vijnana) develop on the ground of the Storehouse Consciousness (citta). This means that because of the aspect of nonenlightenment of the Storehouse Consciousness, he is said to be in possession of ignorance [and thus is bound to remain in samsara].

a. Mind

The mentality which emerges in the state of nonenlightenment, which incorrectly perceives and reproduces the world of objects and, conceiving that the reproduced world of objects is real, continues to develop deluded thoughts, is what we define as mind. The mind has five different names. The first is called the "activating mind", for, without being aware of it, it breaks the equilibrium of mind by the force of ignorance. The second is called the "evolving mind", for it emerges contingent upon the agitated mind as the subject that perceives incorrectly. The third is called the "reproducing mind", for it reproduces the entire world of objects as a bright mirror reproduces all material images. When confronted with the objects of the five senses, it reproduces them at once. It arises spontaneously at all times and exists forever reproducing the world of objects in front of the subject. The fourth is called the "analytical mind", for it differentiates what is defiled and what is undefiled. The fifth is called the "continuing mind", for it is united with deluded thoughts and continues uninterrupted. It retains the entire karma, good and bad, accumulated in the immeasurable lives of the past, and does not permit any loss. It is also capable of bringing the results of the pain, pleasure, etc., of the present and the future to maturity; in doing so, it makes no mistakes. It can cause one to recollect suddenly the things of the present and the past and to have sudden and unexpected fantasies of the things to come. The triple world, therefore, is unreal and is of mind only. Apart from it there are no objects of the five senses and of the mind. What does this mean? Since all things are, without exception, developed from the mind and produced under the condition of deluded thoughts, all differentiations are no other than the differentiations of one's mind itself. Yet the mind cannot perceive the mind itself; the mind has no marks of its own that can be ascertained as a substantial entity as such. It should be understood that the conception of the entire world of objects can be held only on the basis of man's deluded mind of ignorance. All things, therefore, are just like the images in a mirror which are devoid of any objectivity that one can get hold of; they are of the mind only and are unreal. When the deluded mind comes into being, then various conceptions (dharma) come to be; and when the deluded mind ceases to be, then these various conceptions cease to be.

b. Consciousness

What is called "consciousness (vijñāna)" is the "continuing mind". Because of their deep-rooted attachment, ordinary men imagine that I and Mine are real and cling to them in their illusions. As soon as objects are presented, this consciousness rests on them and discriminates the objects of the five senses and of the mind. This is called "vijñāna [i.e., the differentiating consciousness]" or the "separating consciousness". The propensity for discrimination of this consciousness will be intensified by both the intellectual defilement of holding fast to perverse views and the affectional defilement of indulgence in passion. That the deluded mind and consciousness arise from the permeation of ignorance is something that ordinary men cannot understand. The followers of the Hinayana, with their wisdom, likewise fail to realize this. Those Bodhisattvas who, having advanced from the first stage of correct faith by setting the mind upon enlightenment through practicing contemplation, have come to realize the Dharmakaya, can partially comprehend this. Yet even those who have reached the final stage of Bodhisattvahood cannot fully comprehend this; only the Enlightened Ones have thorough comprehension of it. Why? The Mind, though pure in its self-nature from the beginning, is accompanied by ignorance. Being defiled by ignorance, a defiled state of Mind comes into being. But, though defiled, the Mind itself is eternal and immutable. Only the Enlightened Ones are able to understand what this means. What is called the essential nature of Mind is always beyond thoughts. It is, therefore, defined as "immutable". When the one World of Reality is yet to be realized, the Mind is mutable and is not in perfect unity with Suchness. Suddenly, a deluded thought arises; this state is called ignorance.

c. Defiled States of Mind

Six kinds of defiled states of mind conditioned by ignorance can be identified. The first is the defilement united with attachment to atman (self), from which those who have attained liberation in Hinayana and those Bodhisattvas at the "stage of establishment of faith" are free. The second is the defilement united with the "continuing mind", from which those who are at the "stage of establishment of faith" and who are practicing expedient means to attain enlightenment can gradually free themselves and free themselves completely at the "stage of pure-heartedness". The third is the defilement united with the discriminating "analytical mind", from which those at the "stage of observing precepts" begin to be liberated and finally are liberated completely when they arrive at the "stage of expedient means without any trace". The fourth is the subtle defilement disunited from the represented world of objects, from which those at the "stage of freedom from the world of objects" can be freed. The fifth is the subtler defilement disunited from the "evolving mind that perceives" [i.e., the defilement existing prior to the act of perceiving], from which those at

the "stage of freedom from evolving mind" are freed. The sixth and most subtle is the defilement disunited from the basic "activating mind", from which those Bodhisattvas who have passed the final stage and have gone into the "stage of Tathagatahood" are freed.

d. Comments on the Terms Used in the Foregoing Discussion

On the expression "the one World of Reality is yet to be realized": From this state those Bodhisattvas who have advanced from the "stage of the establishment of faith" to the "stage of pure-heartedness", after having completed and severed their deluded thoughts, will be more and more liberated as they advance, and when they reach the "stage of Tathagatahood", they will be completely liberated. On "united": By the word "united" appearing in the first three defilements is meant that though difference [i.e., duality] exists between the mind (subject) and the datum of the mind (object), there is a simultaneous relation between them in that when the subject is defiled the object is also defiled, and when the subject is purified the object is also purified. On "disunited": By the word "disunited" is meant that the second three subtle and fundamental defilements are the aspects of nonenlightenment on the part of the mind existing prior to the differentiation into the subject and object relationship; therefore, a simultaneous relation between the subject and object is not as yet established. On the expression "defiled state of mind": It is called "the hindrance originating from defilements", for it obstructs any fundamental insight into Suchness. On "ignorance": Ignorance is called the "hindrance originating from misconceptions of objects", for it obstructs the wisdom that functions spontaneously in the world. Because of the defiled state of mind, there emerges the subject that perceives [incorrectly; i.e., the evolving mind] and that which reproduces [the reproducing mind] and thus one erroneously predicates the world of objects and causes oneself to deviate from the undifferentiated state of Suchness. Though all things are always in quiescence and devoid of any marks of rising, because of the nonenlightenment due to ignorance, one erroneously strays from the dharma [i.e., Suchness]; thus one fails to obtain the wisdom that functions spontaneously by adapting oneself to all circumstances in the world.

3. The Characteristics of Beings in Samsara

In analyzing the characteristics of beings in samsara, two categories may be distinguished. The one is "crude", for those who belong to this category are united with the crude activities of the defiled mind; the other is "subtle", for those who belong to this category are disunited from the subtle activities of the defiled mind. Again, each category may in turn be subdivided into the cruder and the subtler. The cruder of the crude belongs to the range of mental activity of ordinary men; the subtler of the crude and the cruder of the subtle belong to that of Bodhisattvas; and the subtler of the subtle belongs to that of Buddhas. These two categories of beings in the phenomenal order come about

because of the permeation of ignorance; that is to say, they come about because of the primary cause and the coordinating causes. By the primary cause, "nonenlightenment" is meant; and by the coordinating causes, "the erroneously represented world of objects". When the primary cause ceases to be, then the coordinating causes will cease to be. Because of the cessation of the primary cause, the mind disunited from the represented world of objects, etc. will cease to be; and because of the cessation of the coordinating causes, the mind united with the attachment to atman, etc. will cease to be. Question: If the mind ceases to be, what will become of its continuity? If there is continuity of mind, how can you explain its final cessation? Answer: What we speak of as "cessation" is the cessation of the marks of the deluded mind only and not the cessation of its essence. It is like the case of the wind which, following the surface of the water, leaves the marks of its movement. If the water should cease to be, then the marks of the wind would be nullified and the wind would have no support on which to display its movement. But since the water does not cease to be, the marks of the wind may continue. Because only the wind ceases, the marks of its movement cease accordingly. This is not the cessation of water. So it is with ignorance; on the ground of the essence of Mind there is movement. If the essence of Mind were to cease, then people would be nullified and they would have no support. But since the essence does not cease to be, the mind may continue. Because only stupidity ceases to be, the marks of the stupidity of the mind cease accordingly. It is not that the wisdom [i.e., the essence] of Mind ceases. Because of the four kinds of permeation, the defiled states and the pure state emerge and continue uninterrupted. They are (1) the pure state, which is called Suchness; (2) the cause of all defilements, which is called ignorance; (3) the deluded mind, which is called "activating mind"; (4) the erroneously conceived external world, which is called the "objects of the five senses and of mind". The meaning of permeation: Clothes in the world certainly have no scent in themselves, but if a man permeates them with perfumes, then they come to have a scent. It is just the same with the case we are speaking of. The pure state of Suchness certainly has no defilement, but if it is permeated by ignorance, then the marks of defilement appear on it. The defiled state of ignorance is indeed devoid of any purifying force, but if it is permeated by Suchness, then it will come to have a purifying influence.

a. Permeation of Ignorance

How does the permeation of ignorance give rise to the defiled state and continue uninterrupted? It may be said that, on the ground of Suchness [i.e., the original enlightenment], ignorance [i.e., nonenlightenment] appears. Ignorance, the primary cause of the defiled state, permeates into Suchness. Because of this permeation a deluded mind results. Because of the deluded mind, deluded thoughts further permeate into ignorance. While the principle of Suchness is yet to be realized, the deluded mind, developing thoughts fashioned in the state of nonenlightenment, predicates erroneously conceived objects of the

senses and the mind. These erroneously conceived objects of the senses and the mind, the coordinating causes in bringing about the defiled state, permeate into the deluded mind and cause the deluded mind to attach itself to its thoughts, to create various evil karma, and to undergo all kinds of physical and mental suffering. The permeation of the erroneously conceived objects of the senses and the mind is of two kinds. One is the basic permeation by the "activating mind", which causes Arhats, Pratyeka-buddhas, and all Bodhisattvas to undergo the suffering of samsara, and the other is the permeation which accelerates the activities of the "object-discriminating consciousness" and which makes ordinary men suffer from the bondage of their karma. The permeations of ignorance are of two kinds. One is the basic permeation, since it can put into operation the "activating mind", and the other is the permeation that develops perverse views and attachments, since it can put into operation the "object-discriminating consciousness".

b. Permeation of Suchness

How does the permeation of Suchness give rise to the pure state and continue uninterrupted? It may be said that there is the principle of Suchness, and it can permeate into ignorance. Through the force of this permeation, Suchness causes the deluded mind to loathe the suffering of samsara and to aspire for nirvana. Because this mind, though still deluded, is now possessed with loathing and aspiration, it permeates into Suchness in that it induces Suchness to manifest itself. Thus a man comes to believe in his essential nature, to know that what exists is the erroneous activity of the mind and that the world of objects in front of him is nonexistent, and to practice teachings to free himself from the erroneously conceived world of objects. He knows what is really so - that there is no world of objects in front of him - and therefore with various devices he practices courses by which to conform himself to Suchness. He will not attach himself to anything nor give rise to any deluded thoughts. Through the force of this permeation of Suchness over a long period of time, his ignorance ceases. Because of the cessation of ignorance, there will be no more rising of the deluded activities of mind. Because of the nonrising of the deluded activities of mind, the world of objects as previously conceived ceases to be; because of the cessation of both the primary cause (ignorance) and the coordinating causes (objects), the marks of the defiled mind will all be nullified. This is called "gaining nirvana and accomplishing spontaneous acts". The permeation of Suchness into the deluded mind is of two kinds. The first is the permeation into the "object-discriminating consciousness". Because of this permeation, ordinary men and the Hinayanists come to loathe the suffering of samsara, and thereupon each, according to his capacity, gradually advances toward the highest enlightenment. The second is the permeation into mind. Because of this permeation, Bodhisattvas advance to nirvana rapidly and with aspiration and fortitude. Two kinds of permeation of Suchness into ignorance can be identified. The first is the "permeation through manifestation of the essence of Suchness", and the second is "the permeation through external influences".

(1) Permeation through Manifestation of the Essence of Suchness

The essence of Suchness is, from the beginningless beginning, endowed with the "perfect state of purity". It is provided with suprarational functions and the nature of manifesting itself (literally, the nature of making the world of object). Because of these two reasons it permeates perpetually into ignorance. Through the force of this permeation it induces a man to loathe the suffering of samsara, to seek bliss in nirvana, and, believing that he has the principle of Suchness within himself, to make up his mind to exert himself. Question: If this is so, then all sentient beings are endowed with Suchness and are equally permeated by it. Why is it that there are infinite varieties of believers and nonbelievers, and that there are some who believe sooner and some later? All of them should, knowing that they are endowed with the principle of Suchness, at once make an effort utilizing expedient means and should all equally attain nirvana. Answer: Though Suchness is originally one, yet there are immeasurable and infinite shades of ignorance. From the very beginning ignorance is, because of its nature, characterized by diversity, and its degree of intensity is not uniform. Defilements, more numerous than the sands of the Ganges, come into being because of the differences in intensity of ignorance, and exist in manifold ways; defilements, such as the belief in the existence of atman and the indulgence in passion, develop because of ignorance and exist in different ways. All these defilements are brought about by ignorance, in an infinitely diversified manner in time. The Tathagatas alone know all about this. In Buddhism there is a teaching concerning the primary cause and the coordinating causes. When the primary cause and the coordinating causes are sufficiently provided, there will be the perfection of a result. It is like the case of wood: though it possesses a latent fire nature which is the primary cause of its burning, it cannot be made to burn by itself unless men understand the situation and resort to means of actualizing fire out of wood by kindling it. In the same way a man, though he is in possession of the correct primary cause, Suchness with permeating force, cannot put an end to his defilements by himself alone and enter nirvana unless he is provided with coordinating causes, i.e., his encounters with the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, or good spiritual friends. Even though coordinating causes from without may be sufficiently provided, if the pure principle [i.e., Suchness] within is lacking in the force of permeation, then a man cannot ultimately loathe the suffering of samsara and seek bliss in nirvana. However, if both the primary and the coordinating causes are sufficiently provided, then because of his possession of the force of permeation of Suchness from within and the compassionate protection of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas from without, he is able to develop a loathing for suffering, to believe that nirvana is real, and to cultivate his capacity for goodness. And when his cultivation of the capacity for goodness matures, he will as a result meet the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and will be instructed, taught, benefited, and given joy, and then he will be able to advance on the path to nirvana.

(2) Permeation through Influences

This is the force from without affecting men by providing coordinating causes. Such external coordinating causes have an infinite number of meanings. Briefly, they may be explained under two categories: namely, the specific and the general coordinating causes.

(a) The Specific Coordinating Causes

A man, from the time when he first aspires to seek enlightenment until he becomes an Enlightened One, sees or meditates on the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas as they manifest themselves to him; sometimes they appear as his family members, parents, or relatives, sometimes as servants, sometimes as close friends, or sometimes as enemies. Through all kinds of deeds and incalculable performances, such as the practice of the four acts of loving-kindness, etc., they exercise the force of permeation created by their great compassion, and are thus able to cause sentient beings to strengthen their capacity for goodness and are able to benefit them as they see or hear about their needs. This specific coordinating cause is of two kinds. One is immediate and enables a man to obtain deliverance quickly; and the other is remote and enables a man to obtain deliverance after a long time. The immediate and remote causes are again of two kinds: the causes which strengthen a man in his practices of expedient means to help others, and those which enable him to obtain enlightenment.

(b) The General Coordinating Causes

The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas all desire to liberate all men, spontaneously permeating them with their spiritual influences and never forsaking them. Through the power of the wisdom which is one with Suchness, they manifest activities in response to the needs of men as they see and hear them. Because of this indiscriminately permeating cause, men are all equally able, by means of concentration (samadhi), to see the Buddhas. This permeation through the influence of the wisdom whose essence is one with Suchness is also divided into two categories according to the types of recipients. The one is yet to be united with Suchness. Ordinary men, the Hinayanists, and those Bodhisattvas who have just been initiated devote themselves to religious practices on the strength of their faith, being permeated by Suchness through their mind and consciousness. Not having obtained the indiscriminate mind, however, they are yet to be united with the essence of Suchness, and not having obtained the perfection of the discipline of free acts, they are yet to be united with the influence of Suchness. The other is the already united with Suchness: Bodhisattvas who realize Dharmakaya have obtained undiscriminating mind and are united with the essence of the Buddhas; they, having obtained free acts, are united with the influence

of the wisdom of the Buddhas. They singly devote themselves with spontaneity to their religious disciplines, on the strength of Suchness within; permeating into Suchness so that Suchness will reclaim itself, they destroy ignorance. Again, the defiled principle (dharma), from the beginningless beginning, continues perpetually to permeate until it perishes by the attainment of Buddhahood. But the permeation of the pure principle has no interruption and no ending. The reason is that the principle of Suchness is always permeating; therefore, when the deluded mind ceases to be, the Dharmakaya [i.e., Suchness, original enlightenment] will be manifest and will give rise to the permeation of the influence of Suchness, and thus there will be no ending to it.

II. The Essence Itself and the Attributes of Suchness, or The Meanings of Maha

A. The Greatness of the Essence of Suchness

The essence of Suchness knows no increase or decrease in ordinary men, the Hinayanists, the Bodhisattvas, or the Buddhas. It was not brought into existence in the beginning nor will it cease to be at the end of time; it is eternal through and through.

B. The Greatness of the Attributes of Suchness

From the beginning, Suchness in its nature is fully provided with all excellent qualities; namely, it is endowed with the light of great wisdom, the qualities of illuminating the entire universe, of true cognition and mind pure in its self-nature; of eternity, bliss, Self, and purity; of refreshing coolness, immutability, and freedom. It is endowed with these excellent qualities which outnumber the sands of the Ganges, which are not independent of, disjointed from, or different from the essence of Suchness, and which are suprarational attributes of Buddhahood. Since it is endowed completely with all these, and is not lacking anything, it is called the Tathagata-garbha when latent and also the Dharmakaya of the Tathagata. Question: It was explained before that the essence of Suchness is undifferentiated and devoid of all characteristics. Why is it, then, that you have described its essence as having these various excellent qualities? Answer: Though it has, in reality, all these excellent qualities, it does not have any characteristics of differentiation; it retains its identity and is of one flavor; Suchness is solely one. Question: What does this mean? Answer: Since it is devoid of individuation, it is free from the characteristics of individuation; thus it is one without any second. Question: Then how can you speak of differentiation [i.e., the plurality of the characteristics of Suchness]? Answer: In contrast to the characteristics of the phenomena of the "activating mind" the characteristics of Suchness can be inferred. Question: How can they be inferred? Answer: All things are originally of the mind only; they in fact transcend thoughts. Nevertheless, the deluded mind, in nonenlightenment, gives rise to irrelevant thoughts and predicates the world of objects. This being the case, we define this mentality as "the

state of being destitute of wisdom (avidya: ignorance)". The essential nature of Mind is immutable in that it does not give rise to any deluded thoughts, and therefore, is the very opposite of ignorance; hence, it is spoken of as having the characteristic of "the light of great wisdom". When there is a particular perceiving act of the mind, objects other than the objects being perceived will remain unperceived. The essential nature of Mind is free from any partial perceiving; hence, Suchness is spoken of as having the characteristic of "illuminating the entire universe". When the mind is in motion [stirred by ignorance], it is characterized by illusions and defilements, outnumbering the sands of the Ganges, such as lack of true cognition, absence of self-nature, impermanence, blisslessness, impurity, fever, anxiety, deterioration, mutation, and lack of freedom. By contrast to this, the essential nature of Mind, however, is motionless [i.e., undisturbed by ignorance]; therefore, it can be inferred that it must have various pure and excellent qualities, outnumbering the sands of the Ganges. But if the mind gives rise to irrelevant thoughts and further predicates the world of objects, it will continue to lack these qualities. All these numberless excellent qualities of the pure principle are none other than those of One Mind, and there is nothing to be sought after anew by thought. Thus, that which is fully endowed with them is called the Dharmakaya when manifested and the Tathagata-garbha when latent.

C. The Greatness of the Influences of Suchness

The Buddha-Tathagatas, while in the stages of Bodhisattvahood, exercised great compassion, practiced paramitas, and accepted and transformed sentient beings. They took great vows, desiring to liberate all sentient beings through countless aeons until the end of future time, for they regarded all sentient beings as they regarded themselves. And yet, they never regarded them as separate sentient beings. Why? Because they truly knew that all sentient beings and they themselves were identical in Suchness and that there could be no distinction between them. Because they possessed such great wisdom which could be applied to expedient means in quest of enlightenment, they extinguished their ignorance and perceived the original Dharmakaya. Spontaneously performing incomprehensible activities, exercising manifold influences, they pervade everywhere in their identity with Suchness. Nevertheless, they reveal no marks of their influences that can be traced as such. Why? Because the Buddha-Tathagatas are no other than the Dharmakaya itself, and the embodiment of wisdom. They belong to the realm of the absolute truth, which transcends the world where the relative truth operates. They are free from any conventional activities. And yet, because of the fact that sentient beings receive benefit through seeing or hearing about them, their influences [i.e., of Suchness] can be spoken of in relative terms. The influences of Suchness are of two kinds. The first is that which is conceived by the mind of ordinary men and the followers of Hinayana [i.e., the influence of Suchness as reflected] in the "object-discriminating consciousness". This is called the influence of Suchness in the form of the

"Transformation-body" (Nirmanakaya). Because they do not know that it is projected by the "evolving mind", they regard it as coming from without; they assume that it has a corporeal limitation because their understanding is limited. The second is that which is conceived by the mind of the Bodhisattvas, from the first stage of aspiration to the highest stage, [i.e., the influence of Suchness as reflected] in the mentality which regards external objects as unreal. This is called the influence of Suchness in the form of the "Bliss-body" (Sambhogakaya). It has an infinite number of corporeal forms, each form has an infinite number of major marks, and each major mark has an infinite number of subtle marks. The land where it has its abode has innumerable adornments. It manifests itself without any bounds; its manifestations are inexhaustible and free from any limitations. It manifests itself in accordance with the needs of sentient beings; and yet it always remains firm without destroying or losing itself. These excellent qualities were perfected by the pure permeation acquired by the practice of paramitas and the suprarational permeation of Suchness. Since the influence is endowed with infinite attributes of bliss, it is spoken of as the "Bliss-body". What is seen by ordinary men is only the coarse corporeal forms of the manifestation of Suchness. Depending upon where one is in the six transmigratory states, his vision of it will differ. The visions of it conceived by the unenlightened beings are not in a form of Bliss; this is the reason why it is called the "Transformation-body" [i.e., the body appearing in the likeness of the conceiver]. The Bodhisattvas in their first stage of aspiration and the others, because of their deep faith in Suchness, have a partial insight into the nature of the influence of Suchness. They know that the things of the Bliss-body, such as its corporeal forms, major marks, adornments, etc., do not come from without or go away, that they are free from limitations, and that they are envisioned by mind alone and are not independent of Suchness. These Bodhisattvas, however, are not free from dualistic thinking, since they have yet to enter into the stage where they gain complete realization of the Dharmakaya. If they advance to the "stage of pure-heartedness", the forms they see will be subtler and the influences of Suchness will be more excellent than ever. When they leave the last stage of Bodhisattvahood, they will perfect their insight into Suchness. When they become free from the "activating mind" they will be free from the perceiving of duality. The Dharmakaya of the Buddhas knows no such thing as distinguishing this from that. Question: If the Dharmakaya of the Buddhas is free from the manifestation of corporeal form, how can it appear in corporeal form? Answer: Since the Dharmakaya is the essence of corporeal form, it is capable of appearing in corporeal form. The reason this is said is that from the beginning corporeal form and Mind have been nondual. Since the essential nature of corporeal form is identical with wisdom, the essence of corporeal form which has yet to be divided into tangible forms is called the "wisdom-body". Since the essential nature of wisdom is identical with corporeal form, the essence of corporeal form which has yet to be divided into tangible forms is called Dharmakaya pervading everywhere. Its manifested corporeal forms have no limitations. It can be freely manifested as an infinite

number of Bodhisattvas, Buddhas of Bliss-body, and adornments in the ten quarters of the universe. Each of them has neither limitation nor interference. All of these are incomprehensible to the dualistic thinking of the deluded mind and consciousness, for they result from the free influence of Suchness.

III. From Samsara to Nirvana

Lastly, how to enter into the realm of Suchness from the realm of samsara will be revealed. Examining the five components, we find that they may be reduced to matter (object) and mind (subject). The objects of the five senses and of the mind are in the final analysis beyond what they are thought to be. And the mind itself is devoid of any form or mark and is, therefore, unobtainable as such, no matter where one may seek it. Just as a man, because he has lost his way, mistakes the east for the west, though the actual directions have not changed place, so people, because of their ignorance, assume Mind (Suchness) to be what they think it to be, though Mind in fact is unaffected even if it is falsely predicated. If a man is able to observe and understand that Mind is beyond what it is thought to be, then he will be able to conform to and enter the realm of Suchness.

CHAPTER TWO The Correction of Evil Attachments

All evil attachments originate from biased views; if a man is free from bias, he will be free from evil attachments. There are two kinds of biased view: one is the biased view held by those who are not free from the belief in atman [i.e., ordinary men]; the other is the biased view held by those who believe that the components of the world are real [i.e., the Hinayanists].

I. The Biased Views Held by Ordinary Men

There are five kinds of biased views held by ordinary men which may be discussed. Hearing that it is explained in the sutra that the Dharmakaya of the Tathagata is, in the final analysis, quiescent, like empty space, ordinary men think that the nature of the Tathagata is, indeed, the same as empty space, for they do not know that the purpose of the sutra is to uproot their adherence. Question: How is this to be corrected? Answer: The way to correct this error is to understand clearly that "empty space" is a delusive concept, the substance of which is nonexistent and unreal. It is merely predicated in relation to its correlative corporeal objects. If it is taken as a being termed nonbeing, a negative being, then it should be discarded, because it causes the mind to remain in samsara. In fact there are no external corporeal objects, because all objects are originally of the mind. And as long as there are no corporeal objects at all, "empty space" cannot be maintained. All objects are of the mind alone; but when illusions arise, objects which are regarded as real appear. When the mind is free from its deluded activities, then all objects imagined as real vanish of themselves. What is real, the one and true Mind, pervades everywhere. This is the final meaning of the Tathagata's great and comprehensive wisdom. The Dharmakaya is, indeed, unlike "empty space". Hearing that it is explained in the sutra that all things in the world, in the final analysis, are empty in their substance, and that nirvana or the principle of Suchness is also absolutely empty from the beginning and devoid of any characteristics, they, not knowing that the purpose of the sutra is to uproot their adherence, think that the essential nature of Suchness or nirvana is simply empty. Question: How is this to be corrected? Answer: The way to correct this error is to make clear that Suchness or the Dharmakaya is not empty, but is endowed with numberless excellent qualities. Hearing that it is explained in the sutra that there is no increase or decrease in the Tathagata-garbha and that it is provided in its essence with all excellent qualities, they, not being able to understand this, think that in the Tathagata-garbha there is plurality of mind and matter. Question: How is this to be corrected? Answer: They should be instructed that the statement in the sutra that "there is no increase or decrease in the Tathagata-garbha" is made only in accordance with the absolute aspect of Suchness, and the statement that "it is provided with all excellent qualities" is made in accordance

with the pluralistic outlook held by the defiled minds in samsara. Hearing that it is explained in the sutra that all defiled states of samsara in the world exist on the ground of the Tathagata-garbha and that they are therefore not independent of Suchness, they, not understanding this, think that the Tathagata-garbha literally contains in itself all the defiled states of samsara in the world. Question: How is this to be corrected? Answer: In order to correct this error it should be understood that the Tathagata-garbha, from the beginning, contains only pure excellent qualities which, outnumbering the sands of the Ganges, are not independent of, severed from, or different from Suchness; that the soiled states of defilement which, outnumbering the sands of the Ganges, are not independent of, severed from, or different from Suchness; that the soiled states of defilement which, outnumbering the sands of the Ganges, merely exist in illusion; are, from the beginning, nonexistent; and from the beginningless beginning have never been united with the Tathagata-garbha. It has never happened that the Tathagata-garbha contained deluded states in its essence and that it induced itself to realize Suchness in order to extinguish forever its deluded states. Hearing that it is explained in the sutra that on the ground of the Tathagata-garbha there is samsara as well as the attainment of nirvana, they, without understanding this, think that there is a beginning for sentient beings. Since they suppose a beginning, they suppose also that the nirvana attained by the Tathagata has an end and that he will in turn become a sentient being. Question: How is this to be corrected? Answer: The way to correct this error is to explain that the Tathagata-garbha has no beginning, and that therefore ignorance has no beginning. If anyone asserts that sentient beings came into existence outside this triple world, he holds the view given in the scriptures of the heretics. Again, the Tathagata-garbha does not have an end; and the nirvana attained by the Buddhas, being one with it, likewise has no end.

II. The Biased Views Held by the Hinayanists

Because of their inferior capacity, the Tathagata preached to the Hinayanists only the doctrine of the nonexistence of atman and did not preach his doctrines in their entirety; as a result, the Hinayanists have come to believe that the five components, the constituents of samsaric existence, are real; being terrified at the thought of being subject to birth and death, they erroneously attach themselves to nirvana. Question: How is this to be corrected? Answer: The way to correct this error is to make clear that the five components are unborn in their essential nature and, therefore, are imperishable - that what is made of the five components is, from the beginning, in nirvana. Finally, in order to be completely free from erroneous attachments, one should know that both the defiled and the pure states are relative and have no particular marks of their own-being that can be discussed. Thus, all things from the beginning are neither matter nor mind, neither wisdom nor consciousness, neither being nor non-being; they are ultimately inexplicable. And yet they are still spoken of. It should be understood that the Tathagatas, applying their expedient means, make use of

conventional speech in a provisional manner in order to guide people, so that they can be free from their deluded thoughts and can return to Suchness; for if anyone thinks of anything as real and absolute in its own right, he causes his mind to be trapped in samsara and consequently he cannot enter the state filled with true insight [i.e., enlightenment].

CHAPTER THREE Analysis of the Types of Aspiration for Enlightenment, or The Meanings of Yana

All Bodhisattvas aspire to the enlightenment (bodhi; Chinese, tao) realized by all the Buddhas, disciplining themselves to this end, and advancing toward it. Briefly, three types of aspiration for enlightenment can be distinguished. The first is the aspiration for enlightenment through the perfection of faith. The second is the aspiration for enlightenment through understanding and through deeds. The third is the aspiration for enlightenment through insight.

I. The Aspiration for Enlightenment through the Perfection of Faith

Question: By whom and through what kind of discipline can faith be perfected so that the aspiration for enlightenment may be developed?

Answer: Among those who belong to the group of the undetermined, there are some who, by virtue of their excellent capacity for goodness developed through permeation, believe in the law of retribution of karma and observe the ten precepts. They loathe the suffering of samsara and wish to seek the supreme enlightenment. Having been able to meet the Buddhas, they serve them, honor them, and practice the faith. Their faith will be perfected after ten thousand aeons. Their aspiration for enlightenment will be developed either through the instruction of the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas, or because of their great compassion toward their suffering fellow beings, or from their desire to preserve the good teaching from extinction. Those who are thus able to develop their aspiration through the perfection of faith will enter the group of the determined and will never retrogress. They are called the ones who are united with the correct cause for enlightenment and who abide among those who belong to the Tathagata family. There are, however, people among those who belong to the group of the undetermined whose capacity for goodness is slight and whose defilements, having accumulated from the far distant past, are deep-rooted. Though they may also meet the Buddhas and honor them, they will develop the potentiality merely to be born as men, as dwellers in heaven, or as followers of the Hinayana. Even if they should seek after the Mahayana, they would sometimes progress and sometimes regress because of the inconsistent nature of their capacity. And also there are some who honor the Buddhas and who, before ten thousand aeons have passed, will develop an aspiration because of some favorable circumstances. These circumstances may be the viewing of the Buddhas' corporeal forms, the honoring of monks, the receiving of instructions from the followers of the Hinayana, or the imitation of others' aspiration. But these types of aspiration are all inconsistent, for if the men who hold them meet with unfavorable circumstances, they will relapse and fall back into the stage of attainment of the followers of the Hinayana. Now, in developing the aspiration for enlightenment through the perfection of faith, what kind of mind is to be cultivated? Briefly speaking, three kinds can be discussed. The first is the mind characterized by straightforwardness, for it correctly meditates on the principle of Suchness. The second is the mind of

profoundness, for there is no limit to its joyful accumulation of all kinds of goodness. The third is the mind filled with great compassion, for it wishes to uproot the sufferings of all sentient beings. Question: Earlier it has been explained that the World of Reality is one, and that the essence of the Buddhas has no duality. Why is it that people do not meditate of their own accord on Suchness alone, but must learn to practice good deeds? Answer: Just as a precious gem is bright and pure in its essence but is marred by impurities, so is a man. Even if he meditates on his precious nature, unless he polishes it in various ways by expedient means, he will never be able to purify it. The principle of Suchness in men is absolutely pure in its essential nature, but is filled with immeasurable impurity of defilements. Even if a man meditates on Suchness, unless he makes an effort to be permeated by it in various ways by applying expedient means, he certainly cannot become pure. Since the state of impurity is limitless, pervading throughout all states of being, it is necessary to counteract and purify it by means of the practice of all kinds of good deeds. If a man does so, he will naturally return to the principle of Suchness. As to the expedient means, there are, in short, four kinds: The first is the fundamental means to be practiced. That is to say, a man is to meditate on the fact that all things in their essential nature are unborn, divorcing himself from deluded views so that he does not abide in samsara. At the same time he is to meditate on the fact that all things are the products of the union of the primary and coordinating causes, and that the effect of karma will never be lost. Accordingly he is to cultivate great compassion, practice meritorious deeds, and accept and transform sentient beings equally without abiding in nirvana, for he is to conform himself to the functions of the essential nature of Reality (dharmata) which knows no fixation. The second is the means of stopping evils. The practice of developing a sense of shame and repentance can stop all evils and prevent them from growing, for one is to conform oneself to the faultlessness of the essential nature of Reality. The third is the means of increasing the capacity for goodness that has already been developed. That is to say, a man should diligently honor and pay homage to the Three treasures, and should praise, rejoice in, and beseech the Buddhas. Because of the sincerity of his love and respect for the Three Treasures, his faith will be strengthened and he will be able to seek the unsurpassed enlightenment. Furthermore, being protected by the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, he will be able to wipe out the hindrances of evil karma. His capacity for goodness will not retrogress because he will be conforming himself to the essential nature of Reality, which is free from hindrances produced by stupidity. The fourth is the means of the great vow of universal salvation. This is to take a vow that one will liberate all sentient beings, down to the last one, no matter how long it may take to cause them to attain the perfect nirvana, for one will be conforming oneself to the essential nature of Reality which is characterized by the absence of discontinuity. The essential nature of Reality is all-embracing, and pervades all sentient beings; it is everywhere the same and one without duality; it does not distinguish this from that, because it is, in the final analysis, in the state of quiescence. When a Bodhisattva develops this aspiration for

enlightenment through faith, he will be able, to a certain extent, to realize the Dharmakaya. Because of this realization of the Dharmakaya, and because he is led by the force of the vow that he made to liberate all sentient beings, he is able to present eight types of manifestation of himself for the benefit of all sentient beings. These are: the descent from the Tushita heaven; the entrance into a human womb; the stay in the womb; the birth; the renunciation; the attainment of enlightenment; the turning of the wheel of the Dharma (doctrine); and the entrance into nirvana. However, such a Bodhisattva cannot be said to have perfectly realized the Dharmakaya, for he has not yet completely destroyed the outflowing evil karma which has been accumulated from his numberless existences in the past. He must suffer some slight misery deriving from the state of his birth. However, this is due not to his being fettered by karma, but to his freely made decision to carry out the great vow of universal salvation in order to understand the suffering of others. It is said in a sutra that there are some Bodhisattvas of this kind who may regress and fall into evil states of existence, but this does not refer to a real regression. It says this merely in order to frighten and stir the heroism of the newly initiated Bodhisattvas who have not yet joined the group of the determined, and who may be indolent. Furthermore, as soon as this aspiration has been aroused in the Bodhisattvas, they leave cowardice far behind them and are not afraid even of falling into the stage of the followers of the Hinayana. Even though they hear that they must suffer extreme hardship for innumerable aeons before they may attain nirvana, they do not feel any fear, for they believe and know that from the beginning all things are of themselves in nirvana.

II. The Aspiration for Enlightenment through Understanding and Deeds

It should be understood that this type of aspiration is even more excellent than the former. Because the Bodhisattvas who cherish this aspiration are those who are about to finish the first term of the incalculable aeons since the time when they first had the correct faith, they have come to have a profound understanding of the principle of Suchness and to entertain no attachment to their attainments obtained through discipline. Knowing that the essential nature of Reality is free from covetousness, they, in conformity to it, devote themselves to the perfection of charity. Knowing that the essential nature of Reality is free from the defilements which originate from the desires of the five senses, they, in conformity to it, devote themselves to the perfection of precepts. Knowing that the essential nature of Reality is without suffering and free from anger and anxiety, they, in conformity to it, devote themselves to the perfection of forbearance. Knowing that the essential nature of Reality does not have any distinction of body and mind and is free from indolence, they, in conformity to it, devote themselves to the perfection of zeal. Knowing that the essential nature of Reality is always calm and free from confusion in its essence, they, in conformity to it, devote themselves to the perfection of meditation. Knowing that the essential nature of Reality is always characterized by gnosis and is free from ignorance, they, in conformity to it, devote

themselves to the perfection of wisdom.

III. The Aspiration for Enlightenment through Insight

As for the Bodhisattvas of this group, who range from the "stage of pure-heartedness" to the "last stage of Bodhisattvahood", what object do they realize? They realize Suchness. We speak of it as an object because of the "evolving mind", but in fact there is no object in this realization that can be stated in terms of a subject-object relationship. There is only the insight into Suchness transcending both the seer and the seen; we call this the experience of the Dharmakaya. The Bodhisattvas of this group can, in an instant of thought, go to all worlds of the universe, honor the Buddhas, and ask them to turn the wheel of the Dharma. In order to guide and benefit all men, they do not rely on words. Sometimes, for the sake of weak-willed men, they show how to attain perfect enlightenment quickly by skipping over the stages of the Bodhisattva. And sometimes, for the sake of indolent men, they say that men may attain enlightenment at the end of numberless aeons. Thus they can demonstrate innumerable expedient means and suprarational feats. But in reality all these Bodhisattvas are the same in that they are alike in their lineage, their capacity, their aspiration, and their realization of Suchness; therefore, there is no such thing as skipping over the stages, for all Bodhisattvas must pass through the three terms of innumerable aeons before they can fully attain enlightenment. However, because of the differences in the various beings, there are also different ways of teaching them what to practice. The characteristics of the aspiration for enlightenment entertained by a Bodhisattva belonging to this group can be identified in terms of the three subtle modes of mind. The first is the true mind, for it is free from false intellectual discrimination. The second is the mind capable of applying expedient means, for it pervades everywhere spontaneously and benefits sentient beings. The third is the mind subject to the influence of karma operating in subconsciousness, for it appears and disappears in the most subtle ways. Again, a Bodhisattva of this group, when he brings his excellent qualities to perfection, manifests himself in the heaven of Akanishta (the highest heaven in the world of form according to the cosmology of Indian Buddhism) as the highest physical being in the world. Through wisdom united with original enlightenment of Suchness in an instant of thought, he suddenly extinguishes ignorance. Then he is called the one who has obtained all-embracing knowledge. Performing suprarational acts spontaneously, he can manifest himself everywhere in the universe and benefit all sentient beings. Question: Since space is infinite, worlds are infinite. Since worlds are infinite, beings are infinite. Since beings are infinite, the variety of their mentalities must also be infinite. The objects of the senses and the mind must therefore be limitless, and it is difficult to know and understand them all. If ignorance is destroyed, there will be no thoughts in the mind. How then can a comprehension that has no content be called "all-embracing knowledge"? Answer: All objects are originally of One Mind and are beyond thought determination. Because unenlightened people perceive objects in their illusion, they impose

limitations in their mind. Since they erroneously develop these thought determinations, which do not correspond to Reality (dharmata), they are unable to reach any inclusive comprehension. The Buddha-Tathagatas are free from all perverse views and thoughts that block correct vision; therefore, there are no corners into which their comprehension does not penetrate. Their Mind is true and real; therefore, it is no other than the essential nature of all things. The Buddhas, because of their very nature, can shed light on all objects conceived in illusion. They are endowed with an influence of great wisdom that functions as the application of innumerable expedient means. Accommodating themselves to the capacity of understanding of various sentient beings, they can reveal to them the manifold meanings of the doctrine. This is the reason they may be called those who have "all-embracing knowledge". Question: If the Buddhas are able to perform spontaneous acts, to manifest themselves everywhere, and to benefit all sentient beings, then the sentient beings should all be able, by seeing their physical forms, by witnessing their miracles, or by hearing their preachings, to gain benefit. Why is it then that most people in this world have not been able to see the Buddhas? Answer: The Dharmakaya of all the Buddhas, being one and the same everywhere, is omnipresent. Since the Buddhas are free from any fixation of thought, their acts are said to be "spontaneous". They reveal themselves in accordance with the mentalities of all the various sentient beings. The mind of the sentient being is like a mirror. Just as a mirror cannot reflect images if it is coated with dirt, so the Dharmakaya cannot appear in the mind of the sentient being if it is coated with the dirt of defilements.

PART 4 *On Faith and Practice*

Having already discussed interpretation, we will now present a discussion of faith and practice. This discussion is intended for those who have not yet joined the group of beings who are determined to attain enlightenment.

On Four Faiths

Question: What kind of faith should a man have and how should he practice it? Answer: Briefly, there are four kinds of faith. The first is the faith in the Ultimate Source. Because of this faith a man comes to meditate with joy on the principle of Suchness. The second is the faith in the numberless excellent qualities of the Buddhas. Because of this faith a man comes to meditate on them always, to draw near to them in fellowship, to honor them, and to respect them, developing his capacity for goodness and seeking after the all-embracing knowledge. The third is the faith in the great benefits of the Dharma (Teaching). Because of this faith a man comes constantly to remember and practice various disciplines leading to enlightenment. The fourth is the faith in the Sangha (Buddhist Community) whose members are able to devote themselves to the practice of benefiting both themselves and others. Because of this faith a man comes to approach constantly and with joy the assembly of Bodhisattvas and to seek instruction from them in the correct practice.

On Five Practices

There are five ways of practice which will enable a man to perfect his faith. They are the practices of charity, observance of precepts, patience, zeal, and cessation of illusions and clear observation. Question: How should a man practice charity? Answer: If he sees anyone coming to him begging, he should give him the wealth and other things in his possession in so far as he is able; thus, while freeing himself from greed and avarice, he causes the beggar to be joyful. Or, if he sees one who is in hardship, in fear, or in grave danger, he should, according to his ability and understanding, explain it by the use of expedient means. In doing so, however, he should not expect any fame, material gain, or respect, but he should think only of benefiting himself and others alike and of extending the merit that he gains from the practice of charity toward the attainment of enlightenment. Question: How should he practice the observance of precepts? Answer: He is not to kill, to steal, to commit adultery, to be double-tongued, to slander, to lie, or to utter exaggerated speech. He is to free himself from greed, jealousy, cheating, deceit, flattery, crookedness, anger, hatred, and perverse views. If he happens to be a monk or nun who has renounced family life, he should also, in order to cut off and

suppress defilements, keep himself away from the hustle and bustle of the world and, always residing in solitude, should learn to be content with the least desire and should practice vigorous ascetic disciplines. He should be frightened and filled with awe by any slight fault and should feel shame and repent. He should not take lightly any of the Tathagata's precepts. He should guard himself from slander and from showing dislike so as not to rouse people in their delusion to commit any offense or sin. Question: How should he practice patience? Answer: He should be patient with the vexatious acts of others and should not harbor thoughts of vengeance, and he should also be patient in matters of gain or loss, honor or dishonor, praise or blame, suffering or joy, etc. Question: How should he practice zeal? Answer: He should not be sluggish in doing good, he should be firm in his resolution, and he should purge himself of cowardice. He should remember that from the far distant past he has been tormented in vain by all of the great sufferings of body and mind. Because of this he should diligently practice various meritorious acts, benefiting himself and others, and liberate himself quickly from suffering. Even if a man practices faith, because he is greatly hindered by the evil karma derived from the grave sins of previous lives, he may be troubled by the evil Tempter (Mara) and his demons, or entangled in all sorts of worldly affairs, or afflicted by the suffering of disease. There are a great many hindrances of this kind. He should, therefore, be courageous and zealous, and at the six four-hour intervals of the day and night should pay homage to the Buddhas, repent with sincere heart, beseech the Buddhas for their guidance, rejoice in the happiness of others, and direct all the merits thus acquired to the attainment of enlightenment. If he never abandons these practices, he will be able to avoid the various hindrances as his capacity for goodness increases. Question: How should he practice cessation and clear observation? Answer: What is called "cessation" means to put a stop to all characteristics (lakshana) of the world of sense objects and of the mind, because it means to follow the samatha (tranquility) method of meditation. What is called "clear observation" means to perceive distinctly the characteristics of the causally conditioned phenomena (samsara), because it means to follow the vipasyana (discerning) method of meditation. Question: How should he follow these? Answer: He should step by step practice these two aspects and not separate one from the other, for only then will both be perfected.

The Practice of Cessation

Should there be a man who desires to practice "cessation", he should stay in a quiet place and sit erect in an even temper. His attention should be focused neither on breathing nor on any form or color, nor on empty space, earth, water, fire, wind, nor even on what has been seen, heard, remembered, or conceived. All thoughts, as soon as they are conjured up, are to be discarded, and even the thought of discarding them is to be put away, for all things are essentially in the state of transcending thoughts, and are not to be created from moment to moment nor to be extinguished from moment to moment; thus one is to conform to the essential nature of Reality (dharmata) through this practice of cessation. And it is not that he should first meditate on the objects of the senses in the external world and then negate them with his mind, the mind that has meditated on them. If the mind wanders away, it should be brought back and fixed in "correct thought". It should be understood that this "correct thought" is the thought that whatever is, is mind only and that there is no external world of objects as conceived; even this mind is devoid of any marks of its own which would indicate its substantiality and therefore is not substantially conceivable as such at any moment. Even if he arises from his sitting position and engages in other activities, such as going, coming, advancing, or standing still, he should at all times be mindful of the application of expedient means of perfecting "cessation", conform to the immobile principle of the essential nature of Reality, and observe and examine the resulting experiences. When this discipline is well-mastered after a long period of practice, the ideations of his mind will be arrested. Because of this, his power of executing "cessation" will gradually be intensified and become highly effective, so that he will conform himself to, and be able to be absorbed into, the "concentration (samadhi) of Suchness". Then his defilements, deep though they may be, will be suppressed and his faith strengthened; he will quickly attain the state in which there will be no retrogression. But those who are skeptical, who lack faith, who speak ill of the teaching of the Buddha, who have committed grave sins, who are hindered by their evil karma, or who are arrogant or indolent are to be excluded; these people are incapable of being absorbed into the samadhi of Suchness. Next, as a result of this samadhi, a man realizes the oneness of the World of Reality (dharmadhatu), i.e., the sameness everywhere and nonduality of the Dharmakaya of all the Buddhas and the bodies of sentient beings. This is called "the samadhi of one movement". It should be understood that the samadhi of Suchness is the foundation of all other samadhi. If a man keeps practicing it, then he will gradually be able to develop countless other kinds of samadhi. If there is a man who lacks the capacity for goodness, he will be confused by the evil

Tempter, by heretics and by demons. Sometimes these beings will appear in dreadful forms while he is sitting in meditation, and at other times they will manifest themselves in the shapes of handsome men and women. In such a case he should meditate on the principle of "Mind only", and then these objects will vanish and will not trouble him any longer. Sometimes they may appear as the images of heavenly beings or Bodhisattvas, and assume also the figure of the Tathagata, furnished with all the major and minor marks; or they may expound the spells or preach charity, the precepts, patience, zeal, meditation, and wisdom; or they may discourse on how the true nirvana is the state of universal emptiness, of the nonexistence of characteristics, vows, hatreds, affections, causes, and effects; and of absolute nothingness. They may also teach him the knowledge of his own past and future states of existence, the method of reading other men's minds, and perfect mastery of speech, causing him to be covetous and attached to worldly fame and profit; or they may cause him to be frequently moved to joy and anger and thus to have unsteadiness of character, being at times very kind-hearted, very drowsy, very ill, or lazy-minded; or at other times becoming suddenly zealous, and then afterward lapsing into negligence; or developing a lack of faith, a great deal of doubt, and a great deal of anxiety; or abandoning his fundamental excellent practices toward religious perfection and devoting himself to miscellaneous religious acts, or being attached to worldly affairs which involve him in many ways; or sometimes they may cause him to experience a certain semblance of various kinds of samadhi, which are all the attainments of heretics and are not the true samadhi; or sometimes they may cause him to remain in samadhi for one, two, three, or up to seven days, feeling comfort in his body and joy in his mind, being neither hungry nor thirsty, partaking of natural, fragrant, and delicious drinks and foods, which induce him to increase his attachment to them; or at other times they may cause him to eat without any restraint, now a great deal, now only a little, so that the color of his face changes accordingly. For these reasons, he who practices "cessation" should be discreet and observant, lest his mind fall into the net of evil doctrine. He should be diligent in abiding in "correct thought", neither grasping nor attaching himself to anything; if he does so, he will be able to keep himself far away from the hindrance of these evil influences. He should know that the samadhi of the heretics is not free from perverse views, craving, and arrogance, for the heretics are covetously attached to fame, profit, and the respect of the world. The samadhi of Suchness is the samadhi in which one is not arrested by the activity of viewing a subject nor by the experiencing of objects in the midst of meditation; even after concentration one will be neither indolent nor arrogant and one's defilements will gradually decrease. There has never been a case in which an ordinary man,

without having practiced this samadhi, was still able to join the group that is entitled to become Tathagatas. Those who practice the various types of dhyana (meditation) and samadhi which are popular in the world will develop much attachment to their flavors and will be bound to the triple world because of their perverse view that atman is real. They are therefore the same as heretics, for as they depart from the protection of their good spiritual friends, they turn to heretical views. Next, he who practices this samadhi diligently and whole-heartedly will gain ten kinds of advantages in this life. First, he will always be protected by the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas of the ten directions. Second, he will not be frightened by the Tempter and his evil demons. Third, he will not be deluded or confused by the ninety-five kinds of heretics and wicked spirits. Fourth, he will keep himself far away from slanderers of the profound teaching of the Buddha, and will gradually diminish the hindrances derived from grave sins. Fifth, he will destroy all doubts and wrong views on enlightenment. Sixth, his faith in the Realm of the Tathagata will grow. Seventh, he will be free from sorrow and remorse and in the midst of samsara will be full of vigor and undaunted. Eighth, having a gentle heart and forsaking arrogance, he will not be vexed by others. Ninth, even if he has not yet experienced samadhi, he will be able to decrease his defilements in all places and at all times, and he will not take pleasure in the world. Tenth, if he experiences samadhi, he will not be startled by any sound from without. Now, if he practices "cessation" only, then his mind will be sunk in self-complacency and he will be slothful; he will not delight in performing good acts but will keep himself far away from the exercise of great compassion. It is, therefore, necessary to practice "clear observation" as well.

The Practice of Clear Observation

He who practices "clear observation" should observe that all conditioned phenomena in the world are unstationary and are subject to instantaneous transformation and destruction; that all activities of the mind arise and are extinguished from moment to moment; and that, therefore, all of these induce suffering. He should observe that all that had been conceived in the past was as hazy as a dream, that all that is being conceived in the present is like a flash of lightning, and that all that will be conceived in the future will be like clouds that rise up suddenly. He should also observe that the physical existences of all living beings in the world are impure and that among these various filthy things there is not a single one that can be sought after with joy. He should reflect in the following way: all living beings, from the beginningless beginning, because they are permeated by ignorance, have allowed their mind to remain in samsara; they have already suffered all the great miseries of the body and mind, they are at present under incalculable pressure and constraint, and their sufferings in the future will likewise be limitless. These sufferings are difficult to forsake, difficult to shake off, and yet these beings are unaware that they are in such a state; for this, they are greatly to be pitied. After reflecting in this way, he should pluck up his courage and make a great vow to this effect: may my mind be free from discriminations so that I may practice all of the various meritorious acts everywhere in the ten directions; may I, to the end of the future, by applying limitless expedient means, help all suffering sentient beings so that they may obtain the bliss of nirvana, the ultimate goal. Having made such a vow, he must, in accordance with his capacity and without faltering, practice every kind of good at all times and all places and not be slothful in his mind. Except when he sits in concentration in the practice of "cessation", he should at all times reflect upon what should be done and what should not be done. Whether walking, standing, sitting, lying, or rising, he should practice both "cessation" and "clear observation" side by side. That is to say, he is to meditate upon the fact that things are unborn in their essential nature; but at the same time he is to meditate upon the fact that good and evil karma, produced by the combination of the primary cause and the coordinating causes, and the retributions of karma in terms of pleasure, pain, etc., are neither lost nor destroyed. Though he is to meditate on the retribution of good and evil karma produced by the primary and coordinating causes [i.e., he is to practice "clear observation"], he is also to meditate on the fact that the essential nature of things is unobtainable by intellectual analysis. The practice of "cessation" will enable ordinary men to cure themselves of their attachments to the world, and will enable the followers of the Hinayana to forsake their views, which derive from cowardice. The practice of "clear observation" will cure the followers of the Hinayana of the fault of having narrow and

inferior minds which bring forth no great compassion, and will free ordinary men from their failure to cultivate the capacity for goodness. For these reasons, both "cessation" and "clear observation" are complementary and inseparable. If the two are not practiced together, then one cannot enter the path to enlightenment. Next, suppose there is a man who learns this teaching for the first time and wishes to seek the correct faith but lacks courage and strength. Because he lives in this world of suffering, he fears that he will not always be able to meet the Buddhas and honor them personally, and that, faith being difficult to perfect, he will be inclined to fall back. He should know that the Tathagatas have an excellent expedient means by which they can protect his faith: that is, through the strength of wholehearted meditation on the Buddha, he will in fulfillment of his wishes be able to be born in the Buddha-land beyond, to see the Buddha always, and to be forever separated from the evil states of existence. It is as the sutra says: "If a man meditates wholly on Amitabha Buddha in the world of the Western Paradise and wishes to be born in that world, directing all the goodness he has cultivated toward that goal, then he will be born there." Because he will see the Buddha at all times, he will never fall back. If he meditates on the Dharmakaya, the Suchness of the Buddha, and with diligence keeps practicing the meditation, he will be able to be born there in the end because he abides in the correct samadhi.

As has already been explained in the preceding sections, the Mahayana is the secret treasury of the Buddhas. Should there be a man who wishes to obtain correct faith in the profound Realm of the Tathagata and to enter the path of Mahayana, putting far away from himself any slandering of the teaching of Buddha, he should lay hold of this treatise, deliberate on it, and practice it; in the end he will be able to reach the unsurpassed enlightenment. If a man, after having heard this teaching, does not feel any fear or weakness, it should be known that such a man is certain to carry on the lineage of the Buddha and to receive the prediction of the Buddha that he will obtain enlightenment. Even if a man were able to reform all living beings throughout all the systems in the universe and to induce them to practice the ten precepts, he still would not be superior to a man who reflects correctly upon this teaching even for the time spent on a single meal, for the excellent qualities which the latter is able to obtain are unspeakably superior to those which the former may obtain. If a man takes hold of this treatise and reflects on and practices the teachings given in it only for one day and one night, the excellent qualities he will gain will be boundless and indescribable. Even if all the Buddhas of the ten directions were to praise these excellent qualities for incalculably long periods of time, they could never reach the end of their praise, for the excellent qualities of the Reality (dharmata) are infinite and the excellent qualities gained by this man will accordingly be boundless. If, however, there is a man who slanders and does not believe in this treatise, for an incalculable number of aeons he will undergo immense suffering for his fault. Therefore all people should reverently believe in it and not slander it, for slander and lack of faith will gravely injure oneself as well as others and will lead to the destruction of the lineage of the Three Treasures. Through this teaching all Tathagatas have gained nirvana, and through the practice of it all Bodhisattvas have obtained Buddha-wisdom. It should be known that it was by means of this teaching that the Bodhisattvas in the past were able to perfect their pure faith; that it is by means of this teaching that the Bodhisattvas of the present are perfecting their pure faith; and that it is by means of this teaching that the Bodhisattvas of the future will perfect their pure faith. Therefore men should diligently study and practice it.

Profound and comprehensive are the great principles of the Buddha, Which I have now summarized as faithfully as possible. May whatever excellent qualities I have gained from this endeavor In accordance with Reality be extended for the benefit of all beings.

