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[Chengguan, and Guo Cheen. 2014. Translating Totality in
Parts: Chengguan's Commentaries and Subcommentaries to
the Avatamsaka Sutra. Lanham: University Press of America.](#)

The Annotated Translation

Preface to *The Meanings Proclaimed in the Subcommentaries Accompanying the Commentaries to the Flower Ornament Sūtra with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas*

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The teachings dispensed by the supreme Sage, like a mirror, reflect the most mystical and ultimate in the singular mind. Great monastics vastly reveal the subtleties of these words like a candle that lights up depths in the distance. Though thoughts and sentiments may be forgotten in the realm of meanings interpreted, they are extensive like an ocean of literary significance.

If through the etchings of the hexagram explanations and copulatives you wish to know inexhaustible intent exhaustively, then you cannot possibly know the principles in this *Sūtra* though you claim otherwise. Xianshou grasped rather well the mystical intricacies contained in the Jin Dynasty edition of the translation, but intellectuals of latter generations were not able to peer into the profundity embodied in the enchanting composition of the Tang Dynasty translation. Without an assessment of how superficial I am, Chengguan willfully expounded on these fine esoteric points which by happenstance brimmed over the nine continents and soared above the four seas. More than a hundred lecturers inundated me with words about the profound meaning of this great teaching and how commentaries access far-reaching doctrines. [They claim that they are unworthy of] personally receiving my profound instructions and seemingly draw closer to this study. They hope models lasting millennia will be dispensed out of concern that advanced individuals will become enlightened rather than confused. They hope that I will dissect again the principles so that all may behold their light and comply with their proper sentiments.

I publish these classifications and principles, naming them *The Meanings Proclaimed in the Subcommentaries Accompanying the Commentaries*. People

of the past have said, ‘Things are easy when people are around; things are difficult when people are gone.’ As if face to face, I offer you explanations now in the hopes that they reach you throughout different lands and times. Where passages are too complex, you may grow weary, too simplistic and you may be blind to their source; hence, considering talents are difficult to encounter, I regret that I am incapable of compromise. With future students in mind, I avoid tangents in this discourse too.

A Compilation of the Commentaries and Subcommentaries to the Flower Ornament Sūtra with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas² Fascicle I

Going and returning without bounds,
the source of movement and stillness is but one.
The extraneous exists, for it contains a multitude of wonders;
the outstanding soars, for it transcends words and thoughts—
it can only be the Dharma Realm.

An explanation of these Commentaries is divided roughly into four parts: 1. A general description of terms and ideas. 2. The section from “taking refuge” and on is about reverently taking refuge and requesting aid. 3. The section from “an explanation” and on instructs on the chapters and explains the text. 4. One verse in the conclusion of the Commentaries serves as a praise and a dedication. These four sections exist for the processing of the *Sūtra* text. Their order, based on a mainstream analysis, is that the first two sections together are the preface, the opening paragraphs are the text proper, and the praise is about circulating this text; these would be the Commentaries in three sections.

1. A general description of the terms and ideas. This is the preface to the Commentaries, also called the branchings³ of the teachings: 1.1. Four basic divisions. 1.2. Ten detailed categories.

1.1 Four basic divisions:

1.1.1 Most prefaces treat the Dharma Realm as a major Buddhadharmas School.

1.1.2. From “it splices” and on describes this *Sūtra* separately, elaborating on its purpose and destination.

1.1.3. Therefore from “Bodhisattvas searching for secrets” and on is about the utmost fortune in having encountered this *Sūtra*, which encourages beings to make their resolve.

1.1.4. From the title “Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses” and on, the name and the topic are briefly explained so that we know the essentials. These are the four divisions as we too process the *Sūtra*.

1.2. Ten detailed categories. 1.2.1. Labels used for the School’s entity. 1.2.2. The section from “it splices” and on separately praises that which can interpret. 1.2.3. From “so when our” and on is about the inconceivable teaching

host. 1.2.4. From “pellucid [sea of] wisdom” and on is an explanation of the rites that pervade universally. 1.2.5. From “though emptiness is emptied” and on talks about the fundamentals and the superficialities. 1.2.6. From “this is the purport” and on is about the esoteric and subtle purposes and directions. 1.2.7. From “just as Bodhisattva” and on is about the realization of benefits and sudden transcendence. 1.2.8. From “truly it can be” and on is about the conclusion that praises what is vast and far-reaching. 1.2.9. From “concerned only” and on is about gratitude for and celebration of the encounter. 1.2.10. From “the title” and on is a brief explanation of the terms and the topic.

1.2.1. Labels used for the School’s entity. “Going and returning without bounds” to “*it* can only be the Dharma Realm” contains five lines of text but means many different things. There are roughly four aspects to them: 1.2.1.1. Three major explanations. 1.2.1.2. An explanation of the fundamentals and the superficialities. 1.2.1.3. A clarification of the categories of the Dharma Realm. 1.2.1.4. A general establishment of the significance.

1.2.1.1. Three major explanations about them clarify that the Dharma Realm is replete with the three elements: The first line clarifies the function, the second line clarifies the essence, the next line clarifies the form,⁴ the following line integrates and eliminates while the last line concludes. “Going and returning without bounds” is the element of function: “Going” means exiting, rising and moving. “Returning” means coming, extinguishing, and stilling. “Without bounds” is about two things: A. How it is so vast and numerous that it is boundless; this has to do with the functions of phenomena. B. How it is apart from borders based on phenomena being the same as reality. “Going and returning” roughly means three things: 1.2.1.1.1. An explanation regarding both confusion and awakening. 1.2.1.1.2. An explanation addressing falseness only. 1.2.1.1.3. An explanation of returning to the fundamentals and back to the origin.

1.2.1.1.1. An explanation regarding both confusion and awakening. So it is said, confusion in the Dharma Realm leads one toward the six destinies—to exit is to move. Awakening to the Dharma Realm and returning to the singular mind—to arrive is to be still. All these are functions of the Dharma Realm. Falseness comes into being when there is confusion, but falseness extinguishes when there is awakening.

There are two ideas regarding that which is true:

1.2.1.1.1.1. Regarding accordance with conditions: In confusion, that which is true accords with falseness; the true ceases to be and falseness comes into being. In awakening, falseness extinguishes and returns to the true, hence the true comes into being and falseness ceases to be.

1.2.1.1.1.2. Regarding permanence: The coming and going of confusion and awakening and coming into being and ceasing to be are but a flurry. The true realm is clear like space and its essence is free of production and extinction. This facet of the meaning exists in the matter below.

“Without bounds”: Confusion has existed since time immemorial and is without bounds since the beginning; awakening is apart from beginning and end, which means a boundless future.

1.2.1.1.1.2. An explanation addressing falseness only. There are two ideas furthermore:

1.2.1.1.1.2.1. As far as the linear alignment⁵ of the past and the future, there was no beginning in the past, there will be no end to the future, and there are no bounds for that which is before and after.

1.2.1.1.1.2.2. Regarding an expansive explanation, false thoughts exploit conditions widely and boundlessly.

The above two points are about vastness and boundlessness. If this were about borders being eliminated, then falseness has no false source and vertically there would be no bounds to its start. Since it has no beginning, how can it reach an end? Therefore bounds in the future are eliminated. *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* says, “The Great Sage said that the fundamental borders cannot be reached, just as the cycle of birth and death has no beginning, it also has no end. If there were no beginning or end, what middle would there be?”⁶ So with regard to this middle, there is neither before nor after. Search the expanses for false thoughts and they are neither inside nor outside, hence boundless too. For this reason, Lord Yuan⁷ said, “Where did this originate given there are no bounds to rising or ceasing? One hair affects the state of movements and ruins the conditions of mountains. The marks of confusion further inherit and carry each other so stagnation naturally occurs when they are in contact with noumenon. Although causes and conditions have no host, pioneering work does not occur in one lifetime.” This is what it means.

1.2.1.1.1.3. An explanation of returning to the fundamentals and back to the origin. With regard to the initial idea, it is but a generalization. The second is about falseness in that it is only about going and not about coming. Now this is only about returning, returning to the fundamental source of origin, which is what is meant by stillness. Therefore in the Zhou edition of *The Book of Changes*, the hexagram “Return” says, “To return is to see the mind of heaven and earth.”⁸ And whereas there is going, there must be returning. The hexagram “peace” in *The Book of Changes* says, “Whereas there is no going and no returning, that is the ends of heaven and earth.”⁹ Naturally there is going and returning with this idea, therefore in *Mañjuśrī Speaks of the Sūtra of Inconceivable States of Buddhas*, Wholesome Victory Son of Heaven asked Mañjuśrī, “What does it mean by cultivating the Bodhisattva path?”

Mañjuśrī first spoke about dual-practices. Next he said, “Moreover, Son of Heaven, going and returning are about cultivating the Bodhisattva path. What does it mean by the terms ‘going’ and ‘returning’?”¹⁰

To observe the pleasures of all beings is called going; to speak the Dharma in response is called returning. To enter *samādhi*¹¹ personally is called going; to cause all beings to attain *samādhi* is called returning. To practice the holy path personally is called going; to be able to teach

all ordinary beings is called returning. To attain patience with Non-Production personally is called going; to cause all beings to attain this patience is called returning. To transcend the cycle of birth and death on the basis of skillful means personally is called going; to cause all beings to transcend is called returning. To cultivate the liberation of emptiness without forms or vows is called going; to cause living beings to end the three types of mindfulness and to speak the Dharma is called returning. To make firm vows is called going; to accord with those vows and save living beings is called returning. To bring forth the resolve for Bodhi and be willing to sit in the place of practice¹² is called going; to be replete with the cultivation of conduct that Bodhisattvas practice is called returning. These are called the ways of Bodhisattvas' going and returning.¹³

My explanation: The first line in each of the above ten pairs consists of self-benefits related to “going”, going to nirvāṇa that is; and the next line is about benefiting others, which is “returning”, returning to the cycle of birth and death to transform living beings. Although there is going and returning, overall it is about going back to the fundamentals and returning to the source of origin, returning to the original mind.

“Without bounds” also contains two aspects here: 1. The sea of Bodhisattva conduct is huge, plentiful, and boundless. 2. Each and every part is considered true, deep, and without end.

All three aforementioned ideas are about the functions of the Dharma Realm.

“The source of movement and stillness is but one” means that the essence of the Dharma Realm is consistent with the three aforementioned ideas.

1.2.1.1.2.1. An explanation regarding both confusion and awakening. Movement is going and stillness is returning. Although the dual doors of movement and stillness, confusion and enlightenment exist, the true nature of confusion is one source and not two. The non-dualistic source is the essence.

1.2.1.1.2.2. An explanation addressing falseness only. Movement is going and returning because there is coming and going. Stillness is essence hollowed because contrast has ceased to be. Without interpreting movement in seeking stillness, we must seek stillness in all movements. We must seek stillness in all movements because though there is movement, there is always stillness; movement and stillness may be different terms but their source is non-dual. The source of non-duality is that one essence.

1.2.1.1.2.3. An explanation of returning to the fundamentals and back to the origin. Self-benefit is stillness and benefit for others is a form of movement. These two types of benefits guide each other, transforming and yet not transforming; without losing any one source of origin, there lies the essence of the Dharma Realm.

Regarding the two aforementioned types of boundlessness, movement is vast, plentiful, and boundless whereas boundless borders are still.

Non-obstruction exists between movement and stillness because they are of one source. Given bounds and boundlessness, essence ceases to be.

“The extraneous exists, for it contains a multitude of wonders” refers to the grandeur of the Dharma Realm characteristics. It is said that within unfathomable depths, a myriad of wonders exists. The pure Dharma Realm is considered capable of accommodating the unfathomable and the deep, it accommodates virtues of the inherent nature as many as the sands of the Ganges and the subtle and wondrous marks that are great. Characteristics rely on inherent nature while inherent nature accommodates all, therefore the term “accommodation”. There is nothing outside the inherent nature of the essence though the virtues of its features have names. Since the number of names cannot reach that entity with nothing outside, it has a remainder. This is why even though the number is immense, things still remain. Therefore the *Asamkeyeya* chapter says, “In one subtle and minute hair pore, ineffable lands enter sequentially. Hair pores can receive all those lands and yet all lands cannot pervade hair pores.” This is what it means: Hair pores approximate the term “inherent nature” and lands approximate “the mark of indestructibility,” therefore the mark of vastness cannot pervade the nature of smallness.

However, this feature roughly contains two facets: A. Since non-emptiness is regarded as being replete with the virtues of the inherent nature as many as the sands in the Ganges, this is the same idea in the teachings. B. Regarding non-obstruction among phenomena, the hallmark of the Ten Mysteries is fundamentally replete in and of itself; it is essence of the Separate Teachings. However, the two words, “myriad wonders”, are also what Laozi means in *The Tao Te Ching*:

The way that can be told of is hardly an eternal, absolute, unvarying one; the name that can be coded and given is no absolute name. Heaven and earth sprang from something else: The bright nameless; the named is but the said mother that rears the ten thousand creatures of heaven and earth, each after its kind. He that rids himself of base desire can see the secret essences; he that didn't and reached high being, he can see outcomes. Still the two are the same; the secret and its manifestations came from the same stage, the same mold, but anyway sound different—they are given different names where they appear. They can both be called the cosmic mystery, awesome deep, or rather, more secret than the so-called mystery. There is the deeper mystery: The gate and doorway all hidden essences issued from: All such subtleties.¹⁴

My explanation: Consider what is meant by illusory and natural to be esoteric and wondrous, a means to further erase the traces. Hence it is called “deeper mystery.” This is desirelessness in no desire from which the myriad things are born; this is called the door of myriad wonders. Now let us borrow these words without reifying their meaning. The idea is that the one true Dharma

Realm is the mysterious and wonderful essence; the form of that essence is the myriad wonders.

“The outstanding soars, for it transcends words and thoughts” integrates and eliminates the three aforementioned points. With integration, the three and one gather one another in. Through elimination, the three and the one both cease. What does it mean by transcending? It is said that when the principles are perfect, the words are biased; when the words are generated, the principles are dead. The Dharma has no thought of hallmarks; with thinking, chaos is generated. Transcending both, it is therefore called outstanding. For this reason Lord Sengzhao¹⁵ said, “The mouth wishes to converse but words die; the mind is about to explore a situation and yet thoughts cease.” This is an expression that stands out among words and symbols. How? Wishing to speak, form and functions become the same as the ceasing essence. “Wishing” is said to be about the ceasing of entity so there is a flurry of forms and functions. In other words, the one and the three are different in terms of features but the three are the one, their essence is not two. The three and the one do not obstruct each other; grasping at one another, both die. Preservation and obliteration cannot be bridled, so how can words and symbols access them? This is why this transcendence is considered outstanding.

Also, by borrowing the ideas about death and departure to dispel words and thoughts, neither existence nor absence of words can be relied upon. Therefore the latter part of this *Sūtra* says, “Although it does not rely on the path of language, it is not attached to the absence of language either.” Not to mention that signification of words is ultimately void, just as death and departure also die. Hence the contrast between words and the death of words also ceases. The use of the term “outstanding” means that the signification of words and the death of words are eliminated.

“It can only be the Dharma Realm” concludes with the category to which the Dharma belongs, and it belongs to the Realm of the Dharma. It is said that which is replete with all aforementioned virtues is that which is in the Dharma Realm alone.

1.2.1.2. An explanation of the fundamental and the superficial.

“Going and returning without bounds” exemplifies how the superficial begins with the fundamental. This is about the unmoving and true border that establishes all dharmas.

“The source of movement and stillness is but one”: Gathering-in the superficial and returning to the fundamental, these are about the names for “indestructibility” and describe the true signs.

“The extraneous exists, for it contains a multitude of wonders”: The fundamental and the superficial are unobstructed, and yet the signs of the inherent nature are clear and evident.

“The outstanding soars, for it transcends words and thoughts”: Both the fundamental and the superficial cease, hence words and thoughts cannot be entrusted anywhere.

“*It can only be the Dharma Realm*” concludes with how this category connects with the four facets of its meaning.

1.2.1.3. Clarifies the types of Dharma Realms. In brief, there are three facets to the meaning:

1.2.1.3.1. The Three Realms.

“Going and returning without bounds” is about the Dharma Realm of Phenomena. “The source of movement and stillness is but one” is about the Dharma Realm of Noumenon. “The extraneous exists, for it contains a multitude of wonders” is about the Unobstructed Dharma Realm.

“The outstanding soars, for it transcends words and thoughts” integrates and eliminates the above three. “*It can only be the Dharma Realm*” concludes that it belongs to the above three Dharma Realms.

1.2.1.3.2. The Four Dharma Realms.

“Going and returning without bounds” is about phenomena. “The source of movement and stillness is but one” explains how being replete with three facets of the meaning, movement is phenomena and stillness is noumenon. The one source of movement and stillness is the Dharma Realm of Unobstructed Phenomena and Noumenon.

“The extraneous exists, for it contains a multitude of wonders” is about the Dharma Realm of Unobstructed Phenomena. “The outstanding soars, for it transcends words and thoughts” integrates and eliminates the Four Dharma Realms. “*It can only be the Dharma Realm*” concludes that it belongs to the Four Dharma Realms.

1.2.1.3.3. The Five Dharma Realms.

“Going and returning without bounds” means that all are conditioned, but stillness is the unconditioned. The single source contains two aspects. If the seizing and dying of both were of one source, they should neither be the conditioned nor the unconditioned Dharma Realm. If the integration and illumination of each other were of one source, they should both be the conditioned and the unconditioned Dharma Realm.

“The extraneous exists, for it contains a multitude of wonders” is the Unobstructed Dharma Realm.

“The outstanding soars, for it transcends words and thoughts” integrates the Five Dharma Realms overall.

“*It can only be the Dharma Realm*” concludes that *it* belongs to the Five Dharma Realms.

1.2.1.4. A general clarification of the idea overall. The initial description of the Dharma Realm should include the following question: The writings and commentaries of various Schools mostly describe, first of all, that the Thus Come Ones become born in response to phenomena, first small then great, or to the absence of form or phenomenon so that the wordless reveals the words. Now why is it that the Dharma Realm is described first?

The answer: It is the principal aim of this *Sūtra*. It is the connecting essence among all *sūtras* too. It is a reliable connection among all dharmas. It is because all beings are confused or awakened by the fundamentals. It is because all Bud-

dhas certify to it exhaustively. It is because all Bodhisattvas' practices are generated from this. It is a spontaneous explanation upon one's initial realization and it is different than other *sūtra* explanations about moving through a series of stages gradually. The last idea properly addresses the initial question while all earlier ideas together inform the final idea.

It splices and shatters the esoteric and subtle,
 illuminating and expanding the mind and states.
 It reaches noumena exhaustively and the inherent nature thoroughly,
 penetrating consequences and covering causes.
 An oceanic expanse profound and profuse,
 it is vast, huge, and replete with everything.
 It can only be—*The Flower Ornament Sūtra*
with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas!

1.1.2. A separate praise regarding that which can interpret—the content of which makes it clear that this *Sūtra* interprets the Dharma Realm, therefore fathoming it may be difficult. Here are seven lines of the text divided into four parts.

“It splices and shatters the esoteric and subtle, illuminating and expanding the mind and states.” These two lines clarify that which can interpret overall.

“The esoteric and subtle” refers to the many meaningful facets of the aforementioned Dharma Realm. This is about the purpose of that which is mystical and esoteric, subtle and wondrous, the Dharma Realm is dissected and analyzed in this *Sūtra*. The unobstructed Dharma Realm is spliced into the two doors of the mind and states, hence the *Sūtra* says, “. . . illuminating and expanding the mind and states.”

What does it mean by splicing and shattering? As it is said, the one true Dharma Realm is fundamentally without inside or outside and belongs to neither the category of one nor many. The Buddha personally certified to knowledge about the existence of creatures and others extensively, and wishing to lead creatures to awakening, he divided the idea into the aspects mind and states. States are certified to while the mind is that which certifies. Therefore Lord Huiyuan is quoted as saying, “The mind is the Dharma body that all Buddhas certify to; the states are the Pureland that all Buddhas certify to.” Both are those certified to, while wisdom is what can certify. The states certified to are the great, the proper and extensive discourses; the mind that can certify is the Buddhas' flower ornament. This is how the text elaborates on why the Dharma Realm is said to “splice and shatter.”

“Illuminating and expanding the mind and states”: The mind and the states are what the above discloses. That which is illuminated and expounded upon is this *Sūtra*. To illuminate is to make clear, to shine upon. To expand is to empty, stretching to enlarge the small.

What does it mean to make the mind and states clear? This *Sūtra* elucidates and evinces completely without exception, regardless of whether it is about

ordinary beings or sages, cause or effect, the mind that can observe and the states observed. Just as the chapter on Manifestation of Buddha bespeaks of the states of the Buddhas as the realms of the Buddhas and bespeaks of the minds of the Thus Come Ones as the minds of Buddhas, you will learn the mind and states of those of various positions listed here.

What does it mean to illuminate the mind and states? It is said that this *Sūtra* teaches people to observe both the mind and states. For example, “Wishing to know the minds of all Buddhas, one shall observe the wisdom of Buddhas. The wisdom of Buddhas has no place to rely upon, just as emptiness has nothing to rely upon.” This causes us to contemplate the minds of the Buddhas. It also says, “If one wishes to know the states of the Buddhas, one should purify one’s thoughts so they are like emptiness.” This teaches us to contemplate the states of the Buddhas, and in turn, to know too all observed and illuminated minds and states of Bodhisattvas and ordinary beings.

What does it mean to empty and expand the mind and states? Just as it is said, “The nature of the Dharma is fundamentally empty and still, there is neither grasping nor seeing. The inherent nature¹⁶ emptied is the Buddha, which cannot be acquired through thinking.” This is about emptying the mind and states. Non-grasping is no state; not seeing is no mind. The *Sūtra* also says, “If one wishes to know the states of Buddhas, one should purify one’s mind so it is like emptiness. Stay far away from thoughts and all grasping, so that whichever direction the mind heads, it is unobstructed.”

Empty the mind and states too. The *Sūtra* also urges, “Anyone who wishes to attain the wisdom of the Thus Come Ones should leave behind all false discriminations. Penetrating and accessing existence and nonexistence impartially, one quickly becomes a great teacher among people and gods.” This is what is meant by emptying the mind and states too.

What does it mean by stretching the small to make it big? As it is said, if the mind were stretched, there would be no states outside the mind. Were the states stretched, there would be no mind beyond the states. Name either one randomly and it will gather in the Dharma so none of it is left behind, which becomes boundlessness. Therefore in the following the *Sūtra* relates, “Beyond the existence and nonexistence of wisdom is where wisdom enters, and nothing beyond wisdom can certify to such.” The earlier line is about stretching the mind while the latter line is about stretching the states. The true mind and true states are fundamentally boundless, which means that the false is the same as the true, hence the small is stretched to become big. The *Sūtra* says, “The capacity of the Thus Come Ones’ profound states is equal to that of space.” The states of Buddhas are magnificent. It also says, “The wisdom of Buddhas is vast like space.” The true mind is huge. Know that the false was originally true. Seeing the Buddha, there is purity, and so it is with the Buddha of the mind. Just as the Buddhas are living beings, the mind, Buddhas, and living beings are an undifferentiated triad; all stretch the false mind, rendering it boundless. The cause and effect of the myriad of dharmas are universally taken in by the mind and states, hence any random phenomenon can be stretched and expanded.

“It reaches noumena exhaustively and the inherent nature thoroughly, penetrating consequences and covering causes.” These two lines evince the qualities profundity and vastness separately.

“It reaches noumena exhaustively and the inherent nature thoroughly” means that noumena are the destination of the Absolute, which is vast. Nature refers to the nature of the Dharma and the nature of the mind, which is profound. If you were to exhaustively investigate the destination of principles, the nature of essence would end. Now the idea, destination, essence, and nature in this *Sūtra* can all be exhaustively investigated. To borrow the words from *Speaking of the Hexagrams* for the Zhou Dynasty edition of *The Book of Changes*: “To exhaust the principles and to end the inherent nature is to reach the ultimate in life.”¹⁷ In the past, sages authored *The Book of Changes* to accord with the principles of life. The Commentaries say, “Life is born out of the ultimate.” Having gone through the principles, the ultimate ends—this is about the ultimate in words and the ultimate in understanding the inherent nature; in other words, the inherent nature is ultimate.

If we were to go to the extreme with oracles and fully wield the capabilities of the inherent nature, we would accord with fate. Hence the *Sūtra* next talks about the principle of according with life. Now we borrow this terminology and apply these ideas from elsewhere.

“Penetrating consequences and covering causes”: Covering the profound and the vast and penetrating thoroughly the effects of the Five Pervasiveness [of Cause and Effect], this line includes an explanation for the causes of the six positions, which is vast. No other *sūtra* surpasses this one in extensively explaining the cause and effect of the positions of the Stages. If we were to say these causes include the sea of effects and the effects penetrate the source of causes so the two mutually interpenetrate, we would be illustrating profundity. In bringing forth the resolve initially, one immediately realizes Proper Enlightenment, for cause includes effect. Although one reaches Buddhahood, one does not forsake the door of causes, for effect interpenetrates cause. This is a significant idea because just as the interpenetration of effects belongs to the category of effects and the interpenetration of causes belongs to the category of causes, it makes clear that those teachings that can interpret include those that interpenetrate causes and effects.

Now a more in-depth explanation. The interpenetration of effects belongs to the category of causes because causes interpenetrate effects. The inclusion of those causes belongs to the category of effects because effects interpenetrate those causes. In other words, cause and effect include and penetrate each other so that they belong to the category of that which is interpreted. That which can interpret understands what this means comprehensively. However, causes include the sea of effects and effect penetrates the source of causes are the words of the ancients, now I wish to offer a more comprehensive discussion about this profound and far-reaching idea by saying that effects are interpenetrated while causes are included.

“An oceanic expanse profound and profuse, it is vast, huge and replete with everything”: These two lines conclude with a verse in praise of profundity and vastness.

“An oceanic expanse profound and profuse” clarifies the characteristics profundity and vastness—the look of deep waters, the grand spectacle of series of waves. Splashing characterizes depth, which is also considered the center or a compromise. As Laozi said, “The Way is like an empty vessel that may be drawn from without ever needing to be filled.”¹⁸ To interfuse is to integrate and penetrate, including profoundly and vastly. Hence Lord Sengzhao asked, “Water versus waves, how could it be?” The Brahmin¹⁹ Jhāpeti in *The Buddha Speaks of His Eight Teachers Sūtra*²⁰ recounted, “I encountered the path of Buddhas, his ideas are grand and profound, boundless like the oceans. The path leads us to realization in all ways and saves sentient beings and others continuously.” This is what is meant by its profundity and vastness. It is also like the swirling energy that generates and forms the myriad of things and yet it never becomes full, interfusing the myriad of dharmas so as to prevent obstacles.

“It is vast, huge, and replete with everything.” The cause for profundity and vastness emerges so that it is prepared for everything. Similarly, below is an excerpt from *The Great Treatise II of the Book of Changes*, the Zhou Dynasty edition, “The Yi is a book of far-ranging comprehension and broad scope, embracing everything. There are in it the way of heaven, the way of [hu]man, and the way of earth. It then takes (the lines representing) those three Powers, and doubles them till they amount to six. What these six lines show is simply this—the way of the three Powers.”²¹

Applying this idea to the *Sūtra*, it can serve as a parallel for the Three Realms too. The path of heaven represents the proper awakening of wisdom, the path of humans represents that of sentient beings, and the path of the earth represents the material environment. This *Sūtra* explains the Three Realms extensively, at the same time considers the path of heaven to be profound principles, the path of earth to be matter and form, and the path of humans as the path cultivated by all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In an attempt to be all-encompassing, these analogies may be forced, but as the [rhetorical question] goes: Could any dharma be missing from the fundamental Dharma wheel?

Every phenomenon or noumenon is ultimate, every cause or effect has been ready. The five types of cause and effect are elucidated with the 52 positions; the inconceivable sea of teachings is visible in the mysterious text from the nine assemblies. Explain both the true and the false so that both ordinary beings and sages are obvious to all, as they interfuse. Articulate how each phenomenon and noumenon of the Dharma Realm is distinct and yet receives one another. One verse about the Buddhas’ knowledge and views instructs comprehensively. One chapter of *The Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* certainly makes use of its essentials to function fully. Six-hundred fascicles of *Prajñā* texts are inseparable from the *gāthā* texts in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.²² The *sūtra* texts of the *Tripiṭaka* are simultaneously gathered into seven characters. This *Sūtra* excavates all Bud-

dhas' seas of wisdom, depleting the huge water source of form in the inherent nature. This is the reason why this scripture is vast and complete.

“It can only be—*The Flower Ornament Sūtra with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas.*” This line concludes with the category to which the Dharma belongs. The aforementioned winning phenomena belong only to *The Flower Ornament*.

So when our World Honored One's
Ten Bodies were initially perfected
and his Proper Enlightenment first realized,
he rode about the universe on his conduct and vows,
infusing into the nature of his essence, emptiness—
rich with a myriad of virtues,
swept clear of any fiber of dust he has.

1.1.3. The Teaching Host is inconceivable. Six lines of text are divided into four sections in terms of meaning: 1.1.3.1. Two lines indicate the perfection of effect. 1.1.3.2. One line speaks of profound causes. 1.1.3.3. One line clarifies the mystery of the essence. 1.1.3.4. Two lines demonstrate sweeping virtues.

1.1.3.1. “So when our World Honored One's Ten Bodies were initially perfected and his Proper Enlightenment first realized” is an overall indicator of the Ten Bodies. It includes the next two sections and properly clarifies the inconceivable. These Ten Bodies do not obstruct the words of the Buddha because they are not the Three Bodies.

“So when our” refers to that which can interpret the profound and vast. The mysterious and wondrous, as mentioned earlier, is the core of all teachings because our World Honored One spoke this *Sūtra* all of a sudden upon first realizing Proper Enlightenment.

The list of “Ten Bodies” will follow.

“Were initially perfected” refers to how one of the Buddha's Bodies became perfected upon realizing Proper Enlightenment. The *Sūtra* describes, “At that time in his seat, the World Honored One realizes the foremost Proper Enlightenment among all Dharmas. Completely impartial is his wisdom that infuses the three periods of time, so his body pervades all worlds and his voice pervasively accords with those in lands and others throughout the ten directions.” This is the initial perfection.

“His Proper Enlightenment first realized” is about realizing the Body of Bodhi, which is a generalization because the initial enlightenment is equal to the fundamental enlightenment. Moreover, it is no different at the start and at the core; hence it is called the start of realization here. The following will be an elaboration.

1.1.3.2. “He rode about the universe on his conduct and vows” bespeaks of profound causes. The causes to this Vehicle are two:

1.1.3.2.1. The cause to the body of vows. The *Sūtra* says, “Vairocana²³ Buddha's power of vows pervades the Dharma Realm.”

1.1.3.2.2. The cause to the body of conduct, which according to Lord Mountain Spirit's verse is, "Cultivating supreme conduct in the past without bounds etc." Riding on the cause of past vows, the resulting functions are demonstrated by the Body of Vows.

"About the universe" refers to pervasiveness and inclusiveness. It also comes from the copulatives in the Zhou edition of *The Book of Changes*, "The Yi was made on a principle of accordance with heaven and earth, and shows us therefore, without rent or confusion, the course (of things) in heaven and earth."²⁴ My explanation: The sage makes changes according to the principles of heaven and earth. What is articulated in *The Book of Changes* is the same as the principles of heaven and earth, which shows us the course of things throughout heaven and earth. Furthermore, the vows and conduct the Thus Come Ones originally developed were intended to benefit creatures pervasively. Now that he has attained the power of his vows and conduct, pervading the Dharma Realm is considered to be about the universe.

1.1.3.3. "Infusing into the nature of his essence, emptiness" clarifies the mystery of the essence though there are two specific ideas:

1.1.3.3.1. Regarding the World Honored One's body, it is self-replete with the Ten Bodies, which is the Dharma Body. The body of the Dharma nature is the Dharma Body. So the *Sūtra* says, "The inherent nature emptied is the Buddha, unfathomable it is." Furthermore, it states, "The Buddha takes the Dharma for his body, pure like space."

1.1.3.3.2. Regarding external space, the Three Realms melt to become the Buddha's body so external space is just the body of space. Consequently muddled space is the nature of the essence too because the muddled and the integrated are indivisible.

1.1.3.3.4. "Rich with a myriad of virtues, swept clear of any fiber of dust he has." These two lines exhibit a complete set of virtues. The first line is that he is replete with every virtue; the latter line is that obstructions cease without exception.

"A myriad": A general representation for a large number, though in fact the virtues possessed are infinite. Therefore the *Sūtra* lauds,

Knowable is the number of dust motes on land,
drunken dry are waters throughout seas,
measurable is space, and tieable the wind,
but unspeakable are those merits of Buddhas,
endless indeed."²⁵

A limitless number of virtues is called, in general, a myriad of virtues. Seeds of ignorance, numerous like dust and sand, manifesting as habits, have all been eliminated. Therefore it is said that it is cleared of any trace of dust.

There are two obstacles in general. There are three aspects to these two obstacles: A. Present conduct. B. Seeds. C. Habits. Habits are subtle and fine, even more so than fibers or dust motes. They are not even the fine among the

fine, not to mention their being the fine among the crude etc. To match these three virtues in general, the grace of wisdom embodies the myriad of virtues. The next line is about eliminating virtues, intermixing with emptiness to become the essence furthermore, which is a virtue of the Dharma Body. The myriad of virtues is equivalent to the virtue of *prajñā*. Devoid of dust refers to the virtue of having been liberated. The line about the myriad of virtues is an overarching statement, all the lines before and after it are about individual virtues. The two earlier lines are about the Body of Blessings and Virtues. Here, I am done with describing four among the Ten Bodies. I will discuss the other six bodies in later paragraphs.

The translucent waves of the pellucid sea of wisdom
nominally contain the myriad phenomena.
The full moon in the bright sky of his inherent nature
spontaneously cascades into streams in the hundreds.
Without rising, the king of trees
extends to seven places in the Dharma Realm.
Without negating future bounds,
upon his initial realization,
 he proclaims flowingly at the nine assemblies.
Exhausting the vast expanses of this profound study,
he blankets the inconceivable, oceanic assemblies.
Droplets of splendid sound flow forth
instantly circulating throughout the ten lands.
Over and over again, the host and his companions
simultaneously sing to reach the edge of the ten directions.

1.2.4. Speaking of rites that pervade, seven corollaries in the text refer to the following seven ideas: 1.2.4.1. A clarification about the *samādhi* relied upon. 1.2.4.2. A clarification about the body that can speak. 1.2.4.3. The location where the *Sūtra* is spoken. 1.2.4.4. The time when the *Sūtra* is spoken. 1.2.4.5. The targeted audience. 1.2.4.6. An explanation of the fundamentals of this *Sūtra*. 1.2.4.7. Individual instructions and explanations of the rites.

1.2.4.1. A clarification about the *samādhi* relied upon. Just as there is an explanation about the *Samādhi* of the Location of Infinite Meanings relied upon by *The Lotus Sūtra*, an explanation about the *Samādhi* of the Equal and Upholding King relied upon by *The Prajñā Sūtra*, and an explanation about the *Samādhi* of Immobility relied upon by *The Nirvāṇa Sūtra*, here is an explanation about the *samādhi* that this *Sūtra* relies upon. Since most explanations claim that a *sūtra* relies mainly on one *samādhi*, upon which *samādhi* does this *Sūtra* rely now? It is the Oceanic Imprint *Samādhi*. The oceanic imprint is a metaphor and the name of the *samādhi* is derived from the analogy. My commentaries on the Chief of Goodness chapter will elaborate, but for now, a brief illustration of the Oceanic Imprint's hallmarks. It is said that the fragrant sea is lucid, clear, and unmoving. All physical bodies and forms throughout the four continents are

etched upon it, similar to examples about an impress that imprints materials, thousands of miles of clear waves, and a clear and cloudless sky whereby the constellations of stars and the moon align at once and vividly. There is neither coming nor going, neither existing nor nonexisting, and neither one nor distinction. The Thus Come Ones' sea of wisdom does not generate waves in the consciousness, it is lucid and pure, most translucent and most still. With not a mind,²⁶ suddenly the thoughts and sense desires of all beings manifest. Both thoughts in the mind and desires of the senses exist in wisdom the way the ocean embodies reflections. This is why the *Sūtra* reads, "Like the sea it universally manifests the bodies of beings—an explanation that makes it oceanic. Bodhi universally engraves upon all activities of the mind, therefore Proper Enlightenment is considered infinite."

Wisdom does not solely manifest in the minds of creatures. By relying on this wisdom, the myriad of phenomena instantaneously manifests too in response to species universally. The Chief of Goodness chapter details, "Whether manifesting in the form of a boy or a girl, a god, a dragon, or a titan, even a python etc., all are led to behold that which pleases them. The forms of beings are distinct, their karmic activities and sounds are limitless too. All can manifest in this way because of the *Samādhi* of Oceanic Imprint's awesome spiritual powers." This text articulates the presence of the Dharma with a metaphor in that wisdom is the Dharma while the ocean acts as its metaphor. Once the waves of consciousness stop, it is called the lucid sea of wisdom; no-mind suddenly appears so it is explained as a nominal embodiment. Both the subject that can respond and the object that responds are but parts of a myriad of phenomena.

1.2.4.2. "The full moon in the bright sky of his inherent nature spontaneously cascades into streams in the hundreds" depicts the body that can respond. In this line, only the word "nature" is the Dharma, the rest are analogies. An inclusive use of the inherent "nature" contains both metaphors and the Dharma. As it is said, the bright moon in the autumn sky is bright, clear, and flawless, pervading the myriad of lands and hundreds of bodies of water without dividing. The nature emptied is the essence of the Dharma relied upon. The full moon is the actual retribution of perfected wisdom. Hundreds of bodies of water metaphorically represent creatures and objects, which change when the shadows are cast. Therefore the wisdom moon of the Buddhas relies completely on the inherent nature being empty.

When confusions end and virtues are perfected, no-mind suddenly responds. Therefore the chapter on Manifestation of Buddha says, "Just as the pure moon in space can obscure all stars and show itself waxing and waning, its reflections appear in all bodies of water. You observe all of existence as if you were face-to-face. Similarly, the moon-like body of the Thus Come Ones obscures those of all other Vehicles while exposing their deficiencies and weaknesses. It universally manifests in the water of gods' and humans' pure minds as if it were face-to-face with all." A verse by Wisdom Banner Bodhisattva goes, "For instance, the pure full moon universally reflects in all waters. Although there are infinite reflections, the original moon is never two. The unobstructed wisdom from the

Thus Come Ones' realization of Equal and Proper Enlightenment universally manifests in all lands, so the Buddhas' essence is not two." Here water is an analogy for land. According to the chapter on Detachment from the World, it is also an analogy for Bodhisattvas. The verse goes, "Just as the pure sun or moon is a glistening mirror in the sky that projects reflections onto multiple bodies of water, it rests unperturbed by water. You should know that Bodhisattvas as pure Dharma wheels are this way too, manifesting in the waters of the world's minds and yet remain undisturbed by the world." The moon metaphor symbolizes the Dharma.

In all of the above, emptiness and moon are different. Were forms to return to the inherent nature, emptiness would also be called the Buddha. Therefore All Wisdom Bodhisattva explicates, "The nature of the Dharma is fundamentally empty and still, there is neither grasping nor seeing. The inherent nature emptied is the Buddha, unfathomable it is." Hence the color of emptiness is reflected in the water and shadows are casted across the clear sky, leaving the sky emptier still."

1.2.4.3. "Without rising, the king of trees extends to seven places in the Dharma Realm" explains the locations where the *Sūtra* is spoken. The significance lies with the seven locations.

"The king of trees" is the Bodhi tree, the so-called *Pippala* tree. This tree soars high and stands out among all trees; so it is considered the king.

"Without rising." He ascends into the Heaven of the Thirty-Three and others without getting up from under the Bodhi tree. The *Sūtra* chronicles, "At that time the World Honored One did not leave all that were beneath the Bodhi tree and yet rose into Sumeru, toward Lord Śakra's palace." Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva's verse goes, "Disciples of the Buddha, you ought to observe the Thus Come One's power of self-mastery. The Buddha is said to be in all of *Jambudvīpa*.²⁷ Now we see the Buddha residing on the summit of Sumeru, but he should be present in the same way throughout the ten directions. This is so by the power of the Thus Come One's self-mastery."

Since it is said that he did not get up for three days and yet reached higher ground, these four lines were formulated: A. Without rising from beneath the Bodhi tree at all he ascended to one heaven—like an earlier explanation in the *Sūtra* text. B. Without rising from one location he ascended to all places. C. Without rising from one place he ascended to another place. D. Without rising from anywhere he ascended to every place. The second and fourth lines take from the text the last example, in that the Buddha does so in the same way throughout the ten directions. The fourth line comes from an earlier part of the text about all throughout *Jambudvīpa*, along with its parallel about all throughout the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. But it is the second line from the text that states one location in *Jambudvīpa* parallels all throughout the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. The third line is easy to understand so there is no text about it; the significance must be in the combined lines, which is about not rising from beneath the Bodhi tree of the Dharma Realm and yet pervading and ascending to the seven locations throughout the Dharma Realm.

“He is extended to seven places in the Dharma Realm” contains two strands of meaning in brief: 1.2.4.3.1. Causing the seven locations to exist everywhere throughout the Dharma Realm. 1.2.4.3.2. Causing each and every location to pervade the Dharma Realm.

1.2.4.3.1. Causing the seven locations to exist everywhere throughout the Dharma Realm. If the text were to speak of pervasiveness in terms of width, as opposed to narrowness, the following explanation about the locations should say that pervasiveness occurs in eight out of the ten layers. The first can pervade the seven places while the tenth layer names other Buddhas. Though the ten layers listed below are about the Buddhas pervading places, here is a clarification about one location pervading other locations. This means two things. Since the locations relied upon exist throughout the Dharma Realm, the body that can be relied upon also pervades.

Roughly five layers pervade the Dharma Realm:

1.2.4.3.1.1. Among the same types of land that pervade the Dharma Realm, there are seven locales.

1.2.4.3.1.2. Seven locations among the different types of land pervade the Dharma Realm.

1.2.4.3.1.3. Seven locations pervade lands like dust motes throughout the Dharma Realm.

1.2.4.3.1.4. Seven locations throughout the Dharma Realm and space accommodate dust motes.

1.2.4.3.1.5. Seven locations pervade the lands of Indra’s Net throughout the Dharma Realm.

1.2.4.3.2. Causing each and every location to pervade the Dharma Realm. Just as places of practice pervade the Dharma Realm, places of practice also exist in the Universal Light Palace, in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, and in each and every one of the seven locations among the *Suyama*, *Tuṣita*, and other heavens. Just as they exist in these seven locations, they also pervade locales that are not these seven locations, such as in the Heaven of Bliss of Others’ Transformation, the Heaven of the Four Kings, the Form Realm, the Eighteen Realms, and other locations where the *Sūtra* was not spoken. Now places of practice also pervade those places. Just as places of practice pervade the seven locations, each and every one of them pervades all seven of the locations, even the entire Dharma Realm.

Here too are five types:

1.2.4.3.2.1. Pervading lands of the same type.

1.2.4.3.2.2. Pervading lands of different types.

1.2.4.3.2.3. Pervading dust motes throughout the Dharma Realm.

1.2.4.3.2.4. Pervading locations that accommodate dust motes throughout space.

1.2.4.3.2.5. Pervading lands of Indra’s Net throughout the Dharma Realm.

More specifically, these not only pervade each and every location but each and every accompanying dust mote pervades the five stratum of locations throughout the Dharma Realm so that in each location are all locations. The

above two again explain pervasiveness, in that they pervade all five types too. Among the five types, the first three are about the Dharma Realm of Phenomena while the next one is connected to Unobstructed Phenomena and Noumena because phenomena are emptied once noumena are emptied. The last type is about the Dharma Realm of Unobstructed Phenomena in that noumena are derived from phenomena since noumena and phenomena are unobstructed. Phenomena are integrated into noumena, pervading their infinite dimensions. These are all locations where the Thus Come One spoke [and continues to speak] the *Sūtra*.

1.2.4.4. “Without negating future bounds, upon his initial realization, the Buddha proclaims flowingly at the nine assemblies” explains the time when the *Sūtra* was spoken, which was when the Buddha initially realized Proper Enlightenment. One master provided us with two explanations, in that the assemblies are connected by way of the two words, “without negating”. According to Bodhiruci,²⁸ the Buddha spoke at the first five assemblies upon first realizing enlightenment. He had realized Proper Enlightenment when he first uttered the content of the *Sūtra*. This is why for three days he did not rise and yet ascended onto a heaven. The Sixth Assembly and on were spoken two weeks later. When each individual conduct of *The Ten Stages Sūtra* was first spoken, the *Bhagavat*²⁹ had not realized the Way for long, this was just after two weeks. In this example, he lectured at the Ninth Assembly later because the presence of tree trunks etc. [meant the setting had to have been] the Jeta Grove. In contrast, the chapter on Chief of Goodness considered the spontaneous talk upon the Buddha’s initial realization of enlightenment to be the words of the Ninth Assembly. I will now draw from the chapter on Chief of Goodness by pointing to the final synthesis, an analysis about how perpetuity is boundless in the before and after. Since nothing transpires in future times, it states, “without negating future bounds.” Future bounds are connected to the Ninth Assembly that is spoken at a later time. Since future bounds are unimpeded, the Buddha proclaimed flowingly throughout the nine assemblies upon his initial realization. The above divisions of the three periods of time are symbolic while the spontaneous proclamation upon his initial realization of enlightenment signals a perfect integration.

Furthermore, the division of the three periods of time is a Dharma that addresses the potential of the audience. The one who can speak spontaneously refers to the one with the virtues and capabilities of the Buddhas, capable of proclaiming extemporaneously. Since the earlier and the later commingle, future bounds are deemed as not negated, in that upon his initial realization of enlightenment, he is not prevented from an impromptu promulgation at the Ninth Assembly. The *Sūtra* asserts, “One thought is infinite eons; infinite eons are one thought.” Therefore the Jin Dynasty version of the *Sūtra*’s Ten Abodes chapter says, “Infinite eons of the past are securely placed in the future and the present while infinite eons of the future are reverted back to the past. Neither long nor short, this is what liberated individuals practice.” Many eons do not contradict a *kṣaṇa*,³⁰ so how can the initial realization interfere with the bounds of future

time? The above two sections will be analyzed in the section on extensive conditions for teaching accordingly.

1.2.4.5. “Exhausting the vast expanses of this profound study, he blankets the inconceivable, oceanic assemblies” clarifies the targeted audience. Although the earlier line briefly explains what the *Sūtra* means by an individual who addresses the audience, in relation to the intent to establish the targeted audience now, I will briefly name such a capable individual. “Vast” means great. The word “expanses” refers to space. “Profound” means esoteric.

The next line is about that which is blanketed: “He blankets the inconceivable, oceanic assemblies” because he is deep and expansive. It is said that Universal Worthy³¹ and other multitudes have virtues as profound as the Buddhas, the number of which as immense as the number of dust motes in lands, hence they are considered oceanic. So profound they transcend the expressions of sentient beings, as they are unthinkable. The number is so huge that it is difficult to measure, it is also unthinkable.

Since the assemblies are both deep and vast, they cannot be thought about in-depth. Since they are vast and deep, they cannot be thought about vastly. The types and examples of provisional and true reality are numerous and inconceivable, especially since they pervade the sea of effects. These lines from the First Assembly communicate, “Bodhisattvas as numerous as the number of dust motes in ten Buddhalands together surround.” I list them in brief as the 42 multitudes, but all of them assume the limitless dust motes of lands to be their limits and the light from their mouths call on each and every Bodhisattva who leads retinues of Bodhisattvas as numerous as minute dust motes in oceans of worlds to arrive at this assembly. The light from their hairs radiate repeatedly, pervasively entering into lands as numerous as dust motes. Relying on proper functioning, they gather-in those throughout the bounds of the three periods of time. Even all the great Bodhisattvas cannot conceive of this, not to mention ordinary beings who try to fathom the bounds of time and space, hence this is called an inconceivable oceanic assembly.

1.2.4.6. “Droplets of splendid sound flow forth, instantly circulating throughout the ten lands” clarifies the fundamentals spoken in this *Sūtra*. The fundamentals are the splendid sound. “Droplets. . . flow forth” are sporadic sounds in the distance. “The ten lands” include lands the shape of trees and other distinct types. The *Sūtra* lists 20, concluding with dust motes of the ten Buddhalands. It says ten lands because the number “ten” indicates limitlessness. I will elaborate on what splendid sound means below, but in brief—all sounds are replete in one sound, so it is called splendid sound. All sounds are just one sound, so it is also named one-sound. One and many do not obstruct each other so in general this makes for splendid sound. The *Sūtra* states, “With one wondrous sound, the Buddha is completely heard throughout lands in the ten directions. It is replete with a multitude of sounds, so the rain of Dharma pervades. All seas of words and phrases and all sounds that accord with each species revolve around the pure Dharma wheel throughout all Buddhalands.” All these are aspects of what it means by splendid sound. It is simultaneously heard

throughout the ten lands without there being anything earlier or later, therefore it is called sudden. It is heard without exception throughout the ten lands of the Dharma Realm, therefore it is called pervasive.

1.2.4.7. “Over and over again, the host and his companions simultaneously sing to reach the edge of the ten directions” instructs on individual aural rites. It is an explanation that connects the directions by naming one the host and those in the ten directions the companions. All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas may be hosts and companions, accompanying one another and looking to one another throughout the ten directions. The host is accompanied by companions throughout the ten directions. This combination repeats “over and over again” because they are close and immediate neighbors.

But the forms are still difficult to comprehend, so now another brief illustration. There are roughly two ideas to the words, “They are close and immediate neighbors, hence the description ‘over and over again’”: First, they look to one another. For example, when Vairocana is the host, all Buddhas throughout the ten directions are the companions. When the Thus Come One Akṣobhya east of this realm is the host, Vairocana of this land and all Buddhas throughout the ten directions are the companions. Next, when the second Buddha of the east is the host, Vairocana and the first Buddha of the east and Buddhas throughout the ten directions are the companions. Accompanying one Buddha are all the infinite Buddhas of the Dharma Realm.

Just as ten people are hosts or companions who accompany and look to each other, there are ten combinations of hosts and companions. Just as the Buddhas are this way, so too are the Buddhas as hosts and Bodhisattvas as companions. Since the hosts are this way, the companions are so too. To one idea there are three significant aspects. Second, just as Vairocana is one Buddha who is a host, Bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions are companions. Since the host Buddha pervades, the companions pervade too. As it is said, beyond worlds as many as dust motes in ten Buddhalands east of the Universal Light Hall where Vairocana resides, Mañjuśrī of the Golden Colored World arrives to serve as a companion. All Bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions come from those ten lands. If this host Buddha heads east by one world while sitting on a lotus throne, Mañjuśrī of the Golden Colored World is far away even as he arrives, remaining apart by a distance of as many lands as dust motes in ten Buddhalands. Just as the constellations surround the bright moon over the long sky, the myriad of landscapes and hundreds of bodies of water reflect the stars and the moon. The moon is like the host Buddha while the array of constellations is like the companions. They appear in each and every body of water near and afar.

The idea being that when the Golden Colored World draws closer to the east by one world, Chief in Goodness Bodhisattva of the Western Lotus Colored World also draws near the east by one world. Those in the other eight directions all draw near the east by one world. In this way, the host Buddha reaches the place that is as many worlds apart from the east as the number of dust motes in ten Buddhalands while sitting on a lotus treasury lion throne, which is exactly the location of the Golden Colored World. From the host Buddha to you, the

Golden Colored World is as close to the east as being apart by a number of worlds equal to the number of dust motes in ten Buddhalands. The Lotus Colored World in the west is exactly the location of the *Sahā*.³² In this way, the host Buddha is at the far end of the east, Golden Colored World and other companion lands are also at the far end of the east, and yet they never see Mañjuśrī coming from the west and going eastward to draw near the host Buddha. They also do not see Mañjuśrī pass before the Buddha and draw near the Buddha from the west. In this way the host Buddha is at the extreme end of the west, and yet he never sees western Bodhisattvas coming from the east and going westward to draw near the host Buddha. It is the same throughout the ten directions.

Just as an individual spreads a string of ten coins on the ground, the heart of one coin is the host and the other coins are its companions. With the first coin, when the second coin presses on top of the first coin so it is closer to the east by one coin, the words “inaugural currency” etc. [on the Tang Dynasty coins] all come closer to the east by a distance of one coin. In this way, each coin presses upon one another, layer after layer, all of them gradually moving closer to the east. Having moved closer to the east in this way, the ten coins move closer to the west in the same way.

By this explanation about one, you can believe in the explanations about all ten, hence they already pervade the ten directions layer upon layer. Just as the Third Assembly explains the Ten Abodes, the Faiths are explained in this way too, in that they pervade the ten directions ad infinitum. The Conduct, Dedications, Stages, and others are the same too. Since there are nine assemblies, there are nine strata. Just as the First Assembly pervades the Dharma Realm as a dimension, the Second Assembly overlays the tiered First Assembly; consequently the nine assemblies are naturally nine dimensions. If there were 48 assemblies, there would be 48 dimensions. If there were infinite assemblies, there would be infinite dimensions. Layer upon layer occurs when one Buddha is the host and the rest of the Bodhisattvas are the companions; layer upon layer also develops when Buddhas throughout the ten directions are the hosts and the Bodhisattvas throughout the ten directions are the companions. In this way all Buddhas repeatedly and in turn pervade ad infinitum; hence it says, “Over and over again, the host and his companions simultaneously sing to reach the edge of the ten directions.” I will distinguish this idea from others when we get to the causes and conditions for the arising of the teachings.

Although there are seven pairs above, they refer to the six bodies:

1.2.4.7.1. The Oceanic Imprint *Samādhi* relied upon is about the Wisdom Body because the sea of wisdom is lucid.

1.2.4.7.2. The body that speaks the Dharma is the Transformational Body, just as the waters contain a thousand divided moon reflections.

1.2.4.7.3. The location where the *Sūtra* is explained is about the Body that Accords with Thought because one pervades locations throughout the Dharma Realm on the basis of a thought.

1.2.4.7.4. The time that the *Sūtra* is explained is about the Body Supported by Power, sustaining it so that it lasts forever.

1.2.4.7.5. The Ineffable Oceanic Assembly is about the Awesome Might Body because it shines with a fantastic light among the multitude of Bodhisattvas.

1.2.4.7.6. The splendid sound.

1.2.4.7.7. All hosts and companions are about the Adorned and Fine Physical Body, the splendid sound being one feature. The hosts and companions who sit on the lotus treasury lion thrones are replete with fine features. There are six parts to this passage. Since the earlier explanation about the host's inconceivability already constructed the four bodies, the Ten Bodies are replete, being that the Buddha spoke this *Sūtra* when his Ten Bodies were first perfected. Although the fundamental idea in the Commentaries properly demonstrates the aural rites and other differences embodied by the Ten Bodies, names of two or three bodies are completely unknown.

Though emptiness is emptied and devoid of one trace,
stars sparkle across the sky of meaning.
Though stillness is stilled and bereft of words,
waves in the sea of teachings tumble tumultuously.
Thousands of gates submerge only to gush forth,
casting a colossal fountainhead with a multitude of texts
so that the myriad of virtues intersect and return,
gathering-in various *sūtras* as retinue.

1.2.5. These words encompass the fundamentals and the superficialities. This text includes two facets about the fundamentals and the superficialities: 1.2.5.1. Phenomenon and noumenon look to one another in this discussion about the fundamentals and the superficialities. 1.2.5.2. All teachings look upon each other in this discussion about the fundamentals and the superficialities.

1.2.5.1. Phenomenon and noumenon look to one another in this discussion about the fundamentals and the superficialities. I am afraid I obscure hidden difficulties because some things are difficult to articulate, such as how the great phenomenon is formless, the great sound is silent, and faint hope distances itself from a conqueror—these are inconceivable states, how could there be form or words? Once the mind is apart from being moved and shaken and words forget to engage in sophistry, we naturally enter true destiny. Why constantly display vast quantities of words and externalities to disturb people?

Therefore I now offer this explanation. If it is without words, how can we know that it is wordless? If it is without form, how can we show that it is formless? *The Ten Acceptances Sūtra* articulates this, “Understand that the Dharma is not in words, enter the bounds of wordlessness well, and yet be able to illustrate with spoken words, like echoes that reverberate around the world.” Here the words reveal the wordless. It also says, “The Buddhas take the Dharma as the body, which is pure like space and causes the multitude of manifested forms to

enter this Dharma.” Here form reveals formlessness. It also says, “The physical body is not the Buddha, neither is sound. And yet without being apart from form and sound, one sees the spiritual powers of the Buddha.” The above two aspects are included here. *The Dharma Flower Sūtra* also propounds, “The trait of quiescence in all Dharmas cannot be proclaimed with words. It is with the power of expedients that it was spoken for the five *bhikṣus*.”³³ Here the words also reveal the wordless. *The Vajra Sūtra* notes, “If we see that all forms are no form, we would then see the Thus Come Ones.” These are also about form revealing formlessness. *The Pure Names Sūtra* reads, “The Dharma speaker speaks nothing and instructs on nothing.” It also says, “The Dharma speaker shall speak according to the Dharma,” It continues, “Without being apart from words, speak about liberation.” Furthermore, “Although we know that all Dharmas neither come into being nor cease to be as fine features adorn their bodies. Although we know that all Buddhalands and sentient beings are empty, we always cultivate the Pureland practice and teach and transform all beings and others.” These are about how words and wordlessness, form and formlessness are inseparable.

The chapter on the Ten Abodes says, “Wishing to universally respond, he proclaims according to kind throughout the ten directions with one wondrous sound of quiescence. In this way, all are caused to be pure and understand. With this, the Bodhisattvas make their initial resolve: To proclaim the Dharma of all beings’ languages endlessly with one word. Wishing to understand their inherent nature, the Bodhisattvas make their initial resolve based on this. There are no words or sounds in the world that he does not make, so that all are led to liberation and certify to quiet extinction. Wishing to attain such a wonderful faculty of tongue, the Bodhisattvas make their initial resolve based on this.” All these are words that are wordless. There is more than one text about this.

All teachings look upon each other in this discussion about the fundamentals and the superficialities. The Commentaries but briefly clarify the meaning of non-obstruction. There are two pairings in the text: The first pair is about formlessness not obstructing form and the latter pair is about wordlessness not obstructing words. The first pair is about formlessness not obstructing form: “Though emptiness is emptied and devoid of one trace.” The nature of the Dharma is fundamentally empty, emptiness that is free of all form: The Dharma comes into being with a certain set of conditions but its inherent nature is non-existence, hence emptiness. Furthermore, what form is there? Borrowing emptiness to expel existence, existence leaves and emptiness dies, hence it is called emptiness emptied. *The Pure Names Sūtra* says, “There only exists the ailment of emptiness, but the ailment of emptiness is empty too.” *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* proclaims, “All Buddhas speak of the Dharma of emptiness to eliminate the view of existence. If we were to see existence as emptiness again, no Buddha would transform us.” Therefore know that there is neither existence nor nonexistence. Nonexistence is emptiness. No-void is equivalent to emptied emptiness. The *Sūtra* says, “In the void there is no duality and duality is void too. All are empty throughout the Triple Realm—that is the view of all Buddhas.” This is emptied emptiness. Next it says, “Ordinary people

do not awaken to or understand that the Buddhas cause the proper Dharma to abide and yet no Dharma abides. Enlighten to this and see your inherent body.” So emptiness also does not abide. Furthermore, there is no center or duality in the above, which is about emptiness. The absence of duality is void, being emptied emptiness. All in the Triple Realm are empty, becoming true emptiness. Also the chapter on the Dedications states, “The nature of the Dharma is fundamentally non-dual, the absence of duality is absent furthermore.” All are emptied of emptiness.

“Devoid of one trace” refers to emptiness and existence being eliminated and the place of mind’s activities being extinguished. The place of mind’s activities extinguished, traces cannot be found. As it is said, if it is possible that the existence of existence exists, then it is possible that the nonexistence of existence exists not. Now the nonexistence of existence can exist and the nonexistence of nonexistence can be nonexistent. Expelling existence with nonexistence, nonexistence remains a trace. Chasing away emptiness with emptied emptiness, emptied emptiness remains a trace too because there is existence being expelled. Expel and expel until there is no expelling. If non-expulsion expels expulsion, non-expulsion is also a trace, because there is the existence of attainment. Just as there is nothing left behind as a bird glides over sand, void exists in this line. So the chapter on Manifestation of Buddha reiterates, “Understand that the nature of all Dharmas is still and extinct, the way birds flying across the sky leaves not a trace.” Emptied emptiness is apart from traces because emptied emptiness does not obstruct form.

You see why this is difficult to articulate, and yet *words* produce the following: “Stars sparkle across the sky of meaning,” in that the glittery stars depend on the clear sky that does not obstruct them. The clear sky is the sky of meaning. By relying on the sky foremost in meaning does not obstruct the constellation of Dharma doors.³⁴ Also, you know it is emptiness when the constellations are not obstructed; after all, the unobstructed Dharma door is the true emptiness foremost in meaning. The above is about emptiness being the fundamentals and the Dharma doors as the superficialities.

The latter pair is about wordlessness not obstructing words. “Though stillness is stilled and bereft of words, waves in the sea of teachings tumble tumultuously.” This is about wordlessness not obstructing words: Wordlessness is the fundamentals while words are superficialities. “Stillness is stilled” is a trait of clear and settled seawater. This line clarifies that movement is dependent upon stillness, so wordlessness does not obstruct words. Consequently the *Sūtra* admits, “Although one does not rely on the path of languages, one is not attached to the absence of spoken words either.” If you were obstructed by words, you would be exhorted in person. Unobstructed by words, Mañjuśrī would present you with praises. Not to mention when the nature of language departs, the death of words is uttered. Although there are no words, waves spread wide in the sea of teachings. Tidal waves are eagers in that the Buddhas certify to being apart from words, flowing into sounds and listening to expressions. The Dharma is fundamentally unspoken while the great *Tripitaka* is being

proclaimed in the Dragon's Palace. Hence know that the Dharma is not far from the destination and the acquired activities of the mind are most profound. The phenomenon of words is not so near and the hollowed essence can be sighted. Phenomena severed from words are not severed; the proliferation and flourishing of esoteric texts are not prosperity. This talks about the death of words. By integrating constantly the mind and words, there is no expulsion.

1.2.5.2. "Thousands of gates submerge to gush forth, casting a colossal fountainhead with the multitude of texts" and on is about how all teachings are dual, as a part of the discussion on the fundamentals and the superficialities. There are two pairs in the text about *The Flower Ornament* being the fundamental Dharma wheel.

"Thousands of gates submerge to gush forth" is about the fundamentals reaching a gradual opening. As it is said, the different meanings of thousands of doors submerge then pour into the multitude of *sūtras*. Like the sea that flows underground beneath the lands of the four continents, anyone who drills acquires water. Know that the multitude of flows rely on seawater, so the sea is the source of multiple bodies of water and *The Flower Ornament* is the fundamental source of all teachings.

"Casting a colossal fountainhead with the multitude of texts" is about gathering-in the superficialities back to the fundamentals: The myriad of virtues intersect and return. Were hundreds of bodies of water to return to the sea, the sea can universally accept them, hence it is the core. People of the past said, "The nine waterflows therefore intersect and return while the multitude of sages meet in profound depth," which is about the meeting in and returning to nirvāṇa, and about the meeting in and returning to the Dharma Realm. Along the same lines, *The Śāstra on the Stages* proclaims, "There is nothing that does not flow from this Dharma Realm and there is nothing that does not return to and certify to this Dharma Realm." *The Dharma Flower Sūtra* says, "The One Buddha Vehicle is differentiated and explained as three." The One Vehicle is the core of the Three Vehicles. The One Buddha Vehicle is *The Flower Ornament*. The meeting of the three and the returning to the one is to gather-in the superficialities and to return to the fundamentals. The fifth fascicle of the *Sūtra* describes, "For those who believe me and accept me, upon first seeing me in person and hearing what I say, enter the wisdom of the Thus Come Ones." This refers to how the *The Flower Ornament* is the fundamentals. Besides those who practice and study the *Theravadān* teachings, the one waterflow, I now invite you to an encounter with this *Sūtra* and enter the wisdom of the Buddhas too. This is to gather-in the superficialities and to return to the fundamentals. This *Sūtra* is *The Dharma Flower*. *The Dharma Flower* gathers-in the rest of the *sūtras* to return to the *The Flower Ornament*. Therefore *The Dharma Flower* also refers to *The Flower Ornament* as the fundamentals. The following explanation makes some distinctions and clarifies this idea.

This is the purport.

The orphic true body in the realm of a myriad of transformations
 reveals virtues' form at the gate of exceptional quandary.
 Functions flourish so they are everlasting;
 wisdom pervasively mirrors and yet is always still.

1.2.6. The esoteric and subtle purpose and destiny. “This is the purport” establishes the standard. “The orphic true body” and on discloses the destination meant by the intent proper, which consists of two aspects: 1.2.6.1. Clarifies that noumenon and phenomena are unobstructed. 1.2.6.2. Shows that phenomena are unobstructed. Since this *Sūtra* elaborates on how phenomena and noumenon are unobstructed, the unobstructed Dharma Realm is the destination of such a paradigm. This door consists of ideas that are divided and aligned in accordance with meaning.

1.2.6.1. There are also two points with regard to clarifying non-obstruction between noumenon and phenomena: 1.2.6.1.1. Instructions on the three elements. 1.2.6.1.2. Integration of the true and the false.

1.2.6.1.1. Instructions on the three elements. Question: Earlier in the lines about the going and returning to boundlessness etc., the three elements had already been clarified, why explain them again now? Answer: In short, these are three distinct ideas, different from those aforementioned.

1.2.6.1.1.1. The aforementioned clarifies that the three elements are based directly on the idea of the Dharma Realm. Now the idea is about being able to interpret the *Sūtra's* overall explanation about the three elements, hence this is different.

1.2.6.1.1.2. The aforementioned distinguishes the traits among the three elements whereas now the locations of the three elements are clarified. Where is the essence located? It can be said to be in infinite transformations etc.

1.2.6.1.1.3. The aforementioned clarifies that the three elements integrate and eliminate, therefore forming an individual School. Now the clarification is that the three elements exist in relation to one another so as to obscure interpretations about differences. This idea makes the distinction that they do not abandon one another, which means that they are unobstructed. For example, people of the past said, “Being essence, it neither comes into being nor ceases to be, it neither comes nor goes. Its non-extinction is non-production and its non-production is non-extinction etc.” “Being form, it is a distinct body similar to other kinds. It is subtle and fine, accommodated and supported. Its distinct qualities similar to other kinds repeatedly and successively manifest. Its subtle and fine principles are even more difficult to behold than the easily observed reappearing forms in a mustard seed jar. It is likened to Lord Indra’s Net etc.”

“Its functions pervade without dividing, becoming consummate without departing. The one and the many, the large and the small interact—their traits remain despite delay or rush, stillness or chaos etc.” These show the traits of the three elements individually, but now the clarification is that they do not part, which is profound, mysterious, and called “phenomena and noumenon unobstructed.”

The first line clarifies the essence. The essence is in the midst of a myriad of transformations and not beyond phenomena, so it says, “the orphic true body in the realm of a myriad of transformations.” “Orphic” means mystical, as well as quiescent. “A myriad of transformations” is a general term for the Dharma of phenomena. Wishing to recognize that the true essence is only located in the midst of a myriad of transformations, Lord Yuanxiao³⁵ in his preface to *A Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* wrote, “The original essence of the Great Vehicle is void and empty, so clear that it washes away the dark. More mysterious than the mysterious, how did the symbol of the myriad of phenomena emerge? More still than stillness, it remains a theory among hundreds of Schools and not a symbol for a myriad of phenomena. The Five Eyes³⁶ cannot see its face. With words, the four types of eloquence cannot describe its look.”

My explanation: This clarifies that the true essence is neither one nor different from all dharmas. Although now the Commentaries speak of non-obstruction, it is neither one with nor different from all dharmas. Therefore Lord Sengzhao said, “The Tao is far way and becomes real when in contact with phenomena and the essence is just the myriad of transformations.”

“Reveals virtues’ form at the gate of exceptional quandary” clarifies form, in that form does not obstruct essence. “Exceptional quandary” is the essence of noumenon, clarifying that “virtues’ form” refers only to the essence. If there were form apart from the essence, such form would not be the mysterious or wonderful form of victorious virtue, which is called virtues’ form. Speaking of “exceptional quandary”, it is just emptied emptiness. Borrowing the words of Laozi, “Or rather more secret than so-called mystery. There’s the deeper mystery: The gate and doorway from which issued all secret essences, yes, all such subtleties.”³⁷ Whether you own a name or not, both are considered a mystery. The Riverside Lord noted [in his commentary on the *The Tao Te Ching*], “Mysterious are the heavens, and there are heavens beyond heavens.” Zhaungzi conveyed, “Heaven is natural, hence nature is natural too.” *The Imperial Commentaries on The Tao Te Ching* state that the mysterious is profound and wonderful. I am afraid that being attached to the mysterious is a stagnation that prevents forgetting both the profound and the wonderful, so the mysterious is used to dispel the mysterious. Understand the absence of desire by being without desire—by relying on this, a myriad of things is born. Hence this is called the door of the myriad of wonders. Now in emptied emptiness, no virtue is wanting.

“Functions flourish so they are everlasting” clarifies how function is not apart from the form of the essence, therefore the plentiful rises and yet it remains constant, as it is. The aforementioned elements of the triad essence, form, and function do not disregard each other; each component is certified to and observed.

“Wisdom pervasively mirrors and yet is always still” is about that which can certify and observe. What this line clarifies is non-obstruction between “stopping” and “contemplating”. “Pervasively mirrors” is about contemplation,

contemplating phenomena and noumenon pervasively. “Always still” is about stopping, where all signs of confusion are stilled. Also the provisional and the real are unobstructed: “Pervasively mirrors” is about the provisional while “always still” is about the real. With regard to the above three lines, they are about non-obstruction between states and wisdom. Since the state contemplated is unobstructed in essence and function, the wisdom that can contemplate also illuminates both flows quietly. If this were directed separately at the three elements, each would be replete with essence and function and contain stopping and contemplating. Just as the aforementioned essence, “the orphic true body”, is the essential, the stopping, so “the realm of a myriad of transformations” is the function, being about contemplation. “Revealing virtues’ form” is about contemplation. “The gate of exceptional quandary” is about stopping. “Functions flourish” is about contemplation. “So they are everlasting” is about stopping.

If we were to explain the three contemplations, the contemplation of emptiness would be about using wisdom to reflect, the mirroring function is a false contemplation, and the mirroring of form is a middle-way contemplation. These three truths are in line with contemplation, therefore termed pervasively mirrored. With regard to these three contemplations, the stopping of constant stillness also consists of three aspects: A. The essence is true therefore still. B. Stillness expediently accords with conditions without grasping. C. Stillness is apart from discrimination based on either of the two extremes. The three stoppings and the three contemplations integrate in the one-mind and correspond with the three truths’ noumenon of non-obstruction so that the mind and its states are merged in a way that is always clear.

The true and the false intersect thoroughly
so that through the ordinary mind the mind of Buddhas is seen.
Cultivate both phenomena and noumena
by relying on fundamental wisdom
while seeking the wisdom of the Buddhas.

1.2.6.1.2. The text contains two sets about integrating the true and the false. “The true and the false intersect thoroughly” and on is the one set about integrating both the proper and the understanding. “Cultivate both phenomena and noumena” and on is the one set about non-obstruction occurring for both.

Integrating both the proper and the understanding. “The true” refers to noumenon, the Buddhas. “The false” refers to confusion, birth, the cycle of birth and death, and *nirvāṇa*. “Intersect thoroughly” means that the true covers the false and superficialities while the false permeates the source of the true; hence they are said to interlink and mingle. They are like waves and moisture; there are no dry waves and no moisture apart from waves. In discussing interlinking and mingling, we could also claim, “Through the sage’s mind we see the minds of ordinary beings.” Just as we see waves in moisture, so the Thus Come Ones do not eliminate nature that is evil, not to mention furthermore, in the minds of

Buddhas are sentient beings and others. If we were to base ourselves on this idea, we can say that the true and the false interlink and mingle, and ordinary beings and sages gather each other in.

Now the contrary. With regard to integrating noumena, the real is the coexistence of the true and the false. Now about the existence of indestructible hallmarks—those who understand ordinary beings are similar to sages because that is equivalent to the true. However, sages are different from ordinary beings because they have no afflictions. For example, waves are moist but moisture may not necessarily be waves, as in the presence of clean water. Since clean water explains that waves contain the nature of movement and the phenomenon of non-movement. Just as waves explain moisture, in that both movement and moisture exist, the explanation that ordinary beings are Buddhas benefits ordinary beings too. However, claims about Buddhas being ordinary beings result in misunderstandings.

Consequently it is said, “So that through the ordinary mind the mind of Buddhas is seen.” The fact that the true and the false interlink and mingle is because the two Dharmas of the true and the false are of the same mind. The false overtakes the true to form nothing other than the false; the true manifests according to the false so there is nothing other than the true. The names for the true and the false are different but they are not two essences. Where the false exists beyond the true, noumenon does not pervade; where the true exists beyond the false, phenomenon has nothing to rely upon. Perhaps we speak of falseness being empty and the true being existent, the false being existent and the true being empty, both being empty and being existent, both being negated and being affirmed—and yet these many facets all interlink and mingle.

What does this mean? Let us talk about what Dharmas are of the true and what Dharmas are of the false. There are two ideas inherent to the true and the false: A. Speaking of the Three Natures,³⁸ perfect realization is the true and pervasive calculation is the false. The emergence of the inherent nature based on the other connects with both the true and the false, its pure portions are equivalent to the true and tainted portions are equivalent to the false. B. Speaking of the Two Truths, the truth is true and the secular truth is false. There are many doors to the Two Truths, which I will elaborate upon below. Now regarding the two doors of phenomenon and noumenon, noumenon is the truth and the true while phenomenon is the secular truth and the false. Even the pure portions of phenomena are not entirely devoid of falseness.

Question: Are the two Dharmas of the true and the false empty or existent?

Answer: Just as *The Consciousness Only Śāstra* states, with regard to pervasive calculation, it is false; so where the false is empty, the true is existent. If tainted portions were false, then both the true and the false would exist. *The Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says, “Emptiness is about the so-called cycle of birth and death while the absence of emptiness is about the so-called great nirvāṇa,” in that the tainted portions that rely on the other are empty whereas the pure portions that perfect realization exist in their entirety. According to the Three Śāstras, there is existence because of secular truths and there is emptiness

because of truths. Were we to assume the false as secular truth and the true as truth, then the false exists and the true is empty. If it were about according with the secular explanation of the Two Truths, both the true and the false connect with emptiness and existence. If it were about tangible objects in our midst, both the true and the false would be neither empty nor existent.

Question: What are the traits to activities that interlink and mingle with the true and the false?

Answer: Speaking of both interlinking and mingling, clarifications must be about the School. Consciousness-Only and other schools do not interlink and mingle. Now with regard to *The Flower Ornament*, all aforementioned ideas interlink and mingle because they are replete with the significance of the one-mind and others. Regarding pervasive calculation as falseness, for example, sentient existence means that noumenon is devoid of falseness and permeates the truth.

The absence of noumenon would mean that the sentient contains the true that penetrates the false. Regarding how the tainted portions rely on the other being the false, conditions generate the absence of inherent nature so the false penetrates the true. The absence of nature then conditions the realization of the true penetrating the false. Regarding the explanation of the cycle of birth and death and nirvāṇa, the cycle of birth and death is nirvāṇa so the false penetrates the true. Nirvāṇa is the cycle of birth and death, so the true penetrates the false. Hence *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* says, “The bounds of reality of birth and death is the bounds of nirvāṇa; the bounds of reality for nirvāṇa is the bounds of birth and death.” In this way, the two borders are not different by the slightest, which means that they interlink and mingle. This *Sūtra* affirms that, “Contention bespeaks of birth and death; the absence of contention bespeaks of nirvāṇa. Both birth and death and nirvāṇa cannot be attained.” Both are empty and existent, which demonstrates the importance of interlinking and mingling. Were we to rely on the Two Truths by assuming that the false is the secular truth and the true to be the truth, this would be about interlinking and mingling since something is made true because it is secular and something is made secular because it is true. Therefore Lord Tanying³⁹ expressed, “To unite the essentials at their source, the Two Truths meet and are connected. It is because of truth there is no existence; it is because of secular truth there is no absence. Although existent, it is absent, hence it does not burden existence; although absent, it is existent, hence it does not stagnate in absence. I can even say, stilling these various extremes is called the Middle Way.”

This is the interlinking and mingling of the true and the false. Because of the true, there is no existence; conversely, with absence, there is existence. So the true penetrates the false. Because of the secular, there is no absence; conversely, with existence, there is absence. So the false penetrates the true. The rest can be thought about along the same lines. Were we to accord with the secular explanation that the true and the false are fundamentally illusory and yet they interlink and mingle, then the fundamental and the superficial are of one flavor given that the true and the false are all true but actually interlink and

mingle. Tangible objects among them actually interlink and mingle. Next is a clarification on the how's of interlinking and mingling.

Question: The traits of the true and the false are as contrary as water and fire, how is it possible that they interlink and mingle?

Answer: It means many things here:

1.2.6.1.2.1. Since the two Dharmas of the true and the false are of the same mind, they are strung together as one so that interlinking and mingling are possible. Therefore *A Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* argues, “There are two types of doors that rely on the Dharma of the one-mind: A. The door of the mind that is True Thusness. B. The door of the mind that involves coming into being and ceasing to be.” Although there are two doors, they both individually gather-in all Dharmas exhaustively. Since these two doors are inseparable, it is therefore said that they are not apart from the one-mind so that interlinking and mingling are possible.

1.2.6.1.2.2. The false overtakes the realization of the true because there is no other falseness. This is also what is meant in *A Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna, Victorious Garland*, and others because “True Thusness” and “accord with conditions” lead to the realizing of all Dharmas so that the true penetrates the false. Since speaking truth that accords with falseness reveals that there is no other truth, falseness penetrates truth. If there were no falseness, how could you speak of relative truth? If falseness were produced without conditions, it would be devoid of the absence of nature.

1.2.6.1.2.3. The terms for the true and the false are different but their essence is not two. As cited, contention bespeaks of birth and death, non-contention bespeaks of nirvāṇa etc.—neither is attainable and yet their essence is non-dual. Therefore the *Sūtra* maintains, “If we were to chase after specious terms, grasping and becoming attached to these two Dharmas, it would be perversion and not the real meaning—that way we cannot see Proper Enlightenment.” Understanding non-duality to be real, how could they not interlink and mingle?

1.2.6.1.2.4. The following is about noumenon not pervading because beyond the true there is the false, which turns into two ideas. This line is about the true penetrating the false.

1.2.6.1.2.5. Phenomena have nothing to depend upon because beyond the false there is the true, which is about the false penetrating the true. This is also an idea from the Dharma Nature School.⁴⁰ All Dharmas are thus, how could there be the true beyond the false? True Thusness⁴¹ pervades all places, how could there be the false beyond the true? Therefore know that the true and the false always interlink and mingle; they also do not impair the hallmarks of the true or the false. Hence the true that enshrouds the false is untrue truth that is lucid and still; the false that permeates the true is genuine falseness that gathers and flourishes.

Non-obstruction occurs for both. “Cultivate both phenomena and noumena by relying on fundamental wisdom while seeking the wisdom of the Buddhas” is what is meant by non-obstruction in interlinking and mingling. My remarks are

made here out of fear that people will mistakenly be attached to and obliterate the hallmarks of both. Also, for those confused individuals who are attached to meditation practices,⁴² relying on the fundamental nature of wisdom being the absence of action and cultivation because the mirror is fundamentally bright without having to wipe it or polish it, they must act on phenomena. Those who are attached to the Dharma shall seek to become the Thus Come Ones by relying on the winning conditions of others to realize their personal virtues.

For those with biased attachments, I recommend that they practice both. Those who rely on their fundamental wisdom speak based on noumena since the nature of wisdom without outflow is fundamentally complete. Discussions among those who seek the wisdom of Buddhas are predicated on phenomena because in seeking nothing, we are seeking. The mirror of the mind is fundamentally pure but it has been occluded for long because dust coats the senses, because the inherent nature's virtues as many as sand grains in the Ganges are buried in the sand of afflictions, because we accord with the essence of the Dharma without miserliness, greed etc. as we practice *dāna*, generosity, and others, because all Buddhas have already reached certification while we have not, because noumena do not obstruct phenomena or prevent the seeking of them, and because phenomena do not obstruct noumena so seeking is no seeking. If these types of cultivation were called the absence of cultivation, in the cultivation of the absence of cultivation, cultivation makes for no cultivation, which is real cultivation.

Noumenon changes according to phenomena
as boundless conditions give rise to the one and the many.
Phenomena become integrated with noumenon,
as thousands of differences relate without impediment.

1.2.6.2. Clarifies that the Dharma Realm of Non-Obstructive Phenomena. The significance to the purpose and destination of the *Sūtra* is divided and delineated here. We shall elaborate on and distinguish them. But for now, I will briefly clarify by dividing them into two parts: 1.2.6.2.1. Clarifying the cause of non-obstruction; 1.2.6.2.2. Properly showing the signs of non-obstruction.

1.2.6.2.1. Clarifying the cause of non-obstruction. The reason that non-obstruction occurs where phenomena vary is because noumenon integrates phenomena. The first line clarifies that by relying on noumenon, phenomena form, therefore the one and the many are conditions for each other's development. This is still about the non-obstruction of phenomena and noumenon—one is at the immediate heel of the other, which is why they are named here. With the non-obstruction of phenomena and noumenon, the non-obstruction of phenomena is reached. Were phenomena not noumena, phenomena would not be created by noumenon; consequently they would obstruct each other. Now because phenomenon is noumenon, non-obstruction occurs.

The next line is about how noumenon integrating phenomena. So it says, "Phenomena become integrated with noumenon, so that thousands of differences

relate without impediment.” This properly differentiates the *how* of non-obstruction among phenomena. With the aforementioned, noumenon occurs as phenomena are overtaken. Without phenomena, there is no noumenon so that noumenon integrates with phenomena. Since noumenon integrates and connects, phenomena imitate noumenon so that the state of thousands of differences relating without impediment is attained. Phenomena vary in thousands of different ways, but to integrate with noumenon, involvement occurs in infinite dimensions. This is why this is the Door of Integrating and Connecting the Nature of Noumenon among the Ten Mysteries. I will clarify the rest below.

So the Ten Bodies he attained are distinct but work together.
 He interferes not with the Six Positions⁴³ and enfolds them furthermore.
 They are so vast they melt into ceaselessness.
 Embraced and accommodated by a dust or a hair,
 nothing is outside of them.
 Distinct and radiant, they manifest simultaneously
 like mustard seeds in a jar.
 Complete and concurrent,
 they are droplets occupying the sea.
 Obstructing neither one nor many,
 equivalent to a thousand lamps in an empty hall.
 Delivering both concealment and revelation,
 such as a slice of moon in the autumn sky.
 Layers and layers of their reflections intersect,
 as if those on the dangling pearls of the Lord’s Net.
 Perfect and interpenetrating are they in thought after thought,
 similar to centuries in a dream overnight.
 The Dharma doors stack up,
 like clouds, mounting across the long sky.
 The scent of their myriad of conduct drapes over,
 comparable to flowers blooming on brocades.

1.2.6.2.2. Properly showing the signs of non-obstruction replete in the Ten Doors of Mystery. To accord with the text expediently, this list is slightly out of order. The following is the sequence: 1.2.6.2.2.1. The Door of Simultaneous Completion and Mutual Interaction. 1.2.6.2.2.2. The Door of the Unhindered and Easy Intersections between the Vast and the Narrow. 1.2.6.2.2.3. The Door of the One and the Many Containing One Another yet being Different. 1.2.6.2.2.4. The Door of the Mutual Identity of All Dharmas in Freedom and Ease. 1.2.6.2.2.5. The Door of the Hidden and the Revealed being Established Together. 1.2.6.2.2.6. The Door of the Establishment and the Inter-containment of the Subtle and Minute. 1.2.6.2.2.7. The Door of the Dharma Realm like Indra’s Net. 1.2.6.2.2.8. The Door of Relying on Phenomena to Reveal Dharmas and Produce Understanding. 1.2.6.2.2.9. The Door of the Different Accomplishment of Separate Dharmas of the Three Periods of Time. 1.2.6.2.2.10. The

Door of Complete Virtues from the Perfected Understanding of Host and Companions. You can tell the sequence by the words in the text except for the door about the host and companions, the text and principles of which were already complete in the earlier section on rites, so I will not repeat it. The various portions of the *Tripitaka* are simple or mixed, with different names in the present and ancient times. Now that the texts are published again, there are also ten doors.

1.2.6.2.2.1. “So the Ten Bodies he attained are distinct but work together. He interferes not with the Six Positions and enfolds them furthermore” is about the Door of the Mutual Identity of All Dharmas in Freedom and Ease. There are two lines of text.

The first line generally clarifies that the three realms form each other, “so the Ten Bodies he attained are distinct but work together. He interferes not with the Six Positions and enfolds them furthermore.” With regard to “so. . . he attained”, you attain all Ten Doors of Mystery below with the aforementioned phenomena that integrate noumenon. Although the words “so. . . he attained” appear early in the text, they connect with the list of ten below.

With regard to the “Ten Bodies”, the Eighth Stage explains, “These Bodhisattvas stay far away from all thoughts of discrimination about the bodies and reside in impartiality. These Bodhisattvas know the bodies of living beings, bodies of lands, bodies of karmic retribution, bodies of Sound Hearers,⁴⁴ bodies of Solitarily Enlightened Ones,⁴⁵ bodies of Bodhisattvas, bodies of Thus Come Ones, bodies of wisdom, bodies of Dharma, and bodies of space.”

With regard to “work[ing] together”, the *Sūtra* next claims:

These Bodhisattvas know the pleasures on the mind of one living being and can assume the body of that living being as their own body. They can also become a body of land, a body of karmic retribution, and even a body of space. They also know the pleasures on the mind of one living being and can assume the body of one land as their own body. They can also become the body of that living being, a body of land, and even a body of space. They also know the pleasures on the minds of all living beings and can assume the bodies of karmic retributions as their own bodies. They can also become bodies of living beings, bodies of lands, and even bodies of space. They also know the pleasures of living beings and personally assume the bodies of living beings, bodies of lands, and even bodies of space. They accord with the different pleasures of all beings so as to make appear these forms and others in their own bodies.

My explanation: Each of the above four versions discloses information, their examples will come after the conclusion, which are about the Ten Bodies working with one another.

With regard to “distinct”, it is a sign of indestructibility. Actions that destroy form are not inconceivable, since Sumeru accommodated on a mustard

seed is the original form of Mt. Sumeru. This is why the 77th fascicle of the *Sūtra* says, “It is the dwelling place of the indestructible hallmark of one land entering all lands.” It also says, “It is the dwelling place etc. of the indestructible hallmark of one Buddha entering all Buddhas.” The 56th fascicle of the *Sūtra* says, “It is said to make the bodies of living beings into bodies of lands without destroying the bodies of living beings is a game for Bodhisattvas. To make the bodies of lands into living beings’ lands without destroying the bodies of lands is a game for Bodhisattvas.” In this way when the bodies of the Buddhas and the bodies of the Two Vehicles work together, the bodies of Bodhisattva-conduct and the bodies of Proper Enlightenment-realized work together, they signal that birth and death etc. are in nirvāṇa with none of their hallmarks expunged. Hence it says they are clearly distinct and yet work together.

The next line says, “He interferes not with the Six Positions and enfold them furthermore.” The Six Positions are the Three Worthies, the Ten Sages, the Two Enlightenments of Impartiality and Wonder. Due to cause and effect, they mutually gather-in one another. Just as those who bring forth their initial resolve immediately realize Proper Enlightenment do not destroy the hallmarks of their initial resolve. Without initial resolve, what would be meant by the phrase, immediate realization of Proper Enlightenment upon bringing forth the initial resolve? Since the Ten Faiths gather-in all positions and the Ten Faiths are clear and distinct within all positions. The Ten Abodes gather-in all positions; all of the positions of the Ten Abodes are orderly. Orderly, they spread afar and collapse furthermore, which is a perfect integration. Just as the following discusses, differentiating the cause for this line is also about entering the door through form. The following contains form for entering, so this line is about form just as milk thrown into water abandons itself and becomes like something else. This is why it is called form.

1.2.6.2.2.2. “They are so vast they melt into ceaselessness. Embraced and accommodated by a dust or a hair, nothing is outside of them” is about the Door of the Unhindered and Easy Intersections between the Vast and the Narrow. The first line is about the great being able to enter the small and the next line is about the small being able to accommodate the great. Although there is entering, the idea is about vastness and narrowness. “Ceaselessness” is smallness. So small nothing is inside it and because it has no interior, it has no center. “Nothing is outside” means that it is gigantic—so huge nothing is beyond it. Nothing is outside means that the land of a great body immediately enters a dust mote or a hair that has nothing inside—this is why it is called an unhindered and easy intersection.

Whether as is or upon entering, it reaches unhindered intersection. The *Sūtra* says, “All around are limitless adamantine mountains, how can they be safely placed on the tip of one hair? Wishing to know the characteristic of smallness when it is the greatest, Bodhisattvas consequently develop their initial resolve.” The quality of smallness exists when it is the greatest refers to the indivisibility between vastness and narrowness. It also says, they “can make small worlds into large worlds and large worlds into small worlds” etc.

1.2.6.2.2.3. “Distinct and radiant, they manifest simultaneously, just as a jar of mustard seeds” is about the Door of the Establishment and the Intercontainment of the Subtle and Minute. The one can accommodate the many, accommodating mutually. The one and the many do not mix, so they stand alone safely. “Distinct” means evident. There are three aspects to the subtle and minute:

1.2.6.2.2.3.1. The subtle and minute contained are like a lapis lazuli jar with many mustard seeds. The seeds are clearly arrayed and sequentially aligned; they do not block one another and there is no front or back. This is exactly what *The Sūtra of the Thus Come Ones’ Inconceivable States* proclaims, though there are two versions. One version says these are white mustard seeds, the other version just says these are mustard seeds. We will be relying on this latter version for now. As said, the one Dharma called inherent nature contains everything completely, hence all Dharmas manifest herein according to the principles embodied. They also mutually accommodate because of the unobstructed ease with which conditions develop real virtues. They do not safely stand because of the workings of heavenly beings. Just as with the Eight Forms,⁴⁶ each and every form is replete with the Eight Forms, called subtle and fine.

1.2.6.2.2.3.2. It is about the capability to contain the subtle and fine.

1.2.6.2.2.3.3. It is about the difficulty of knowing the subtle and fine.

1.2.6.2.2.4. “Complete and concurrent, they are droplets occupying the sea” is about the Door of Simultaneous Completion and Mutual Interaction. Just as one drop of ocean contains the flavors of hundreds of bodies of water and the ten types of virtues, so this door accords with one Dharma and gathers-in endless Dharmas, including the following nine doors. This one door is a generalization, and yet it is simultaneously made clear that there is no first or last; being complete, it gathers everything in without exception.

With regard to the sea’s ten types of virtues, here’s a description from *The Ten Stages Sūtra*, “A. Gradually deepens. B. Rejects corpses. C. Any water that enters it loses its former name. D. Universally shares the same taste. E. Infinite gems. F. Bottomless. G. Vast and limitless. H. Giant creatures reside in it. I. No excessively high tides. J. Universally accepts major downpours.” *The Nirvāṇa Sūtra* explains, “Just as people who enter the great sea of desire use the water of all rivers personally,” cultivating this one form of practice and the virtues therein cannot end.

1.2.6.2.2.5. “Obstructing neither one nor many, equivalent to a thousand lamps in an empty hall” is about the Door of the One and the Many Containing One Another yet being Different. Due to the mutual arising of conditions between the one and the many, their powers and functions interweave, hence interpenetrating each other, which is called mutually containing. Since their traits are intact, they are said to be different. Just as a thousand lamps in a room simultaneously shine, their brightness varies depending on the wick. Wherever the lights reach, the lamps accord, hence lights intersect and interpenetrate, always different and always entering other rays of light. The *Sūtra* discloses, “In one, the infinite is understood; in the infinite, the one is understood. Understand

that they give rise to each other so that they become unimportant.” This metaphor of lamps is also an analogy about their form in that, by looking directly at the light, no other form can be seen because there is only one light.

1.2.6.2.2.6. “Delivering both concealment and revelation, such as a slice of moon in the autumn sky” is about the Door of the Hidden and the Revealed being Established Together. Just as the moon is half revealed and half hidden on the nights of the eighth and ninth, a proper manifestation is a hidden manifestation. A proper manifestation is different than a hidden new moon; it is different than a full moon revealed without any part of it hidden. When one gathers-in the many, the one is revealed while the many are hidden. The many gather-in the one while the many reveal the hidden one. One hair gathers-in the Dharma Realm while the Dharma Realms of the rest of the hairs are hidden. Each and every hair gathers each other in and enters each other, so each hides and reveals in the same way. However, the half moon is not only half light and half dark, there is also darkness beneath the light side and light beneath the dark side; just as entering in the East is half bright, rising from *samādhi* in the West is half dark. Entering *samādhi* in the East, rising from *samādhi* occurs in the East. Just as there is darkness beneath the light, when the rising place is in the West, there is entry into *samādhi* in the West. Just as there is light beneath darkness, it is called the Door of the Hidden and the Revealed being Established Together.

1.2.6.2.2.7. “Layers and layers of their reflections intersect, as if those on the dangling pearls of the Lord’s Net” is about the Door of the Dharma Realm like Indra’s Net. Just as the universe’s palatial net of pearls canopies from above, one bright pearl completely reflects the myriad of things. All pearls are this way and furthermore reflect each other’s reflections. The reflections furthermore reflect the hidden ad infinitum. Therefore although a thousand lights and a myriad of colors intersect and reflect layer upon layer, they are orderly and distinct, just as two mirrors reflect each other, the dimensions interpenetrate, so they transmit illuminations written to deliver the inexhaustible.

1.2.6.2.2.8. “Perfect and interpenetrating are they in thought after thought, similar to centuries in a dream overnight” is about the Door of the Different Accomplishment of Separate Dharmas of the Three Periods of Time. In the chapter on Detachment from the World, the Bodhisattvas explain the three periods of time in ten ways, “It is said that the past explains not only the past, but the past explains the present and the past explains the future. The present explains the past, the present explains parity, and the present explains the future. The future explains the past, the future explains the present, and the future explains infinity. The three periods of time define one thought.”

The first nine are specifics while the one thought is a generalization; hence they are called the ten periods of times. The hallmarks to the cause of the three periods of time gather each other in so that each thought is replete with ten, indicating inexhaustibility. One thought is infinite eons and infinite eons are one thought. Universal Worthy’s Conduct and Vows chapter conveys, “With insight, limitless and countless eons are one thought. Know that thoughts are no thought then you see the world.” Just as in one night’s dream one undergoes several

lifetimes, *The Mahāyāna Compendium*⁴⁷ determines that, “It may seem as if you were undergoing years in a dream, but waking up only requires a moment. Therefore time may be boundless while gathering-in time occurs in one briefest moment in time.” The chapter on Detachment from the World articulates, “Just as people in their dreams do various things, such as experiencing millenia in time, though the night has yet to end.” Therefore Zhuangzi⁴⁸ depicted life as a butterfly’s dream. And the Commentaries say in life there are those who pretend to sleep and dream that they are undergoing centuries. There is an assortment of this type of thing.

1.2.6.2.2.9. “The Dharma doors stack up, likened to clouds mounting across the long sky” is about the Door of the Different Accomplishment of Separate Dharmas of the Three Periods of Time. Speaking of “stack[ing] up”, it is meant to show that the one and the many do not obstruct each other, so with each and every phenomenon there are many Dharma doors. To accord with one phenomenon is to be in infinite Dharma Realms. Dharma Realms being infinite, phenomena are infinite too. Just as the *Sūtra* states, “These flower canopies and others come into being etc. from Patience with the Non-Production of Dharma.” The idea is to clarify that all causes produce one effect, since one effect is replete with all causes. This is not a different expression with the same basis.

1.2.6.2.2.10. “The scent of their myriad of conduct drapes over, comparable to flowers blooming on brocades” is about the Door of Complete Virtues from the Purities and Impurities of Various Treasuries. This is one of the terms for the hallmarks of the Ten Mysteries; it contains two ideas, which is why Xianshou changed it to the Door of the Unhindered and Easy Intersections between the Vast and the Narrow. For one, if the corresponding principles were pure and the myriad conduct were impure, then phenomena and noumenon would be unobstructed rather than phenomena and phenomena being unobstructed. These two doors could be different without phenomena and phenomena being unobstructed if the Bodhisattvas’ great compassion were pure so that we only see them practice compassion throughout the future while the rest of their conduct were like space and if the impure door were about those who completely cultivate the myriad of conduct.

Two, just as it is considered pure that the entire myriad of Dharmas is regarded as generosity within one door of practice about giving, this door of giving is considered impure because it is replete with the conduct of all *pāramitās*.⁴⁹ Just as purity and impurity do not obstruct each other, they are hence called replete with virtues; in this way the idea of non-obstruction among phenomena develops and all *pāramitās* are preserved in either one. This is precisely about entering the door with name and form.

Were all *pāramitās* eliminated, their similar form would be the door. This is why the earlier name of this door was not preserved but modified to include forms that range from the vast to the narrow. The *pāramitās* only vary slightly with regard to form. Since this passage omits the paradigm about host and companions, the name of this door resurfaces to illustrate ten ideas.

With regard to the line “comparable to flowers blooming on brocades”, the idea comes from the five-colored garland of petals. Although the colors of the flowers are different, a thread strings all of them together. Connection is analogous to purity while distinction is analogous to impurity. Since the flowers are always connected by some commonality and yet each has a unique name, they are considered unobstructed. Conversely, silk drawings of various flowers are distinct but do not connect.

The above Ten Mysteries briefly unfold a major outline, the significance of which will be elaborated upon, divided, and aligned below.

Too lofty to behold,
just as Bodhisattva Accumulating Conduct
exposes himself like a dessicated fish at the dragon gate,
Too profound to catch a glimpse of,
just as the supremely virtuous Sound Hearers
were visually and aurally obstructed at the celebratory assembly.

1.2.7. Realizing the benefits and transcending them suddenly. There are ten ideas to this text. The first consists of two ideas: 1.2.7.1. They demonstrate the height and depth of the *pāramitās* overall and clarifies that the provisional is tiny and fathomable. 1.2.7.2. The latter eight explain the realized benefits proper, how pervasive benefits are suddenly perfected. Also the first two are high and deep, which actually show the benefits realized. The provisional, being minuscule and unfathomable, is clarified because there are no causes from the past so sentient beings are actually exhorted to believe. The latter eight accord with the manifestations and realize the benefits—so it is said, that which is capable of being sudden and perfect will certainly be cause for acceptance.

1.2.7.1. They demonstrate the height and depth of the *pāramitās* overall:
1.2.7.1.1. Clarifying height and distance: 1.2.7.1.2. Exhibiting depth and wonder.

1.2.7.1.1. Clarifying height and distance. If Mt. Tai and Jihua lean against the sky and Mt. Ming and Emei sweep across China, we can hardly view the top of them. Therefore *The Analects* states, “I looked up to them, and they seemed to become more high; I tried to penetrate them, and they seemed to become more firm.”⁵⁰ “Bodhisattva Accumulating Conduct” in the chapter on Manifestation of Buddha says:

Suppose Bodhisattvas practice the Six *Pāramitās* throughout infinite, hundreds and thousands and millions of *nayutas*⁵¹ of eons and cultivate various Dharmas of the Bodhi way, but they have never heard of these Thus Come Ones’ inconceivably great, awesome, and virtuous Dharma doors, or that they have encountered them but do not believe, do not understand, do not accord with, or do not enter them, they cannot be called real Bodhisattvas. For these reasons they cannot become born in the Thus Come Ones’ homes. If they encounter these Thus Come Ones’

infinite and inconceivably wise Dharma doors without barrier or obstruction, then they would believe, understand, accord with, and enter into enlightenment upon encountering them. You should know that these individuals will become born in the homes of Thus Come Ones and others.

Just like fish that try to leap over the dragon's gate—for those that leap over, they immediately transform into dragons as if tapping into *The Flower Ornament* potential. For those that fail to leap over, they expose their scales beneath the dragon's gate like those Bodhisattvas with false names, having to cultivate the provisional teachings sequentially.

1.2.7.1.2. Exhibiting depth and wonder with the following: “Too profound to catch a glimpse of, just as the supremely virtuous Sound Hearers were visually and aurally obstructed at the celebratory assembly.” At the start of the Entry into the Realm of Reality chapter, Śāriputra and five hundred Sound Hearers praised the virtues of the Buddhas, saying, “Having awakened to the truth, they have completely certified to reality, deeply entered the essence of Dharma, and forever transcended the sea of existence. Relying on the merit and virtues of the Buddhas, we leave behind mental knots, servants, and bindings. Abiding in a place of non-obstruction, our minds are quiet and still like space. At the place of all Buddhas, we forever end our doubts and confusion. We deeply believe and enter the destiny of the sea of Buddhas' wisdom.”

My explanation: These are supreme virtues, but at the celebratory assembly of the Thus Comes One at Śrāvastī,⁵² the Sound Hearers did not see or hear this, they were occluded in their vision and hearing. Occluded means plugged up—in the eyes it is vision and in the ears it is hearing. Although they were at the assembly, they were as if deaf and blind; therefore they are said to be occluded in seeing and hearing. Consequently, the *Sūtra* relates:

At that time, all the leading great Sound Hearers were Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Revata, Subhūti, Anirudha, Nanda, Kaphina, Kātyāyana, Purna Maitreyaniputra and others. All the great Sound Hearers at Śrāvastī did not see the spiritual might of the Thus Come One, the fine adornments of the Thus Come One, the states of the Thus Comes One, the games of the Thus Come One, the spiritual transformations of the Thus Come One, the revered victories of the Thus Come One, the wondrous conduct of the Thus Come One, the awesome virtues of the Thus Come One, the abiding and upholding of the Thus Come One, or the pure lands of the Thus Come One. Furthermore, they did not see the inconceivable states of Bodhisattvas or the great assembly of Bodhisattvas, the universal entry of Bodhisattvas, the universal arrival of Bodhisattvas, the universal presence of Bodhisattvas, the spiritual transformations of Bodhisattvas, the games of Bodhisattvas, the retinues of Bodhisattvas, the directions of Bodhisattvas, the adorned lion thrones of Bodhisattvas, the palaces of Bodhisattvas, the dwellings

of Bodhisattvas, the at-ease-*samādhi* that Bodhisattvas enter, the observations of Bodhisattvas, the speed of Bodhisattvas, the boldness of Bodhisattvas, the offerings of Bodhisattvas, the predictions granted to Bodhisattvas, the maturity of Bodhisattvas, the courage of Bodhisattvas, the purity of Bodhisattvas' Dharma bodies, the perfection of Bodhisattvas' wisdom bodies, the manifestation of Bodhisattvas' bodies of vows, the realization of Bodhisattvas' physical bodies, the purity replete in all marks of Bodhisattvas, the adornment of various forms and constant light of Bodhisattvas, the extremely bright jeweled nets emitted by Bodhisattvas, the changing clouds raised by Bodhisattvas, bodies of Bodhisattvas that pervade the ten direction, and all conduct perfected by Bodhisattvas. They do not see any of these things.

Why? It is because they have different roots of goodness. It is because originally they did not cultivate or practice seeing the Buddhas' ease and all their roots of goodness. It is because originally they did not praise the merit and virtues of the purity of all Buddhalands throughout worlds in the ten directions. It is because originally they did not praise the various spiritual transformations of all Buddhas and World Honored Ones. It is because originally they did not bring forth the resolve for *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*⁵³ in the migration of birth and death; it is because originally they did not cause others to abide in the resolve for Bodhi. And it is because originally they cannot cause the essence of the Thus Come Ones' lineage to continue etc.

The above first lists humans, who are Sound Hearers with supreme virtues, next an explanation for their not seeing etc., i.e., being occluded in seeing and hearing. Why the next section? It explains the reasons for their not seeing. The inferior ones do not see though it is not yet profound; the supremely virtuous ones do not know, hence it is a mystical wonder.

Seeing and hearing are seeds
 in transcending the Eight Difficulties as steps to the Ten Stages.
 Personally practice understanding and action,
 in one lifetime, the fruits of vast eons are perfected.
 The lion bolts—
 the oceanic multitudes spontaneously reach certification in the forest.
 The elephant king turns—
 six-thousand realize the Way as soon as the words fall.
 His enlightened explanation at the Eastern temple
 shows that his wisdom is full, no different than the initial mindstate.
 Entrusted with positions, he sought southward—
 consummating causes without having to exceed the bounds of a pore.
 In dissecting the fascicles of the *Sūtra* in a particle,
 fruitions are realized in thought after thought.

Through the door of fulfilling sentient beings' vows,
his conduct is perfected in dust mote after dust mote.

1.2.7.2. The latter eight explain the realized benefits proper, the hallmarks of pervasive benefits that are suddenly perfected.

1.2.7.2.1. "Seeing and hearing are seeds in transcending the Eight Difficulties as steps to the Ten Stages" clarifies the benefits of seeing and hearing, which is also called the benefits of the lineage. In the chapter on the Ocean of Physical Marks of the Ten Bodies of Buddha, those among the three tiers of hell beings, heavenly beings, and human beings realize sudden perfection. And an excerpt from the First Stage, "Although living in the *kalpic* fire⁵⁴ of the sea, those who accept this Dharma will certainly encounter the benefits; whereas those who are skeptical and disbelieve will never encounter ideas such as these." Not believing and not hearing repeatedly show that with belief and hearing, benefits will be realized. The seawater is the destiny that gathers-in dragons and animals. *Kalpic* fire is a fire that occurs in the heavens of First *Dhyāna* and Second *Dhyāna*, the Heaven of Light Sound and others where extreme longevity is an issue. Even for those who encounter this Dharma here, including the hell beings, heavenly beings, and human beings mentioned above, they are faced with these three difficulties already. At the assembly of Buddhas, even spirits and ghosts encounter this teaching, not to mention those of the three realms. At the time of the fire, both before and after the time of a Buddha, the realms of humans and gods are different. But already eloquent and smart, they do not choose to be in the Northern Continent.⁵⁵ The deaf see with their eyes and the blind listen with their ears; even though the Eight Difficulties⁵⁶ are replete, all are allowed to see and hear the meaning of this heritage. To transcend the Ten Stages is precisely about being among hell beings, heavenly beings, and human beings. By naming the major points and assimilating the minor points, even those in the *Avīci* Hells⁵⁷ will reach sudden perfection, so how can those in the realm of humans not stay and listen? So in the chapter on the Ocean of Physical Marks of the Ten Bodies of Buddha, the Buddha told Jeweled Hand Bodhisattva:

Disciple of the Buddha, under each foot of a Bodhisattva is a mark of a thousand-spoked wheel called the King of Universally Illuminating Light. It embodies a secondary hallmark called Perfection King that always releases 40 types of light. In their midst is a light called Pure Merit that can light up worlds as many as dust motes in millions of *nayutas*⁵⁸ of Buddhalands by according with the various karmic activities, desires, and pleasures of sentient beings so that they become mature. Sentient beings undergoing extreme misery in the *Avīci* Hells encounter this light and all, at the end of their lives, become born in the *Tuṣita* Heaven. Having become born in that heaven, the heavenly drum sounds to speak the Dharma extensively for them.

I can even say, once all heavenly beings hear the explanation of Universal Worthy's vast and great dedication, they reach the Ten Stages, attain the adorned *samādhi* of various powers, and eliminate all of the various major obstacles in shame, on behalf of the three pure forms of karma for sentient beings and others. They then see seven-jeweled lotuses as many as dust motes in hundreds of thousands of millions of *nayutas* of Buddhalands. Above each and every flower is a Bodhisattva sitting cross-legged and releasing magnificent light etc., even spreading flowers over Buddhas. I will tell you too, various fragrant clouds universally rain down upon worlds as many as dust motes in infinite Buddhalands. Were there sentient beings perfumed with that scent, they would be at peace and happy physically, even to the point of eliminating their 84,000 forms of afflictions. Knowing thus, they realize the ease, light, and pure roots of goodness like clouds of scented banners.

My explanation: This is the first tier along the Ten Stages' attainments.

Next the text communicates, "If there were sentient beings who see that canopy, they would have planted roots of goodness as many as sands in one Ganges River, like those of Golden Rimmed Wheel-Turning King."⁵⁹ My explanation: This is the second tier along the Ten Stages' attainments. Later in the text it says, "Bodhisattava *Mahasattavas* who abide in the position of the pure Golden Rimmed Wheel Turning King release pure light from their pearl top-knots. All sentient beings who encounter that light will reach the Tenth Stage of the Bodhisattvas, realizing infinite light of wisdom, attaining the ten types of pure eyes, even the ten types of pure thoughts, and being replete with limitless *samādhis* that are most profound." My explanation: This is the third tier along the Ten Stages' attainments.

1.2.7.2.2. "Personally practice understanding and action, so in one lifetime the fruits of vast eons are perfected" understands the benefits of conduct. In the 78th fascicle of the *Sūtra*, Maitreya praises Good Wealth⁶⁰ saying:

All other Bodhisattvas throughout eons in limitless hundreds of thousands of ten's of thousands of millions of *nayutas* can fulfill their practice, as in their Bodhisattva vows, and even draw near all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In one life time, this elder's son can purify Buddhalands, can transform sentient beings, can deeply enter the Dharma Realm with wisdom, can accomplish all *pāramitās*, can add to the expansiveness of all conduct, can perfect all great vows, can transcend all demonic karma, can serve and attend to all good friends, can purify all Bodhisattva ways, and can be replete with Universal Worthy's various conduct.

And Great Awesome Light Prince is also someone who perfected many eons' effects in one life. The above two examples both illustrate the rapid speed

of his certification. Also the tradition based on this *Sūtra* clarifies the perfection of three births: A. The birth of seeing and hearing. B. The birth of understanding and conduct, which are in the above two lines. C. The birth of certification and entry, which are in the next two lines.

1.2.7.2.3. “The lion bolts—the oceanic multitudes spontaneously reach certification in the forest” is about suddenly certifying to the benefits. The start of the 60th fascicle of the *Sūtra* imparts, “At that time the World Honored One knew the thoughts in the minds of all Bodhisattvas. With great compassion as the body, great compassion as the door, great compassion as the head, and the Dharma of great compassion as an expedient, he filled up space and entered the *Samādhi* of Lion’s Sprint.” In an earlier version of this *Sūtra* it is called “bolt”, which means being brave and fast; it uses the metaphor of a lion as an ad hoc expression.

From the start of the 61st fascicle of the *Sūtra*, after Universal Worthy gave an address, the Thus Come One released bright lights from between his brows. At that time the great multitude of Bodhisattvas at Śrāvastī’s Jeta Grove saw all Buddhalands throughout the entire Dharma Realm and space. In each and every dust mote are all Buddhalands with various names, various forms, various purities, various dwellings, and various shapes—the number of which equals dust motes throughout all Buddhalands. In all those lands are great Bodhisattvas who sat on the lion throne at the place of practice realizing Proper and Equal Enlightenment. Great multitudes of Bodhisattvas surrounded them, front and back. All lords of worlds made offerings etc., which are said to be the reason why they attained great spiritual might that fills the Dharma Realm and space, and entered the Thus Come Ones’ inconceivable and utmost profound *samādhi*. Or it may be why they entered the Dharma Body, entered the physical body, entered all realized practices in the past, entered the perfection of all *pāramitās*, entered wheels of adorned and pure conduct, entered all Stages of Bodhisattvas, entered the realization of the power of Proper Enlightenment, entered undifferentiated great spiritual transformation from the *samādhi* where Buddhas abide, entered the fearless wisdom of the Thus Come Ones’ powers, or entered the unobstructed sea of Buddhas’ eloquence. Or it may be why they suddenly reached certification in the Grove and vastly explained the ten capabilities for entering this door.

1.2.7.2.4. “The elephant king turns—six-thousand realize the Way as soon as the words fall” and on is about transcending provisional benefits. At the start of the final assembly in the 61st fascicle of the *Sūtra*, 6,000 *bhikṣus* gathered. His physical embodiment allowed the 6,000 *bhikṣus* to behold Mañjuśrī’s ten virtues. The 6,000 *bhikṣus* requested to go and see Mañjuśrī, and his physical body made it possible for them to see.

At that time Youth Mañjuśrī had infinite At Ease Bodhisattvas surrounding him, along with other large multitudes. He was like a king elephant as he turned to look at all *bhikṣus*, which is why it says the elephant king turned around. Speaking of “six thousand realize the Way as soon as the words fall,” these *bhikṣus* developed their vows and Mañjuśrī led them to bring forth ten kinds of

indefatigable states of mind. At that time all *bhikṣus* heard this Dharma and attained the *samādhi* called the Unobstructed Eye. Seeing all Buddhas' states, they attained this *Samādhi*. All of them saw all Buddhas and Thus Come Ones in all worlds throughout limitless and boundless ten directions and their multitudes of assemblies in places of practice. They also saw all sentient beings in all destinies throughout worlds of the ten directions, they also saw various differences among all those worlds, they also saw every dust mote in all those worlds, they also saw palaces that were adorned with various gems where all beings live in all those worlds, and they also heard all those Buddhas and Thus Come Ones proclaiming all Dharmas with various words and sounds, understanding those words, phrases, exhortations, and explanations completely. Also they were able to observe all sentient beings' desires in their every sense faculty in those worlds; they were able to recall all sentient beings' ten lives before and after in those worlds too; they were able to recall matters throughout ten eons in the past and ten eons into the future in those worlds too; they were able to be mindful of all that happened with the Thus Come Ones during ten lives past, ten realizations of Proper Enlightenment, ten turnings of the Dharma wheel, ten forms of spiritual powers, ten forms of speaking the Dharma, ten forms of teaching and exhortation, and ten forms of eloquence too; they also realized that the 10,000 Bodhi resolves, the 10,000 *samādhis*, and the 10,000 *pāramitās* are all pure. They attained the perfect light of great wisdom, they attained the ten spiritual powers' tender and subtle wonders, and unmoved, they upheld their Bodhisattva resolves steadily.

At that time, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva exhorted all *bhikṣus* who abided in Universal Worthy's practice. Abiding in Universal Worthy's conduct, they entered the sea of great vows. Entering the sea of great vows, they realized the sea of great vows. Realizing the sea of great vows, their minds were therefore pure; minds pure, their bodies were therefore pure; bodies pure, their bodies were therefore light and agile; bodies light and agile, they therefore attained great spiritual powers without retreating; and having attained these spiritual powers, they did not leave Mañjuśrī at his feet, hence universally manifested their bodies at the places of all Buddhas throughout the ten directions and completely realized all Buddhadharmas. My explanation: This is about realizing the Way. There are ten functions of powers in one *samādhi*, all of which perfected the benefits reaped.

1.2.7.2.5. "His enlightened explanation at the Eastern temple shows that his wisdom is full, no different than the initial mindstate" is about the realization of the benefits of wisdom. Regarding "His enlightened explanation at the Eastern temple," the 62nd fascicle of the *Sūtra* elucidates, "At that time Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva encouraged all *bhikṣus* to bring forth *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* and gradually traveled southward. Having experienced the world, they arrived at eastern Chaitya and stayed in the Adorned Banner Sala Grove, where great *stūpas* and temples were located and where all Buddhas in the past taught and transformed sentient beings."

My explanation: This is about what occurred at the temple in the east. “At that time, the people at Chaitya heard that Youth Mañjuśrī was located by the great *stūpas* and temples in the Adorned Banner Sala Grove, so infinitely large crowds came out of the city and went to that location.” The following lists one by one the presence of 500 *upāsikās*, 500 *upāsakas*,⁶¹ 500 boys, and 500 girls, among whom Good Wealth is one. In the following Mañjuśrī alone observes Good Wealth. Having made his observations, he comforted Good Wealth and used an analogy to proclaim all Buddhadharmas for him, including the speaking of this Dharma. He eagerly urged him with an analogy to increase his strength so that he will be happy and bring forth the resolve for *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. He also led him to recall his past roots of goodness. Having done so, he spoke the Dharma appropriate for all sentient beings at that location, then left.

At that time, Youth Good Wealth heard about these various merits and virtues from Mañjuśrī and focused on diligently seeking *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* according to the verses, words, and other utterances by Mañjuśrī. This is the enlightened explanation at the temple in the east.

“Shows that his wisdom is full, no different than the initial mindstate”—a non-dual sign illuminated by initial wisdom according to the 80th fascicle of the *Sūtra*. The *Sūtra* reads:

At that time Mañjuśrī extended his right hand across 110 *yojanas*⁶² and pressed the top of Good Wealth’s head, saying: Excellent, excellent, good man. If you leave the root of faith, your mind will become inferior with sadness and regret. You will not be complete in meritorious conduct and will lose vigor and diligence. Resolving to abide in and to be attached to one root of goodness, and becoming satisfied with little merit you cannot bring forth conduct and vows with wholesomeness and cleverness. Kind teachers will not gather you in and protect you, Thus Come Ones will not keep you in mind, and you cannot know Dharma nature such as this, destinations for principles such as these, Dharma doors such as these, conduct such as these, and states such as these. Whether it is pervasive knowledge or various forms of knowledge, you will not be able to reach the depth of the source, of understanding, of entry into a destination, of a verbal explanation, of discrimination, of certification, or of attainment.

My explanation: From “understanding the Dharma nature” and on is about the perfection of wisdom. If you abandon faith, you could not attain wisdom; in fact the above shows that attainment is possible because of faith. If you do not leave your initial resolve, then faith and wisdom are non-dual. If unmoving wisdom is considered what is initial, then the earlier and the later, and the two forms of wisdom, are non-dual.

1.2.7.2.6. “Entrusted with positions, he sought southward—consummating causes without having to exceed the bounds of a pore” is about realizing the

benefits of those positions he reaches. It is said that Good Wealth was entrusted with achieving the positions of the Ten Faiths upon seeing Mañjuśrī initially, entrusted with accomplishing the positions of the Three Worthies and the Ten Sages as he went from Virtuous Clouds to Gopa, and was entrusted with realizing Equal Enlightenment by Maya and on. Later when he saw Universal Worthy, he immediately acquired perfected causes without having to go beyond one hair pore. The text details:

At that time Youth Good Wealth saw himself in the body of Universal Worthy, teaching and transforming sentient beings in all worlds throughout the ten directions. It also says: The total number of seas of Buddhalands that he entered in a thought and on one hair pore of Universal Worthy exceeded all those seas of Buddhalands that he entered from the time that Youth Good Wealth developed his initial resolve until he saw Universal Worthy Bodhisattva. He exceeded that number by as many dust motes in ineffably ineffable Buddhalands. Just as it is the case in one hair pore, so it is the same in all hair pores. It also says, Youth Good Wealth in those lands on Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's hair pores practiced in this way for one eon in each land or practiced in this way for eons as many as dust motes in ineffably ineffable Buddhalands, and yet he never disappeared from this land to appear in another land.

In thought after thought, he pervaded a limitless number of oceanic lands to teach and transform sentient beings, causing them to go toward *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. At that time, Youth Good Wealth attained Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's various seas of conduct and vows sequentially so that he was equal to Universal Worthy, equal to all Buddhas, equal to one body filling all lands throughout worlds, equal to conduct, equal to Proper Enlightenment, equal to spiritual powers, equal to Dharma wheels, equal to words and phrases, equal to voices, equal to the power of fearlessness, equal to the abodes of Buddhas, equal to great compassion, and entirely the same and equal to the inconceivable liberation and ease.

My explanation: This is about the perfection of causes on a hair pore.

1.2.7.2.7. "In dissecting the fascicles of the *Sūtra* in a particle, fruitions are realized in thought after thought" shows that causes result in beneficial effects. In the chapter on Manifestation of Buddha, the scripture describes in verse-form the analogy that this great *Sūtra* is submerged in a dust mote:

If the fascicles of the great *Sūtra* were equal to the volume of 3,000 worlds, they would still be in one dust mote the way they were in all dust motes. One intelligent individual sees all of them clearly with his excellent vision and shatters that dust mote to remove the fascicles of the *Sūtra*, universally benefiting sentient beings. Just as it is so with the

wisdom of Buddhas, so the text pervades the minds of sentient beings; however, entangled by false thoughts, beings neither awaken nor are aware. Given the great compassion of all Buddhas, this *Sūtra* causes false thoughts to end. Manifestations in this way benefit all Bodhisattvas.

Furthermore the *Sūtra* expounds, “You should know that in thought after thought of the mind, there are always Buddhas realizing Proper Enlightenment. Why? It is because all Buddhas and Thus Come Ones do not leave their mind to realize Proper Enlightenment.” Therefore, correspondence in thought after thought means realization in thought after thought.

1.2.7.2.8. “Through the door of fulfilling sentient beings’ vows, his conduct is perfected in dust mote after dust mote” achieves the benefits of conduct and vows. It is said that Bodhisattvas develop their resolve to transform beings in realms until beings end—only if the realms of beings end will their great vows end. The realms of beings are inexhaustible so their great vows will be unending. Therefore the Ten Stages chapter says, “Only if the realms of sentient beings end will my vows end. Since the realms of sentient beings never end, these great vows and good roots of mine never end.” Now although the realms of sentient beings are endless, they own these *Sūtra* fascicles, hence these rolls of text are universally disclosed to cause Bodhisattvas to make the great vow of ending endless number of sentient beings’ cyclic existences. With regard to “his conduct is perfected in dust mote after dust mote,” it is difficult to imagine the mind’s capacity for Bodhisattvas’ great compassion, for they cultivate a myriad of practices throughout limitless eons in one dust mote for one sentient being without growing weary. They do so in every dust mote and in every lifetime, which shows that vows and conduct are endless. Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva praised Good Wealth this way, “You pervade all lands and all eons equal to the number of dust motes cultivating Universal Worthy’s conduct, realizing the Bodhi path.”

Truly it can be called wondrous articulation throughout forever,
as these prevalent rules are versatile for any direction.
An ultimate expression that matches the inherent nature
and the essential track of the One Vehicle.

1.2.8. Concluding with a praise about its grandeur and extensive reach in two parts: 1.2.8.1. Showing the other’s superiority. 1.2.8.2. Showing the superiority of each relative to the other.

1.2.8.1. Showing the other’s superiority in that the “forever” in “truly it can be called wondrous articulation throughout forever” is clarified. Forever refers to the past and the future, without bounds.

“As these prevalent rules are versatile for any direction” clarifies “prevalent”, meaning the Dharma is spoken in every land. What is understood is its universal scope, but different provisional teachings may be verbalized or not.

“An ultimate expression that matches the inherent nature” shows depth. Since every word and line is congruent with principle, one cannot be exhaustive. The great Universal Worthy told Good Wealth, “In my sea of Dharmas there is not one word, not one line that is sought after and attained by giving up and giving away the position of the King of Infinite Turning Wheel.”

“And the essential track of the One Vehicle” clarifies “essential”. It is said that the One Vehicle is the unique purpose of the Separate Teachings’ One Vehicle, the door of perfected causes and the wonder of Buddhahood realized.

In the search for the esoteric aim,
I have browsed other *sūtras*;
but this one is like the radiant sun on a sunny day,
robbing brilliance from numerous other scenes
or as if Sumeru across the seas,
clipping the heights of summits in multiples.

1.2.8.2. Showing the superiority of each relative to the other, first via the Dharma, then the analogies. We understand the initial lesson. Two analogies are presented later in the text.

“But this one is like the radiant sun on a sunny day, robbing brilliance from numerous other scenes” is a simile that bright wisdom overpowers other lights. The new sunrise being dawn, it is “radiant” because of its luminosity. This *Sūtra* is like the rising sun. When the sun rises, it overtakes the splendor of all other settings, including luminous sceneries such as lights from the stars or the moon. Among the flow of extremely bright lights in the sky, it overwhelms the splendor of a plethora of stars. This *Sūtra*’s phenomenal explications make all texts dull.

“Or as if Sumeru across the seas, clipping the heights of summits in multiples” is a metaphor for its incomparable height and superiority. “Sumeru” is this *Sūtra* while “summits in multiples” are the other *sūtras*. Let us assume that the seven gold and metal gates are taller and wider than all those around, but Mt. Wonderfully High that transcends the oceans’ surfaces considers those heights minimal because it overlooks all summits as if they were mounds of dirt.

Hence the Bodhisattva searched for the mystical in the Dragon Palace
and greatly worthy ones proclaimed it in China.
Concerned only about how in the era of the Proper Dharma
a clear illumination is shrouded still.
Fortunately during the concluding hours of the Image Age,⁶³
we occasion mysterious transformations.
Not to mention encountering a sagely lord
at the top of Vulture Peak.
So we ponder earnestly the mysteries of this School—
how can we not jump for joy?

1.2.9. There are two aspects to gratitude for this encounter: 1.2.9.1. A clarification about the origin and the cause of this vast propagation. 1.2.9.2. A proper explanation of this moving encounter.

1.2.9.1. A clarification about the origin and the cause of this vast propagation. “Hence the Bodhisattva searched for the mystical in the Dragon Palace” claims that Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva entered the Dragon Palace in search of and found this most profound text more than 500 years ago. This is described in *The Supplementary Records to the Huayanjing* and *Records of Compiling the Miraculous Related to the Huayanjing*.⁶⁴

“And greatly worthy ones proclaimed it in China” formally cites Juexian and other greatly virtuous ones such as Zhiyan, Faye, Rizhao, Śikṣānanda, and others who promulgated this text. “In China” refers to the green mountain ranges in the east, an area of several thousand *li*. It is the so-called great Chinese expanse, as it is so referenced above. It is because this teaching is profound and wonderful that a search for it had to occur before it was propagated. Hence Nāgārjuna entered the Dragon Palace and saw a limitless number of texts but he recited this *Sūtra* specifically because it is a mystical wonder. This is why *The Wisdom Śāstra* calls this the greatly inconceivable *Sūtra* and claims that many greatly virtuous ones who had read this text could not write one word or one line about it, even if they were to use up ink the quantity of seas. And the light of one of its verses shatters the utter misery of the hells, hence all masters ordered it propagated and circulated.

1.2.9.2. A proper explanation of this moving encounter. “Concerned only about how in the era of the Proper Dharma a clear illumination is shrouded still. Fortunately during the concluding hours of the Image Age, we occasion mysterious transformations” consists of two parts: First is gratitude for the past and next is gratitude for the present.

First, our gratitude for the past. It is said that 500 years ago when it was the time of the Proper Dharma, this clear and radiant *Sūtra* was hidden inside the Dragon Palace where no one had heard about it. How fortunate it is that during the dying years of the Dharma Image Age that we encounter this esoteric and subtle transformation. We ought to be sad that we were born and live in the late years of the Dharma Image Age; in reflection however, the earlier times were an era where the Proper Dharma was not yet on the decline but this *Sūtra* was unheard of, therefore I am thankful. Based on this and without subtracting a millennium of the Proper Dharma Age in duration, the end of the Image Dharma Age is now. It has been 1,860 years since the Great Master entered nirvāṇa. According to the divisions in the Great Accumulation Moon *Tripitaka*, the first 500 years are solid in liberation, the second 500 years are solid in *dhyāna samādhi*, the third 500 years are solid in erudition, the fourth 500 years are solid in the building of *stūpas* and temples while the fifth 500 years are solid in fighting and contention. Presently we are not experiencing the final years of the *stūpa* and temple-building period; rather, our age borders the era full of fighting and contention. To leaf through and encounter this inconceivable *Sūtra*, we may crush ourselves into pieces out of gratitude and yet be unable to repay it.

“Not to mention encountering a sagely lord at the top of Vulture Peak, so we ponder earnestly the mysteries of this School—how can we not jump for joy?” is about the next type of gratitude, gratitude for the present. There are three parts to this gratitude: 1.2.9.2.2.1. Gratitude for the times. 1.2.9.2.2.2. Gratitude for the location. 1.2.9.2.2.3. Gratitude for what is cultivated.

1.2.9.2.2.1. Gratitude for the times. This is exemplified by, “not to mention encountering a sagely lord.” It is said that times of simplicity are difficult to encounter. Now that we are under the reign of a sagely and understanding emperor who permits the Five Teachings to spread and be taught, greatly propagating the One Vehicle while other lands leer at one another as the *Brahmā* bells’ echoes intersect. This is why I can live in leisure and study this text, investigating the numinousness of this esoteric door. This is one of my great fortunes.

1.2.9.2.2.2. “At the top of Vulture Peak” is about gratitude for the location. The refreshing Vulture Peak is the foremost among the 3,000 mountains for Mañjuśrī the great sage and all Buddhas and patriarchs. Although the color gold rises in the east, this residence is golden too. Although the great Sage pervades the Dharma Realm, he always gathers-in those with potential on this mountain. Miraculous responses universally pervade like reflections befalling hundreds of streams. He is always refreshing like the bare moon in the clear sky. The myriad of sages quietly praise from the Five Peaks as hundreds of lineages transmit gratitude through the generations. Not to mention furthermore, that the Greatly Inspirational Vulture is the designated name for this holy monastery where I as an insignificant monk among its number of residents, am grateful given my many shameful lifetimes. This again makes me thankful.

1.2.9.2.2.3. “So we ponder earnestly the mysteries of this School” is about gratitude for what is cultivated. *The Flower Ornament Sūtra with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas* is the palace of origin for Vairocana, the heart and marrow of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, and that which is certified to by all Buddhas and upheld by all Bodhisattvas. Its feature of an inclusive nature leaves none out; its wisdom based on perfect principles stands out. How fortunate it is to hold the *Sūtra* in my hands without it entering the hands of others. How fortunate it is to investigate its mystery and depth when Accumulating Conduct Bodhisattva was confused about it. The third fortunate thing is that my physical body will die its death and my ceased thoughts will reach their return, so how can I not jump for joy with regard to the above three conclusions? Like someone drowning in the giant sea and encountering a fine boat or someone falling from on high and end up riding on a magic crane, when experiencing utmost joy and gratitude, so what if I jump with joy? In short, I am moved and grateful, in a way only the worthy and sagely ones know.

The title—*The Flower Ornament Sūtra*
with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas—
is a general name for an inexhaustible *sūtra*.

Chapter one, Wondrous Adornments of Leaders of Worlds, is a distinct topic for a variety of meaning in these sections.
 “Greatly” vastly covers boundlessness.
 “Proper” upholds the orthodox Dharma on its own.
 “Extensive discourses” reach with their consistent essence.
 “Buddhas” awaken to that which is esoteric and wondrous.
 “Flower” is a metaphor for the meritorious virtues
 of the myriad of conduct.
 “Ornament” refers to the adorned Dharmas that make for people.
 “*Sūtra*” is the eternal spring pouring forth.
 Threading the wonderful meanings mystically coalesced
 and gathering-in limitless seas of assemblies
 as the perpetual guidelines throughout eternity.
 Buddhas and all kings
 are both called lords of worlds.
 All Dharma doors that rely on externals⁶⁵
 are termed wondrous ornaments.
 Divided into types of meanings to clarify the titles of books,
 the crowning chapter among them is called the first.
 This *Sūtra* contains 39 books.
 This chapter is the initial in form,
 therefore it is named Chapter One of *The Flower Ornament Sūtra*
 with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas.

1.2.10. A brief explanation of the names and titles. The Ninth Door below will elaborate, so this part is brief. There are three sections: 1.2.10.1. Twin designations for the two classifications of the *Sūtra* and its chapters. 1.2.10.2. Twin explanations of the two classifications. 1.2.10.3. Twin conclusions of the above two.

1.2.10.1. Twin designations for the two classifications of the *Sūtra* and its chapters. First the designations for the *Sūtra*'s classifications. It is said that it moves from brief to extensive developments that are proclaimed inexhaustibly. The inconceivable sea of teachings is not apart from seven [Chinese] words, which is the entire title of this boundless *Sūtra*. Next, the Wonderful Adornments of the Leaders of the Worlds is the first chapter and a separate category from the multitude of essays based on significant ideas and of other categories. The label “chapter” is a form of classification. The multitude of essays refers to the 39 chapters. Other categories of significant ideas are different depending on the chapter. Now this is the first chapter and deemed a distinct category.

1.2.10.2. “‘Greatly’ vastly covers boundlessness” and on employs two explanations for the two classifications: 1.2.10.2.1. An explanation of the title overall. 1.2.10.2.2. An explanation of its classification by chapter.

1.2.10.2.1. Following the Ten Doors are an explanation of the overall title that examines the seven words, each word is meaningful in ten ways. I will

merely name the words and explain them succinctly. These seven [Chinese] characters contain six correlations in brief:

A. The word “*Sūtra*” is about teachings. The Flower Ornament with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas is the signification, so teachings and signification are one correlation.

B. The word “Ornament” is a generalization. The Flower with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas are specifics, so generalizations and specifics are one correlation.

C. “Flower” is that which can adorn. The Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas are adorned. That which is and that which can are a correlation.

D. “Buddhas” are the individuals adorned. The Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses are the Dharmas that adorn, so people and the Dharma are a correlation.

E. “Extensive” is a function. The Greatly Proper is all about essence, so essence and function are one correlation.

F. “Proper” is form and Greatly is a quality, so the inherent nature and form are a pair.

Hence these seven characters are the substance of the seven greats: “Greatly” is the great entity, “Proper” is the great form, “Extensive Discourses” are the great function, “Buddhas” are the great effect, “Flowers” are the great cause, “Ornament” is great wisdom, and “*Sūtra*” is the great teaching. These seven words are all great; these seven words are all equal.

Now each line means two things. “‘Greatly’ vastly covers boundlessness”:

1.2.10.2.1.1.1. “Vastly covers” clarifies what “greatly” contains; it is about vastness and pervasiveness, which characterize “greatly”. Therefore *The Nirvāṇa Sūtra* imparts, “Speaking of great, its nature is vast like space.” The *Sūtra* states, “The nature of the Dharma pervades all places, all beings, and all lands, being present throughout the three periods of time without exception. There is no shape, form, or anything to be attained.”

1.2.10.2.1.1.2. No boundaries. Regarding a discussion of the vertically connected, it is constant—the so-called “greatly”. *The Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says, “Speaking of great, its name is constant.” Therefore the *Sūtra* says, “The nature of the Dharma has no doing or changing, like space that is fundamentally pure. All states of Buddhas are the same; the nature of their substance is not nature, being apart from existence and void.” However, nothing can mimic the depth and wonder of the palace of origin; hence it belongs to the category “great”. Actually words and thoughts are eliminated, which is why the *Sūtra* says, “The essence of the Dharma is not in words or discussions, it contains no words; it is apart from words and always still and extinct. All states of Buddhas cannot be measured and are spoken in brief now to enlighten sentient beings.”

“‘Proper’ upholds the orthodox Dharma on its own” also consists of two facets:

1.2.10.2.1.2.1. “Proper” means orthodox.

1.2.10.2.1.2.2. “Extensive discourses” are the Dharma. They support the inherent nature and connect to the above two ideas. It is said that the virtues of the inherent nature are as many as sands in the Ganges. There is no prejudice or falseness, it is called proper. All can be maintained according to the rules, as they are the Dharmas. Therefore the *Sūtra* relates, “Ordinary beings have no enlightened understanding whereas Buddhas cause the Proper Dharma to abide. Abiding in none of the dharmas, they awaken to this view personally.”

“‘Extensive discourses’ reach with their consistent essence,” this is about great function. Function is like a substance, pervading without exception. There are two additional aspects. Substance means two things: One is that it can contain, two is that it can pervade. Just like space that accommodates the myriad of things, it pervades all places of form and formlessness. Now function is a consistent essence: A. The embodiment of what is called essence accepts boundless worlds with one dust mote. B. The pervasiveness of what is called essence permeates lands throughout the Dharma Realm without end. The above three words are about the unobstructed essence, form, and function—they are the Dharma Realm certified to.

“‘Buddhas’ awaken to that which is esoteric and wondrous” also means two things—one is that which is capable of awakening. Buddha is a Sanskrit word and means the Awakened One here. Second is that which is awakened to, which is the Great Means Expansiveness. It is the mysterious and wonderful state because that which is awakened to is mysterious and wonderful. This is what the above Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses are about. Individually explained, awakening to the above function is to awaken to the world’s truths, awakening to the above essence is to awaken to the truths, and awakening to the above marks is to awaken to the Middle Way. The three truths integrate and the three awakenings are unobstructed, which indicate Wonderful Enlightenment.

“‘Flower’ is a metaphor for the meritorious virtues of the myriad of conduct” also means two things:

1.2.10.2.1.5.1. The response to the effect of flowers, an analogy of the causes to a myriad of conduct that result in Buddhahood, may or may not bear fruit. Being complete [by bearing fruit] is like a lotus, a symbol of the intersection between cause and effect. Being incomplete is like a peach or a plum because an earlier cause did not deteriorate with the arrival of the later effect.

1.2.10.2.1.5.1. Flowers that adorn the body, an analogy of the merit of various positions, must be replete with the effect of each position. Therefore the *Sūtra* says, “When we see flowers bloom, may all beings’ spiritual powers and other Dharmas blossom like flowers. When we see trees bear flowers, may all beings’ features resemble flowers, being replete with the 32 physical hallmarks of the Buddha.”

“‘Ornament’ refers to the adorned Dharmas that make for people.” Here Ornament also means two things:

1.2.10.2.1.6.1. Decorating the fundamental essence with a myriad of conduct is to adorn the above Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses. Like a

clear bright mirror—though the mirror was initially pure—it will not remain bright unless polished.

1.2.10.2.1.6.2. Making people realize the fruition of Buddhahood with the merit of a myriad of conduct. Like the polishing of jade and the making of a vessel, they decorate the fundamental essence like gold molded into an image. Molding individuals with conduct is like a clever craftsman creating images.

“‘*Sūtra*’ is the eternal spring pouring forth, threading the wonderful meanings mystically coalesced and gathering in limitless seas of assemblies as the perpetual guidelines throughout eternity.” Only this *Sūtra* names four facets to its meaning, though they simply consist of two aspects about connections and ways to gather-in. More specifically, a spring represents the flavor of the meaning gathered and constancy because it connects with the above three features.

1.2.10.2.1.7.1. The words, “the eternal spring pouring forth,” connect with various teachings.

1.2.10.2.1.7.2. “Threading the wonderful meanings mystically coalesced” generally ties together the individual elements. *The Flower Ornament’s* individually mysterious and wondrous meanings are strung together. Crystalizations are solidified and clear, straightening and making neat the entire appearance.

1.2.10.2.1.7.3. “Gathering in limitless seas of assemblies” is to gather-in the meaning. The boundless oceanic assembly is restricted to the multitude related to this *Sūtra* and other selected multitudes.

1.2.10.2.1.7.4. “As the perpetual guidelines throughout eternity” is a line about constancy. Other sections explain how constancy is the king among hundreds of measures and standards; now one shared element ties the individual elements together. Constancy is distinct and belongs to this *Sūtra*. The Dharma eye is always whole and without deficiency or subtraction. Constant and eternal explanations do not casually accord with what is convenient. Free of errors since ancient times, it can be called constant.

The end of an explanation about the title.

1.2.10.2.2. “Buddhas and all kings are both called lords of worlds” is an explanation about the title of a chapter, specifically the Leaders of the Worlds chapter. The worlds include the three realms:

1.2.10.2.2.1. The realm of sentient beings.

1.2.10.2.2.2. The realm of material existence.

1.2.10.2.2.1. The realm of wisdom from Proper Enlightenment. Lords are kings such as Buddhas and all heads of state. Earth spirits, water spirits, forest spirits, and mountain spirits are world leaders in the midst of material existence. Heavenly kings, dragon kings, *yakṣa* kings, and others are world leaders among sentient beings. The Thus Come Ones are the leaders of the worlds of wisdom due to Proper Enlightenment; in general they also transform the above two, pervading and leading the above three. They are therefore called Leaders of Worlds.

“All Dharma doors that rely on externals are termed wondrous ornaments.” These adornments refer to three types of worlds too. Since the Dharma doors can adorn, they are strictly hosts. The tangible adornment connects with the

three realms; sentient beings and Buddhas all connect with the external. It is said that each leader of each world attains a Dharma door that adorns his multitude, which is the adornment of the world of sentient beings. They also use it to adorn Buddhas, which is the adornment of the wisdom of Proper Enlightenment. Realizing Proper Enlightenment is the Buddhas' personal Dharma door, hence they can cause their bodies to fill all worlds, their voices to universally accord with those in lands throughout the ten directions, and shine brightly with an awesome light among the multitude of Bodhisattvas. This is the ornament of wisdom in the Proper Enlightenment world. The ornament of the world of external materiality has solid earth composed of diamond, supreme and wonderful jeweled wheels, a multitude of wonderful flowers, and pure pearls adorning it.

The ornament of the world of external materiality connects to two Dharma doors: A. The power of the Buddhas leads to adornments while Buddhas adorn themselves. B. Those who observe and see can respond, which is the ornament of the Dharma door of the multitude of seas. Therefore the generalization explicates that the Dharma door relies on the proper and the complete, called Wondrous Ornament. The three realms' adornments surpass all others, therefore Wondrous Ornament is the title for one category of chapters.

1.2.10.3. Twin conclusions to the above two categories: "This *Sūtra* contains 39 books. This chapter is the initial in form, therefore it is named Chapter One of *The Flower Ornament Sūtra with Greatly Proper and Extensive Discourses by the Buddhas*." Its function resides in the preface of every *sūtra*, but the rest of the text will be analyzed below.

Among the above major divisions, this concludes the initial overall description of name and signification.

I relinquish my life to they throughout the ten directions
 and to the ends of the three times,
 the Taming Masters who made perfected and brightened lands
 as many as dust motes.
 They are clouds of great compassion in the Dharma Realm of merits;
 they are seas of great wisdom like that of Vairocana.
 They reside in the most profound and true Dharma nature,
 letting flow the perfect *Sūtra*.
 Throughout each and every direction's dust motes,
 in the assemblies of Buddhas
 are Universal Worthy, Mañjuśrī, and all great beings.
 (the first eight lines)
 Now with wisdom the size of a hair I wish
 to fathom and measure the space of the limitless Dharma Realm.
 I vow to inherit the Triple Jewel's kindness that considers us as one
 by having each line correspond with the depth
 of what is meant by all Buddhas.

May I ensure that the Dharma Eye never misses
any being throughout all realms—just like Universal Worthy.
(the next set of six lines)

I dedicate such victorious goodness to the benefit of living beings
so they may soon certify to Bodhi, the fruit of perpetual bliss.
(the final two lines)

2. To take refuge with and revere the Triple Jewel, requesting that they aid and protect with their might. There are 16 lines roughly divided into three sections. The first eight lines consist of proper refuge-taking with and reverence for the Triple Jewel. The second set of six lines is a request for them to aid and protect with their might. The third set contains two lines about dedicating and giving to sentient beings.

The first eight lines consist of proper refuge-taking and reverence for the Triple Jewel. There are two sections to “I relinquish my life to they throughout the ten directions and to the ends of the three times,” one being a general clarification while the rest shows specifics.

The words “relinquish my life” show the ability to return to form. The three karmas universally pervade and return to relying upon the infinite Triple Jewel. However, it speaks of life because people treasure nothing more than life and now are willing to give it up out of admiration.

“The ten directions” and below belong to two neatly divided categories. They pervade the ten directions horizontally and connect exhaustively with the three ends of time vertically; they connect the horizontal and the vertical at the ultimate level.

“The Taming Masters who made perfected and brightened lands as many as dust motes” and below shows the three distinct parts of the Triple Jewel separately: 2.1.2.1. From “dust motes” to “seas of great wisdom” is about taking refuge with the Buddhas. 2.1.2.2. From “they reside in” to “*Sūtra*” is about taking refuge with the Dharma. 2.1.2.3. From “lands as many as dust motes” to “all great beings” is about taking refuge with the Saṅgha.

2.1.2.1. There are two parts to taking refuge with the Buddhas. “They are clouds of great compassion in the Dharma Realm of merits” in general is refuge with all Buddhas while “they are seas of great wisdom like that of Vairocana” is a separate refuge with the Fundamental Teacher. “Lands as many as dust motes” means two things: A. Places relied upon. As it is said, for each and every dust mote in all lands there are lands adorned by Buddhas equal to the number of dust. Also dust is subtle and fine while lands are connected to the crude and the fine. B. Thus Come Ones as many as dust motes. With regard to “Perfected and brightened”, perfect means perfectly still and brightened refers to a clear understanding of wisdom, which is the bodhi of nirvāṇa. Also, no virtue is unperfected and no Dharma is dimmed. The first two are about self-benefit. The Taming Masters connect to benefiting others and is one of the ten titles of those who cleverly gather-in sentient beings.

There are two additional facets to “the Dharma Realm”: A. It becomes the location where the aforementioned relies. The above talks about lands like dust motes as a seeming phenomenon. Now it says that the Dharma Realm includes both phenomena and noumenon because the bodies of the Buddhas fill the Dharma Realm, filling the Dharma Realm without end that is. B. Later the merit of the Dharma Realm is called the clouds of great compassion.

“Merit” is another aspect of perfect clarity. The Ten Powers, Fearlessnesses, 18 Unique Dharmas, and 140 types of infinite virtues of the Dharma universally cover all with compassion, nurturing and nourishing all without a mind; therefore they are analogous to clouds.

“Vairocana” refers to a separate refuge-taking with the Fundamental Teacher, by riding on his substantial kindness. These four syllables indicate his name, of which three syllables praise his virtues. The above indicates that his merits and virtues are infinite in general. Now great wisdom in particular, is deemed most supreme because it accords with the meaning of pervasive light. Great wisdom is deep and vast, therefore analogous to the sea. Also all Buddhas point to compassion and the Fundamental Teacher speaks of wisdom. The sea’s reflections briefly elucidate just as compassion and wisdom are deep and vast. Compassion is also likened to the deep and vast sea of great compassion. Wisdom is like clouds that nurture and nourish with the Dharma rain. In addition, the aforementioned merits and virtues apply to the great wisdom named here, creating the two adornments where endless merits and virtues abide.

2.1.2.2. Taking refuge with the Dharma. “They reside in the most profound and true Dharma nature, letting flow the perfect *Sūtra*” is immediately at the heel of the above. That which follows shows the same essence but the separate marks returned-to do not coalesce with the principles. Actually the Triple Jewel consists of three hallmarks: 2.1.2.2.1. The same hallmarks. 2.1.2.2.2. Individual hallmarks. 2.1.2.2.3. The hallmarks of those who abide and uphold.

2.1.2.2.1. There are three aspects to what it means by those with the same hallmarks:

2.1.2.2.1.1. Regarding how the door of phenomenon aligns with some meaningful feature, with the Triple Jewel residing atop of each.

2.1.2.2.1.1.1. Above the inherent nature of the Buddhas there is an awakening that illuminates signification, which is called the Buddha jewel. Meaning in terms of standards and rules is called the Dharma jewel. The overcoming and ending of transgressions and contention is called the Saṅgha jewel. These take the merit and virtue of the Dharma Realm with no outflow as the essence.

2.1.2.2.1.1.2. The three aspects to that which is above the Dharma include the Dharma with the nature of awakening that is the Buddha jewel, standards and rules that are the Dharma jewel, and the non-contrary essence of the Dharma that is the Saṅgha jewel.

2.1.2.2.1.1.3. The three aspects to that which is above the Saṅgha: The wisdom that contemplates is awakening, which is the Buddha jewel. Standards and rules are the Dharma jewel. Free of transgressions among the multitudes and

free of transgressions against sentient beings, they are therefore named the Saṅgha jewel.

In identifying where the Buddhas reside now to clarify the Dharma, it is about the Buddhas and the aforementioned “us as one”. Noumenon is where the Buddhas reside. The teachings flow from the Buddhas. The two mutually rely upon each other.

2.1.2.2.1.2. About the door of meeting phenomena in compliance with noumenon, the entire Triple Jewel relies on the real. I now name how the Buddhadharma returns to the true nature in its entirety and will omit any explanation about the Saṅgha for now.

2.1.2.2.1.3. About the door of integrating manifestations with noumenon, the fundamental enlightenment of the mind’s essence is the Buddha jewel. Virtues as many as sand grains in the Ganges of the inherent nature symbolize all standards to be upheld, which are the Dharma jewel. Virtues numerous like the sand grains of Ganges are non-dual in essence and form, uniting with the profound without transgression, it is called the Saṅgha jewel. As a result of this door, the Thus Come Ones abide in the true nature of the Dharma. If this were absent, where would they abide? Although the three doors are different, they are together referred to as the same essence. Therefore *The Sūtra of Pure Names* says, “The Buddha is the Dharma, the Dharma is sentient beings. The Triple Jewel is unconditioned in its features and equal to space.” Therefore if we were to refer to the Buddha jewel as the signifier of enlightenment, standards and rules must be the Dharma jewel, and the union of deep accord must be entirely the Saṅgha. This signification is said to consist of three and cannot be one; however, with no other separate essence, how are they different? So they are said to be of the same essence.

2.1.2.2.2. Individual hallmarks. Just like the earlier part of the outline, the Buddha reaches everything horizontally and permeates the Ten Bodies vertically. The Dharmas connect with four principles and teachings that I will name briefly. “The dwelling place most deep, it is the true essence of the Dharma” refers to noumenon. “Letting flow the perfect *Sūtra*” is about teachings. Saṅgha members should attract others to and pervasively speak for them the *Mahāyāna* teachings, though only Mañjuśrī and Universal Worthy are named here.

2.1.2.2.3. Those who abide in and uphold the Triple Jewel. Among the Ten Bodies are the Body Upheld by Power and the Body of Physical Form etc., which are the Buddhas who abide and uphold. The *sūtras* are the Dharma that abide and uphold. Abiding and upholding members of the Saṅgha include Bodhisattvas. Although these three sets of the Triple Jewel connect to all vehicles, some are more superior. I chose ideas and outlines that are superior rather than inferior. Since one noumenon governs these three sets of Triple Jewel without discrimination, it shows that all of them sought refuge with exceptional reverence.

2.1.2.3. These two lines, “Throughout each and every direction’s dust mote in the assemblies of Buddhas are Universal Worthy, Manjushuri, and all great beings,” are about refuge-taking with the Saṅgha. The first line clarifies the

location. In each and every dust mote are all Buddhas surrounded by a multitude of Bodhisattvas, not to mention an inconceivable number of Universal Worthy's at each and every place of the Buddha who abide in the position of Universal Worthy without exception. The next line names the individuals, especially naming two who are the leaders of the oceanic assembly because they represent principles and wisdom. The words may be inconsistent but they include everything without exception.

2.2. "Now with wisdom the size of a hair I wish to fathom and measure the space of the limitless Dharma Realm. I vow to inherit the Triple Jewel's kindness that considers us as one by having each line correspond with the depth of what is meant by all Buddhas. May I ensure that the Dharma Eye never misses any being throughout all realms—just like Universal Worthy." These six lines are about a request for mighty aid and protection, which are divided into three sections:

2.2.1. "Now with wisdom the size of a hair I wish to fathom and measure the space of the limitless Dharma Realm" contains the intent for requesting refuge. The idea is about wishing to explain the *Sūtra*, but the connections show that refuge means many things. In terms of its overall form, the Triple Jewel is auspicious, being the most victorious and fine field for all sentient beings. There are those refuge takers who can do great things and produce all roots of goodness, leaving behind the suffering of birth and death and attaining the bliss of nirvāṇa. Therefore all *sūtras* initially list the Six Accomplishments⁶⁶ so that beings will believe. After the Buddha entered nirvāṇa, all disciples and all written descriptions cede themselves to the Triple Jewel, dispensing instructions about learning from the studies without possessing them. Having parted ways with foibles, one requests for mighty aid and protection so that one may resonate with the Triple Jewel. "Now with wisdom the size of a hair I wish" is about modestly comparing one's inferior wisdom to that of a hair. "To fathom and measure the space of the limitless Dharma Realm" praises the Dharma as being vast and deep like the true Dharma Realm. The space of one hair can be known and measured, but how can ordinary beings measure the Dharma to its end?

2.2.2. "I vow to inherit the Triple Jewel's kindness that considers us as one by having each line correspond with the depth of what is meant by all Buddhas" is the format for making a wish about increased aid and protection. The first line clarifies aid and the next line clarifies benefit. A clarification on what it means by increase: Unable to enter *samādhi* deeply but attracting the aid of the Buddhas externally, one requests the kindness of that same essence, hoping to be touched by victorious outcome. A clarification on what it means by benefits: Each line accords deeply with this wish and nothing about it is inconsistent from beginning to end. To use the word "depth" is a matter of being humble, showing that profundity has increased by the end. I hope to resonate with such depth so that my ordinary mind and dull pen quietly conform with the minds of sages.

2.2.3. "May I ensure that the Dharma Eye never misses any being throughout all realms—just like Universal Worthy" is about authoring and describing the conditional, causing the Dharma eye to perfect and to transform all sentient

beings. The Chief in Goodness chapter says, “All those great individuals’ awesome spiritual powers, their Dharma Eye is always whole and without deficiency or abatement.” The Ninth Dedication is about not wishing to realize Buddhahood for those whose vows equal Universal Worthy’s. Universal Worthy covers the causes and reaches the effects, existing before and after Buddhas. Universal Worthy is the core of all Buddhas, the essence of the Dharma Realm.

Therefore this is what *The Vajra Summit Sūtra* means by all Buddhas throughout the ten directions worshipping Universal Worthy. Although written descriptions are conditional, may the great Dharma propagate and connect them so sentient beings benefit and enjoy them—such is the great intent of compassionate wisdom. Unfortunately, many conditions do foster the construction of other specious theories. This *Sūtra* is the fundamental Dharma wheel that all Buddhas certify to, the standard for all teachings. All in this direction and India admire and observe them. For instance, the sagely empress browsed through rich and abundant writings. Xianshou was unable to reach his admirable goal of completing his commentaries, for he quietly returned to stillness when he reached the 19th fascicle of the *Sūtra*. Lord Huiyuan⁶⁷ was said to have continued the work of the commentaries from the earlier sections but deleting parts of them too. My writing style and phrasing do not live up to the caliber of the ancients, which may cause future generations to slight this great *Sūtra* so that the Way and the flow into Vairocana’s mind source do not materialize readily, and such that newcomers who are about to propagate the Dharma glance at Universal Worthy’s boundless sea of conduct heave a heavy sigh. Were I to remain quiet about faults of certain teachings, right and wrong would mix; would I not be shrouding the clear insights of those who transmit them? I would likely be deterring the path of students deceptively. By naming the different types of errors and pointing out disparate flaws, am I not only contributing to gossip, blackening any wise state of mind? Therefore pat the five summits of the mind and admire and rely on the Three Honored Ones so that without attainment, all is done.

In brief, there are ten other facets in meaning here: 2.2.3.1. The sages’ intent is profound and far-reaching because each extends his views and understanding. 2.2.3.2. It shows that the contemplation of the mind is not for meditators alone. 2.2.3.3. It supports great ideas from the past without wishing to ambush individuals. 2.2.3.4. It eliminates superficial words and engages in straightforward discussions about the highest principles. 2.2.3.5. It takes care of one’s own and others’ traditions by avoiding fabrications that generate divisiveness or criticism. 2.2.3.6. It differentiates and analyzes the distinctions between more recent and earlier ideas of the present and past. 2.2.3.7. It clarifies the instructions on the characteristics of the Dharma to show what the *Sūtra* includes. 2.2.3.8. It vastly proclaims mysterious words to awaken you to the mind’s essentials. 2.2.3.9. It absolves and removes gossip by avoiding fabrications that generate divisiveness or criticism. 2.2.3.10. It evenly integrates the start and the end so that you see both the head and the tail of the Commentaries.

The first is a general idea; the latter nine are individual ideas. Pointing to past faults and flaws, the Commentaries wish to cover right and wrong, for those who are transmitting this teaching must know its advantages and disadvantages. The sincere pleading of all disciples are difficult to contradict, so this is propagated and proclaimed for a long time without excessive counting and recounting. Fearing confusion will occur with this text and stagnation will develop at the superficial levels, I will have right and wrong compete against each other.

2.2.3.1. The sages' intent is profound and far-reaching because each extends his views and understanding, a general idea. It is said that the Buddhadharma is crushingly profound, it is considered deep or shallow depending on the individual's degrees of wisdom. This is also about preventing difficult questions posed by non-Buddhists, for I am afraid there will be challenges. With secular paths, lambs die on roads with many forks; students lose the true when the paths are many. The pure source is not two but the branches and sects are on the rise. *Śāstras* in the past and new articles benefit the true nature of the confused, so why should we build a house on top of a house, place a bed on top of a bed? Why change or duplicate something that already exists? Hence the following ten ideas all connect with this question.

Now the initial idea responds properly to this challenge, particularly from the view that the Sage's intent is profound and far-reaching but different depending on your perception. If each one of you will do your best to give Dharma with light, you continue to emulate those of the past, what more is there to say? Furthermore the Buddha allowed each of the 500 *bhikṣus* to explain their personal stories even though they were not orthodox statements. All 32 of the Bodhisattvas discussed non-duality, their disparate views return to the same source. Therefore in the *Sūtra*, each of the boundless number of oceanic assemblies enters the door of liberation so millions of different states together arrive at the Thus Come Ones' sea of wisdom. In turn, Oceanic Wisdom Bodhisattva tells us, "The states of the Thus Come Ones are boundless; each can observe and see according to one's level of liberation." Therefore those in India and China interpreted *śāstras* and annotated *sūtras*. One *sūtra* may encompass commentaries from many sects and its commentaries may contain explanations by various teachers. Just as an analysis shows that a golden staff and its gold substance are no different, the sea gathers-in hundreds of rivers collectively as gigantic waves lap up. Therefore Dharma presenters may be Bodhisattvas who have reached certain stages, worthy individuals who have strengthened their practices, outstanding contemporary figures, or those upon whom the Thus Come Ones have bestowed predictions. Their thinking stands out among crowds and their wisdom transcends the multitude of sentient beings. Though their views are distinctive, they disseminate the Dharma throughout society simultaneously. Each expounds on the beauty of the teachings and together they praise the great initiative, leading to inevitable benefits in accord with cultivation. Now I also admire their winning virtues as they try their utmost to specialize, peering into the sky through a tube and sprinkling drops of water to reproduce a sea—so how is this strange?

2.2.3.2. It shows that the contemplation of the mind is not for meditators alone. Although this *Sūtra* connects to the interpretations of the Three Studies,⁶⁸ it officially interprets *samādhi*. It is entirely proclaimed from the mind of the Thus Come Ones in *samādhi*. Therefore the *Sūtra* communicates this, “What you say with words is not the message; what I say is message nonexistent in words.” Not to mention that the nature of the oceanic *Flower Ornament* remains in the field of enlightenment while propagating the Oceanic Imprint *Samādhi* certified to by the Buddhas. It personally wields this *Samādhi* so that all Bodhisattvas in their meditative mindstates accept them. People in the past did not understand this ultimate principle and did not visit good friends; they merely browsed texts without valuing connections to this study. Focused on eloquence alone, they could not accept the holy teachings as their bright mirror that reflects their minds. They could not transform their minds into a lamp of wisdom that shines on the mysterious intents of this *Sūtra*. Mysterious words and noumenal explanations are said to be the same, but to have to humble yourself to plead with a study is called conjecture. Without knowing the myriad of conduct so that you understand your mind, you only get to count others’ treasures in this lifetime. Perhaps when you are elderly, you will wish to abandon the teachings and seek out meditation—will you not just be suppressing the mind of the Buddhas? This is actually a mistaken interpretation that future students must recognize.

All these being objections, I author these commentaries to shape understanding and to form observations about specifics and conduct. With the mouth words are spoken and with the mind, principles are understood. Intending to apply the mind-to-mind transmission, I instruct on the door of practice that all Buddhas certified to and unite the practices of the two *Chan* Schools, those of the South and the North. I match the mysterious destinies with the three substantive *Tiantai* contemplations so that the teachings unite with the intent of ceased words. My mind is the same as the mind of all Buddhas and the commentaries do not contradict the guidelines of the teachings and the principles. As I unobtrusively step into the zone of forgotten minds, I need not bother with watching others’ expressions. As it is said, there is yet a separate door of forgotten mechanics where the words of great principles are exhibited. The commentaries resolve quandaries with nothing hidden, though it is difficult to evince them completely.

2.2.3.3. It supports great ideas from the past without wishing to ambush individuals. It is said that the Jin Dynasty edition includes a vast quantity of subtle words and mysterious intent, aspects of its esoteric meaning completely bloom and pervade throughout the directions Xianshou pioneered. Hence Xianshou’s lectures resulted in five cloud layers condensing in midair and the earth quaking in six ways. In contrast, the monk who recorded the compilation may have received the lineage of his teacher, but he does not know the paths of stray lambs despite having entered his teacher’s door. Vainly he passes by houses of good friends and is confounded by the presence of a concealed pearl in his jacket. Therefore [Huiyuan’s] major ideas are frequently contrary as he disguised Xianshou’s subtle words in fact. [Huiyuan] denounced the Five

Teachings and established the Four Teachings, mixing in the doctrines of the deviant schools so that the provisional and the real are undifferentiated and the gradual and the sudden are impossible to distinguish.

An analysis of the Ten Mysteries divides their wonderful purposes into two parts. There is no other alternative given their plethora of benefits. The hallmarks of virtue are no hallmarks, which is the entry into hallmarks. In other words, it is impossible to realize their substance or function, as the hallmarks of virtue do not connect with any tainted door and their intersecting purposes are submerged. The rationale that such means must be the way to transcend a mysterious door accords with this clarification, causing the two doors of form and function to become distinct without reason. The mysterious purpose for the conditions that produce the hallmarks is the same as that for a door of practice that integrates principles and essence, intending to lead the one and the many Dharma doors that bring forth great conditions in the Dharma Realm to intersect while remaining slightly hidden. The likes of this type are actually numerous. I do not value the past over the present, but I do not wish to cheat and swindle, kill and annihilate. For the present exposition on ancient ideas, I browsed through countless recent commentaries and noticed that similarly compilations all contain ideas from ancient times. I will use those ideas in the same way now.

2.2.3.4. It eliminates superficial words and engages in straightforward discussions about the highest principles. With literary talent, one can even obscure principles, so how can a plethora of words not disturb the mind? Overly tedious outlines fly about like random pieces of dirt while repeated lines of the *Sūtra* brim over paper, bleeding ink. The average gathers around the Sanskrit terms, but that does not increase our understanding of the *Sūtra*. Furthermore, counting the *Sūtra* text sections sequentially exacerbates the absence of contemplative principles. Like smoke that stifles a fire and clouds that eclipse the sky, I am cutting and trimming like a strong wind that lifts the fog.

However, analyses throughout most of this *Sūtra* are in sets of ten, so where over half of the set are complex, I will explain the entire set. Where the lines are abstruse, I will try to be comprehensive without being verbose; where the lines are unequivocal, I will give a brief illustration without being insufficient. Where fewer than five or six lines are inexplicable, I will explain selectively. I will not recount the obvious lines of text. Where the meaning of the text is entirely easy to understand, I will just provide a general outline. Where the terms are straightforward but the idea is complex, I will offer an overall conclusion. Where the text is difficult and the idea is simple, you will have to digest the text in detail. Where both the text and the ideas are involved, I will first explicate the idea then elaborate, that way the quality of the analysis will be more polished. I hope to be brief and to the point.

2.2.3.5. It takes care of one's own and others' traditions by avoiding fabrications that generate divisiveness or criticism. People used to cite *sūtras* and *śāstras* to denounce ideas by others, but without questioning the essence or the form of these concepts, they were not comprehensively examined from beginning to end. Critics always cite a theory to refute a viewpoint, or mostly

use the Consciousness-Only doctrines and furthermore, calling it the provisional. They cite the provisional to explain the real without separating the common from the restricted, fostering doubts among new students or misleading them. For instance, faultfinders may consider what is proper in the past incorrect or treat the provisional as the real. Now I object too. Were I to refute what I cite, I would first show what the reference is about so that the real essence and form illustrate sufficiently. Next I will expand on this principle decisively and clearly so that students do not become stymied by the superficial traces and confused over various schools of thought, do not wrong the ideas of ancients, and do not labor uselessly over extensive reading. What more could I ask for?

2.2.3.6. It differentiates and analyzes the distinctions between more recent and earlier ideas of the present and the past. *Venture into the Mysteries of the Huayanjing*⁶⁹ only explains the Jin Dynasty edition of the *Sūtra*, so although the primary purpose [of interpretations based on different *sūtra* editions] is the same, some word choices are different. In citing a commentary, you must justify diction. Just as the chapter on Awakening the Bodhi Resolve in the Jin Dynasty edition of the *Sūtra* asserts, “Bring forth the resolve in this way and attain Buddhahood,” the Tang Dynasty edition of the *Sūtra* reads, “Bring forth the resolve in this way and you shall attain Buddhahood.” Since they are different, how can we cite what is in the earlier edition to explain what is in the present edition? This applies to other facets too. In the past, students mostly relied on Xianshou’s updated and brief commentaries in studying the scriptural sections before the Ten Practices but used *Venture into the Mysteries of the Huayanjing* for the sections after the Dedications. Records from the Third Stage and on are mostly based on the earlier version. The two editions of the *Sūtra* are slightly different and contradictions are found in both. The texts are not one and the same.

2.2.3.7. It clarifies the instructions on the characteristics of the Dharma to show what the *Sūtra* includes. Essence and form are like the sun and moon in the sky and the feminine and the masculine in *The Book of Changes*. China and India have separate traditions that instruct on the teachings, but you can only relate to people if you study both tracks. Therefore in interpreting the *Sūtra*, some things require clear instructions. Since the terminology and meaning for this *Sūtra*’s Dharma characteristics are either that they are both extensive, or that there is terminology but no signification, or the message has no applicable terminology. People used to cite an array of commentaries and interpretations based on a single term in them, providing definitions solely on the basis of one word choice; in actuality, the number of possible significations is limitless. For example, the explanation about the 141 vows in the Purifying Practice chapter was excerpted from the material about various doors, the explanation about the Religious Practice chapter’s Four Fruitions extensively cites *The Vibhāsā*, terms about greed and hatred in the chapter on An Enlightening Being Asks for Clarification copy *in toto* those of Consciousness-Only, and the Ten Dedications chapter’s Three Inversions are based on a wide range of principles from all the traditions. Although all these are Dharma doors, the most profound contempla-

tion and conduct obscure the terms and hallmarks. I only evince all of them now in brief.

If people in ancient times knew the idea but not the terminology, they did not know much. Now everything cited from the *sūtras* and *śāstras* are managed by terms so that the *Sūtra*'s characteristics of the Dharma are illuminated and exhibited among the multitude of *śāstras*. For instance, the 21 merits in the chapter on Ascent to the Palace of the *Tuṣita* Heaven contain ideas but no terminology, whereas at the start of the chapter on Detachment from the World, there is only terminology but nothing about what it means. Now the Ascent to the Palace of the *Tuṣita* Heaven chapter cites *sūtras* and *śāstras* widely in an attempt to explicate while the description in the chapter on Detachment from the World is brief. Also, in the chapter on Detachment from the World, each and every one of the positions such as *Kosa*⁷⁰ collects all facets of such significations without exception, regardless of whether the various terms are synonyms or what is before and after are compressed like the sequence to the 42 positions. Now the correspondence between the cited *Sūtra* passages from the six assemblies and the earlier explanations is entirely evident so that each line of the seven fascicles of the *Sūtra* has a source. In going through and checking past explanations, I discovered many subjective narrations. Of course, the two Schools of Consciousness-Only and Dharma Nature share similarities and differences as far as the characteristics of the Dharma such as the Five Eyes and the Ten Eyes, the Six Superknowledges and the Ten Superknowledges etc. Each set is announced individually so that no confusion remains. For example, in explaining the Ten Bodies, the praise about virtues in the first fascicle of the text is a Dharma characteristic of the School of the Dharma Nature. The extensive citations about the Four Forms of Wisdom work as explanations about wisdom entering the three periods of time, which is a Dharma characteristic of the Consciousness-Only School. To explain terms multitudinous like seas with doors of liberation multitudinous like seas is a Dharma characteristic of the Dharma Nature School. To explain the Ten *Pāramitās* in the *Sūtra* with the Nine Doors and the Six *Pāramitās* is a Dharma characteristic of the Consciousness-Only School. Just as the Ten Superknowledges and the Ten Acceptances meet with the Six Superknowledges and the Five Acceptances, the Ten Bodies and the Ten Wisdoms incorporate the Three Bodies and the Three Forms of Wisdom. Similarly, the nirvāṇa of the Ten Doors connects with the Four Forms of Nirvāṇa. There are ten types of Buddha wisdom but each type of wisdom melts into the Four Forms of Wisdom, which is a Dharma characteristic that contradicts neither one of the two, the Schools of Consciousness-Only and of Dharma Nature. The same applies in more than one area.

Also, all *sūtras* and *śāstras* clarify that the characteristics of the Dharma mostly come from another approximate term. For instance, *The Dharma Flower Sūtra* speaks of the Thus Come Ones' knowledge and views, fearless powers, the *samādhi* of meditative liberation, and deep entry into the boundless. All these praise the profound and far-reaching wisdom of the Buddhas. Encountering the word "power", writings about the Ten Powers develop. The word

“fearless” establishes the section on the Four Fearlessnesses. *Dhyāna* constitutes the Four *Dhyānas*, *samādhi* grounds the Eight *Samādhis*, and liberation *samādhi* anchors both writings and doors of practice. Even if thousands and millions of written compositions were to pour forth to explain only one fascicle of this *Sūtra*, they would never be able to explain it fully. If you wish to achieve the state of fundamental wisdom, you should study more and become more erudite.

However, if you quote from the Dharma Flower of the Mystical Studies just to show sentient beings and others that you possess such knowledge or that you know about material circulated earlier, you should know that five or ten of your writing pieces can hardly describe this wonder comprehensively. *The Flower Ornament Sūtra*, however, is different. For instance, the Ten *Pāramitās* and the Ten Powers are explained in several dozen places in this *Sūtra*, so you always understand the mystical intent instantaneously by reading one excerpt. For example, Dharma Characteristics is a door of contemplation in the Ten Stages chapter, but how could you understand the terminology “leaving filth” without comprehending the Three Clusters?⁷¹ How could you know about the Practice of Radiating Light without knowing about the Eight *Dhyānas*? In the chapter about the ways of the Fourth Stage, you learn about the light of wisdom from non-production. All principles in the Fifth Stage deplete the true and the secular to transform creatures. In the Sixth Stage, *prajñā* requires the contemplation of the coming into being of conditions that are like stars arrayed across the Ten Doors and the moon filling the Three Contemplations. Study the essence and the forms exhaustively so that *prajñā* appears; to see the Middle Vehicle takes more than simply pointing the finger at three things in the past. Both the provisional and the real methodologies to reach Bodhi are completely and exhaustively practiced in the Seventh Stage. In the Eighth Stage, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment are secured so that the effortless way may be seen. The Ninth Stage explains how someone in the role of a Dharma Master must know about medicines and diseases. And without achieving the 40 forms of eloquence, how can you widely transform beings? Only when you reach the Tenth Stage do you actualize the profundity and mystery of fundamental wisdom.

The 42 exhibited positions are collectively called the conduct of contemplation. The Nine Assemblies’ five types of causes and effect are only perfected with Buddhahood. Whether it is form or essence, whether it is cause or effect, all become contemplations and all correspond with the true. The Sage intended for you to cultivate according to this *Sūtra*. If you do not understand the characteristics of the Dharma, not only are you oblivious to the intent of the Sage, you are also the wrong person to propagate. Search the text and know for yourself.

2.2.3.8. It vastly proclaims mysterious words to awaken you to the mind’s essentials. It is said that this *Sūtra* contains many esoteric words and wonderful intent not elaborated upon and clarified in the past—perhaps they were referred to in other writings or briefly disclosed but rendered incomplete. To make complete the explications, commentaries with elementary wording and profound ideas are necessary now. I will explain extensively the text’s essence and

strengths. For instance, “upon first realizing Proper Enlightenment” means that it was compiled as various schools formed and that it employs the Two Wisdoms, the Three Wisdoms, and the Four Wisdoms to explain “wisdom enters the three periods of time.” Like the analogy about an illusion, the depiction about horns on a hare completes it. Like the analogy of shadows, three types of shadows are differentiated. A number of lines discuss lands being level etc., but I only select a few for my comments on the Seventh Dedication. On generating vows in the face of states experienced according to the Eighth Dedication, I expound upon the horizontal and the vertical positioning. The *gathas* and praises about being apart from marks and dedications in the three heavens are connected by the mystical wonder in *The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* and other profound *sūtras*, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, *The Hundred-Verse Treatise*, and other *śāstras*. The Nine Assemblies and the Five Pervasiveness [of Cause and Effect] are all elaborated upon on the basis of essence and form.

The mission of all these examples—Universal Worthy’s *samādhi* being the ultimate wonder among wonders, the chapter on Manifestation of Buddha being the most mystical among the mystical, and the profound contemplations of the Dharma Realm and the Flower Treasury world—is to return to the critical pulse of the wonderful text so that the mystical and subtle key points become complete, and the orderly alignment of the ideas and principles become effectuated. From the appended diagram for important parts to the maxims of the Three Mysteries,⁷² those who grace this *Sūtra* must completely experience its profundity. I also refer to other writings but they are not the most essential, whether you know them or not, they will not clash with my propagating and praising this *Sūtra*.

2.2.3.9. It absolves and removes gossip by avoiding fabrications that generate divisiveness or criticism. People in the past were competitive and arrogant so emotions played a large role in rumors. Consequently, wonderful sets of meaning from ancient times were left unspoken while worthy individuals of those times were vehemently denounced for their minor flaws, often overwhelmingly exaggerated. Some of these hypercritics talk too readily, as if blaming *Sahā* for being the shape of space. In fact, since translators were unfamiliar with various *sūtras* and *śāstras*, they contributed to errors that occurred at translation facilities, mistakenly corrupting the holy teachings from then to now. In their translations, early masters delved too deeply so fibers and mustard seeds were caught on pearls. Why attack them though? The translation of the Ten Practices chapter is not mainstream either, for example, since it elaborates upon odd interpretations. The Jin Dynasty edition of this *Sūtra* missed the essence of the text because those early interpretations focused on superficial phrasing.

Now that the text is clear, why recount what occurred in the past? Cases like this are numerous, so how could we possibly correspond with the great Way were we to gossip all day? Anyone who refutes an idea is like a venomous snake that must be axed for stinging a hand or like a poisonous tree growing in the courtyard that must be cut. If deviant understanding interferes with the

principles, then the matter must be resolved. If I know of obvious errors I will omit them without further explication. If something is ambiguous, I am determined to make it clear. If you wish to understand true gold, you must know brass—there will be no attainment unless you are thorough and avoid becoming emotional over gossip. You must observe propriety and rites even if you were denounced vehemently. You must not commend your own virtues and belittle worthy individuals of the past. You must know how difficult it was for those rugged pioneers and how easy it is for the practitioners who follow. Even if you were to name their flaws and show what is correct, avoid bragging or self-promotion. Therefore this set of commentaries is utterly short on what is right and wrong.

2.2.3.10. It evenly integrates the start and the end so that you see both the head and the tail of the Commentaries. The overall structure of the Commentaries begins with the major points, followed by minor points. If we further broaden our perspectives by summarily digesting the text and treatises, most of the propagation of and explanations about the holy teachings would not founder. Now the Nine Assemblies of this great *Sūtra* are profound and mysterious from the first to the last, so I clarify any idea I encounter without judging which is the best or worst. I do not repeat any of my earlier clarifications since the outline for what the ideas mean and the doors to this writing span like constellations; I do organize them into earlier, middle, and concluding sections so that you may see the text's start and finish. I briefly describe how this set of commentaries was created and that is, in a spiritual state where I forgot my body, I communicated this mystical teaching. My fundamental wish is that all sentient beings reach the same things Universal Worthy and all Buddhas did.

2.3. The line, “I dedicate such victorious goodness to the benefit of living beings so they may soon certify to Bodhi, the fruit of perpetual bliss,” is about dedicating this act of giving to sentient beings. The first part of the line is the reason for composing the Commentaries—for sentient beings. This sentence also connects with the Dedications, the benefits of refuge and the virtues realized, and the merit of creating this set of commentaries. If one line of this set of commentaries resonates deeply with the mind of the Sage, may all sentient beings reach perfect understanding of great enlightenment and the everlasting joy of nirvāṇa.

Notes

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1. Shamen 沙門. An ascetic or a monastic.
 2. Chengguan 澄觀, *Da Fangguang Fo Huayanjing Shuchao Huiben* 《大方廣佛華嚴經疏鈔會本》, Shanghai: Shanghai Huayanjing Shuchao Bianyin Hui 上海華嚴經疏鈔編印會, December 11, 2012, <http://player12345.myweb.hinet.net/web/C8.htm>.
 3. Metaphorically the branches (zhi 枝) of a tree rather than its roots (gen 根).

4. The triad 體 (ti), 相 (xiang *matrata*). 用 (yong) are three facets to any dharma. Essence is also translated to mean substance, body, entity, nature, inherent nature, or intrinsic quality. Form is also translated to mean characteristic, feature, mark, hallmark, quality, identity, meaning, manifestation, or phenomenon. Function is also translated to mean use, usage. Essence and function (體用 *tiyong*) are terms in both Confucianism and Taoism.
5. Linear alignment (豎 *shu cakravāḍa*) and expansiveness (橫 *heng sahasra*) indicate: 1. a temporal cosmology whereby the past, present, and future are linearly aligned and they are expansive in that thoughts about them are various and grouped into sets of thousands, millions, or billions. 2. A spatial cosmology. Cyclical existence of the imperfect Samsāra is arranged in a vertical pattern upward, ranging from the six domains (the realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, titans, and gods) scaling Mt. Sumeru in the Desire Realm (欲界 *yujie Kāmadhātu*), to the 18 heavens including the Four Dhyāna Heavens or states of meditative absorption in the Form Realm (色界 *sejie Rūpadhātu*), and the non-physical spheres of the mind in the Formless Realm (無色界 *wuse jie Ārūpyadhātu*). Horizontally, these vertical worlds are grouped into sets of thousands, millions, or billions.
6. Nāgārjuna, *Zhongguan Lun* 《中觀論》 *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, May 9, 2012, http://beta.org/result/normal/T30/1564_002.htm, Fascicle II. The English title used throughout this paper is translated by Jay L. Garfield.
7. Huiyuan. 慧遠 (334–416 CE). Preeminent monk of the Jin Dynasty who founded the Pureland School of Buddhism.
8. *The Book of Change* 《易經》 *Yijing*, May 9, 2012, <http://ctext.org/book-of-changes/fu/zh?en=on>.
9. *The Book of Change*.
10. Bodhiruci, *Mañjuśrī Speaks of the Sūtra of Inconceivable States of Buddhas* 《文殊師利所說不思議佛境界經》 *Wenshushili Suo Shuo Bu Siyi Fo Jingjie Jing*, Taisho Tripitaka 大正新脩大藏經 T12n0340 (Tokyo: Dazang chuban zhushi huishe 大藏出版株式會社, 1988).
11. 三昧 *sanmei* or 三摩地 *sanmuodi*. Translated as a form of concentration (定 *ding*) or a state of meditative absorption that sometimes leads the meditator to develop supernatural abilities.
12. *Bodhimanda* 道場 *daochang*. A place or facility where practitioners train so they may reach Buddhahood.
13. Bodhiruci, *Mañjuśrī Speaks of the Sūtra*.
14. Laozi 老子, *Tao Te Ching*. 《道德經》, trans. Arthur Waley, January 1, 2012, <http://oaks.nvg.org/tao1-10.html#4>.
15. Sengzhao 僧肇 (384–414 CE). Renowned Han Buddhist theorist who sinicized the idea of *prajñā* in Nāgārjuna's *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* and pioneered the Three *Śāstras* School (三論宗 *sanlunzong*).
16. 性 *xing* or 自性 *zixing svabhava*. Translated to mean inherent nature, intrinsic quality, entity, essence, or substance.
17. *Shuo Gua* 《說卦》, May 9, 2012, <http://ctext.org/book-of-changes/shuo-gua/zh?en=on>.
18. Laozi, *Tao Te Ching*.

19. 梵志 *fanzhi brāhmaṇa*. Those of the priestly class in the Indian class system. They typically adhered to the different branches of Vedas in search of the highest spiritual knowledge.
20. *Fo Shuo Bashi Jing* 《佛說八師經》, Taisho Tripitaka 大正新脩大藏經 T14n0581, trans. Zhiqian 支謙. The Buddha answered Brahmin Jhāpeti's inquiry and gave a lecture about his eight teachers.
21. *The Great Treatise II of The Book of Changes* 周易《繫辭下 *Zhou Yi Xici Xia*, trans. James Legge, May 9, 2012, <http://ctext.org/book-of-changes/xi-ci-xia/zh?en=on>. One of the seven types of commentaries to *The Book of Changes*. It describes the basic principles of *The Book of Changes* in an innovative way.
22. 三十三天 *Sanshisān Tian Trāyastriṃśa*. One of the heavens of the Desire Realm where Lord Śakra (帝釋天 *dishitian*) or Indra (因陀羅 *Yintuoluo*) resides. Chinese Buddhists sometimes consider this leader of 33 gods the Taoist Jade Emperor (玉皇大帝 *yuhuang dadi*).
23. 毗盧遮那佛 *Piluzhena Fo*. One of the three Huayan sages and the Buddha in the center among the five Dhyani Buddhas of the five different directions. Akṣobhya 阿閼佛 *Ahzu Fo* is of the East, Amitābha 阿彌陀佛 *Amituo Fo* is of the West, Ratnasambhava 寶生佛 *Baosheng Fo* is of the South, and Amoghasiddhi 不空成就佛 *Bukong Chengjiu Fo* is of the North.
24. *The Book of Changes* 《易經》 *Yijing*, trans. James Legge, December 10, 2012, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/ich/icintr03.htm>.
25. *Da Fangguang Fo Huayanjing*, Fascicle 80.
26. 無心 *wuxin*. A mindstate utterly devoid of thoughts that even the thought of the mind is nonexistent.
27. 南瞻部洲 *Nan zhanbu zhou*. According to Buddhist cosmology, four continents surround the mid-section of Mt. Sumeru (須彌山 *Xumishan*, Mt. Wonderfully High 妙高山 *Miaogaoshan*). The earthly realm of the Jambu tree resides in the south. The other three continents are Northern Uttarakuru (北俱盧洲 *Bei julu zhou*), Eastern Pūrvavideha (東勝神洲 *Dong shengshen zhou*), and Western Aparagodānīya (西牛賀洲) *Xi niuhe zhou* (.
28. 菩提流志 *Putiliuzhi* (?–527 CE). A *Yogācāra* monk from North India who translated Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Chinese prolifically.
29. One of the ten titles of an awakened being who perfects the practices of enlightenment. The ten are: 1. Thus Come One (如來 *Rulai Tathāgata*), 2. Worthy of Offerings (應供 *Yinggong Arahāt*), 3. (正遍知 *Zhengbianzhi Samyaksambuddha*), 4. Perfect in Clarity and Conduct (明行足 *Minghengzu Vidyācaraṇasampanna*), 5. Well Gone One (善逝 *Shanshi Sugata*), 6. Understanding (世間解 *Shijianjie Lokavid*), 7. Supreme Being (無上士 *Wushangshi Anuttara*), 8. Taming Master (調禦丈夫 *Tiaoyu zhangfu Puruṣadamyasārathi*), 8. Teacher of Gods and Humans (天人師 *Tianrenshi Shasta devamanushyanam*), 9. Buddha (佛 *Fo Buddha*), and 10. World Honored One (世尊 *Shizun Bhagavat*).
30. 刹那 *chana*. A moment, an instant, the shortest unit of time. An instant in time so brief that according to Fascicle 30 of *The Great Wisdom Śāstra*, it is 1/60 amount of the time that it takes to snap your fingers.

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31. 普賢 Puxian. One of the three Huayan sages, along with Vairocana Buddha and Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva.
32. 娑婆 suopo. The secular world where human beings live that means a place that is hardly bearable.
33. 比丘 biqiu. Male Buddhist monks or mendicants. Buddhist nuns are *bhikṣuṇīs* (比丘尼 biqiuni).
34. 法門 famen *Dharmaparyāya*. Door to the path of practice.
35. Yuanxiao 元曉 *Wōnhyo* (617–686 CE). A preeminent Korean Buddhist teacher who authored numerous commentaries, including *A Commentary on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna* 《大乘起信論疏》 *Dacheng Qixing Lun Shu*.
36. Five supernormal visions wuyan 五眼: 1. The flesh eye sees all and sees through material objects and beings. 2. The celestial eye sees the activities in the heavenly realms and other realms, 3. The Dharma eye sees the reality of secular principles anywhere and everywhere, 4. The wisdom eye sees the essence of ultimate reality, which is emptiness, and 5. The Buddha eye sees or knows all that is everywhere.
37. Laozi 老子, *Tao Te Ching* 《道德經》, trans. T. Byrn, December 10, 2012, <http://www.edepot.com/tao11.html>.
38. 三性 *trisvabhāva*. A concept about perceiving reality in three different ways and central to the Indian *Mahāyāna* Consciousness-Only (唯識宗 *Yogācāra*) School.
39. 曇影 Tānying. Jin Dynasty monk and a disciple of the famed translator Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 Jiumuoluoshi (344–409 CE). Master Tānying was a popular lecturer on *The Lotus Sūtra*, a translator, and a commentator on *The Lotus Sūtra* and *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*.
40. Considers the Dharma Nature (法性 *dharmata*) inherently pure in all beings. Chengguan names this system of study mostly in contrast to the Dharma Characteristics or Consciousness-Only School (法相宗唯識宗 *Yogācāra/Vijñāptimātratā*).
41. 真如 *Tathatā*. Various interpretations for this term, including concepts such as the nature of reality, the characteristic of reality, or the Dharma Realm, and the experience of “the way it is”, “as it is”.
42. Meditation or meditative absorption, known mostly as Zen or Chan (禪那 *dhyāna*).
43. Six sequential tiers of practice starting with the Ten Faiths, then the Ten Abodes, the Ten Practices, the Ten Dedications, the Ten Stages, then Equal Enlightenment.
44. 聲聞 Shenwen *Śrāvaka*. Theravādan adherents who became enlightened upon hearing the voice of the Buddha.
45. 緣覺 Yuanjue *Pratyekabuddhas* who learns about dependent arising (因緣法 *dvadasangapratitya-samutpada*) without a Buddha and becomes enlightened by this means.
46. 八相 baxiang. The historical Buddha Śākyamuni or Siddhartha Gautama’s stages of enlightenment. According to *A Commentary on the Awakening Faith in the Mahāyāna*, the Buddha began by 1. Descending from the Tuṣita Heaven, 2. Entering the womb, 3. Residing in the womb, 4. Becoming born, 5. Becoming a monk, 6. Realizing enlightenment, 7. Turning the wheel of Dharma, and 8. Passing away.

47. *She Dacheng Lun* 《攝大乘論》 *The Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* is attributed to Asaṅga. It is a key work for the Chinese Dharma Characteristics (法相) School.
48. 莊子 (369–286 BCE). Influential Taoist of the Warring States period.
49. Buoluomi波羅蜜. Six or ten Mahāyāna practices perfected by Bodhisattvas, or Buddhas-to-be. 1. 布施波羅蜜 bushi buoluomi *Dāna pāramitā*: generosity, giving of oneself. 2. 持戒波羅蜜 chijie buoluomi *Śīla pāramitā*: virtue, morality, discipline, proper. 3. 忍辱波羅蜜 renru buoluomi *Kṣānti pāramitā*: patience, tolerance, forbearance, acceptance, endurance. 4. 精進波羅蜜 jinjing buoluomi *Vīrya pāramitā*: energy, diligence, vigor, effort. 5. 禪定波羅蜜 *Dhyāna pāramitā*: one-pointed concentration, contemplation, meditation. 6. 般若波羅蜜 buoruo buoluomi *Prajñā pāramitā*: wisdom, insight. In *The Huayan Sūtra*, different versions of four more pāramitās are listed. Here is one list: 7. 方便波羅蜜 fangbian buoluomi *Upāya pāramitā*: skillful means. 8. 願波羅蜜 yuan buoluomi *Pranidhāna pāramitā*: vow, resolution, aspiration, determination. 9. 力波羅蜜 li buoluomi *Bala pāramitā*: spiritual power. 10. 智波羅蜜 zhi buoluomi *Jñāna pāramitā*: knowledge.
50. *The Analects* 《論語》 *Lun Yu*, trans. James Legge, December 10, 2012, <http://ctext.org/analects/zi-han/zh?en=on>.
51. 那由他. In essence, a Sanskrit word that represents an incalculable numeral, but depending on the source of the text, one nayuta can range from 1039 to 10112.
52. 舍衛城 Sheweicheng. One of the cities of ancient India and where the renowned Jeta Grove was located.
53. 無上正等正覺 Supreme Perfect Enlightenment.
54. 劫火 jiehuo. Fire that occurs during the deterioration stage of a Buddhist cosmological eon, a cycle consisting of the world coming into being, stabilizing, disintegrating, and ceasing to be.
55. 北俱盧洲 Bei julu zhou Uttarakuru, the continent north of Mount Sumeru where blessings abound but no Buddha or Dharma is present.
56. 八難 banan *astāv aksanāh*. According to *The Ekottaragama Sūtra* 《增壹阿含經》, the Eight Difficulties are eight places, states, or circumstances wherein one is unable to encounter a Buddha or his teachings. They are (1) the realm of hells; (2) the realm of hungry ghosts; (3) the realm of animals; (4) the heavenly realm of long life; (5) the Northern Continent or Uttarakuru; (6) a disability; (7) contentment with secular knowledge; and (8) a time without any Buddha.
57. 阿鼻地獄 ahbi diyu. The lowest level among the realms of hell where beings suffer eternally with no respite.
58. 那由他. A number that means 100,000, a million, or ten million.
59. 轉輪聖王 Zhuanlun shengwang *Chakravarti rāja*. These kings govern the four continents around Mt. Sumeru. There are gold, silver, copper, and iron wheel kings.
60. Shancai 善財 Sudhana. The protagonist who sought enlightenment from 53 teachers in the important 39th chapter of the 80-fascicle *Huayanjing*, the Entering the Dharma Realm chapter (入法界品 *The Gandavyūha*).
61. 優婆塞 youpuosai, 優婆夷 youpuoyi. Male and female Buddhist laity, respectively.
62. 由旬 youxun. The distance traveled by the imperial army in a day, typically considered to range from eight to nineteen kilometers.

63. Periodization centered around the life and death of the Buddha. Buddhists theorize that during the Buddha's lifetime and 500 to 1,000 years after, meditation and enlightenment are rampant during this Proper Dharma Age. The next millennium is the Dharma Image Age when idolatry and temple construction are rampant. The final millennium is the Dharma Ending Age when strife and corrupted practices rampant.

64. Both texts were authored by Fazang. The supplemental history is 《華嚴經旨歸》 *The Huayanjing Zhigui* in the Taisho Tripitaka 大正新修大藏經 Vol. 45, No. 1871 and 《華嚴經纂靈記》 *The Huayanjing Zuanling Ji* is another name for *The Records to the Huayanjing* 《華嚴經傳記》, Taisho Tripitaka Vol. 51, No. 2073.

65. 正 zheng. Externality, materiality, external material and beings that result from karma.

66. The six necessary conditions that make it possible for the Buddha to lecture and indicate that the Buddha did give the lecture according to the *sūtra* later compiled. The six requisite conditions are: 1. Faith in the Buddha's words; 2. An encounter as noted by Ananda's phrase "Thus I have heard"; 3. Timing; 4. The host, who is the Buddha; 5. Location; and 6. Audience.

67. Huiyuan 慧苑, Fazang's disciple, who reputedly received his teacher's lineage transmission. However, as he assumed the responsibility to complete the commentaries on the remaining 61 fascicles to the new 80 fascicle translation after Fazang passed away, he changed a number of Fazang's doctrines, including altering Fazang's Five Teachings into the Four Teachings. Chengguan very much repudiated Huiyuan's commentarial literature and wrote his own commentaries to *The Huayanjing* in part to rectify Fazang's philosophical system.

68. 三學 sanxue or 三無漏學 san wulou xue *sikkhā*. The threefold training in precepts (戒 jie *adhisīla*), meditative absorption (定 ding *adhicitta*), and wisdom (慧 hui *adhipaññā*).

69. *Huayanjing Tanxuan Ji* 《華嚴經探玄記》. Fazang's commentaries on the 60-fascicle *Huayanjing*.

70. 俱舍 Jyushe. An abbreviation for *The Dharma Analysis Treasury* 《阿毘達磨俱舍論》 *Abhidharma-kosa-sāstra* by Vasubandhu.

71. 三聚淨戒 sanju jingjie *tri-vidhāni śīlāni*. The three types of Mahāyāna Bodhisattva precepts: 1. Precepts of the Inherent Nature (攝律儀戒 she lyuyi jie *sajvara-śīla*) (focused on removing filth shrouding the fundamentally pure Dharma body, 2. Precepts of Goodness (攝善法戒 she shanfa jie *kuśala-dharma-sajgrāhaka-śīla*) (focused on practicing everything that is good, and 3. Precepts that Benefit Beings (攝眾生戒 she zhongsheng jie *sattvārtha-kriyā-śīla*) (focused on helping all sentient beings).

72. Using texts by Laozi and by Zhuangzi, also *The Book of Changes* as a basis, Neo-Taoism (玄學 xuanxue) was a focal development in early medieval Chinese philosophy that combined elements from Taoism and Confucianism.