

THE SŪTRASAMUCCAYA -NAGARJUNA'S ANTHOLOGY OF (QUOTATIONS FROM) DISCOURSES  
English Translation by Bhikkhu Pāsadika [Reformatted with American spellings and formatting style]

(Tenth Theme: The Utmost Rareness of Beings who are resolutely Intent on the Vehicle of Oneness)

Beings who are resolutely intent on the Vehicle of One (ness) [ekayāna] are exceedingly rare. The authenticity of the Vehicle of One(ness) is attested in a great many discourses, (for instance) in the holy SADDHARMA-PUNDARIKA-SŪTRA:

"It is with reference to the Vehicle of One-ness, (Śāriputra), that I teach the Doctrine to sentient beings, viz. the Buddha Vehicle culminating in omniscience. Any second or third vehicle does not exist - this is the natural condition everywhere, in all the worlds of the ten directions. For what reason? All the Tathāgatas, too, who lived in the past in all the world-systems of the ten directions, who will appear in future, or who live at present in all the world-systems of the ten directions taught, will teach, and teach to sentient beings the Doctrine with reference to the Vehicle of Oneness, the Buddha Vehicle. In this way, (Sariputra), it must be understood: Nowhere in all the worlds of the ten directions is, (in the ultimate sense), a second vehicle pointed out, how much less a third vehicle!"

(The following is stated) in the holy SATYAKAPARIVARTA:

"Because of salvation through the Vehicle of Oneness, Mañjuśrī, the quintessence of the Great Vehicle is found in that Buddha-land. I do not point out any vehicle of the Disciples or pratyekabuddhas. For what reason? Because the Tathāgata does not entertain any diverse notions. If he had taught some the Great Vehicle, Mañjuśrī, others the pratyekabuddhas, and others again the Disciples' Vehicle, his mind would not be perfectly pure; the Tathāgata would incur the blemish of being inclined towards something, his compassion would be limited, and he would have been unwilling to share with (all) sentient beings the Doctrine (in its entirety). Whatever I teach to them, Mañjuśrī, is just this: setting one's mind on (supreme) enlightenment in order to gain the insight-knowledge of omniscience, succeeding in acquiring omniscience by embarking upon the Great Vehicle, and really getting to 'one place' (i.e. Buddhahood). For this reason I do not point out (any other) vehicle (than ekayāna). A Tathāgata's pointing out (a variety of) vehicles, Mañjuśrī, (would imply) his positing (different) degrees; it (would imply) positing individuals' (puṅgalā) as well as small and boundless accumulations (of merit and wisdom). But since in the realm of the absolute multiplicity does not hold true, there a multiplicity of vehicles does not hold true either. To teach (different vehicles) means to teach (at the level of) conventional truth - a makeshift. At the level of ultimate truth the Vehicle of Oneness (alone holds good), no second vehicle."

The (next excerpt) is from the PRAJNAPĀRAMITĀ:

"Those, Devaputra, who have not begun to aspire after the Highest, Complete, and Full Enlightenment should do so. Those (Disciples) who have won the certainty of perfection (samyaktvaniyāma) are unable to aspire after (supreme) enlightenment. For what reason? Because they have interrupted the continuity of the circuit of mundane existence. If they begin to aspire after the Highest, Complete, and Full Enlightenment, I shall be pleased and do (everything) lest their 'roots of merit' should be damaged. (Then they) will perfectly apprehend the sublime teachings being loftier than the loftiest."

"Converging on the Vehicle of Oneness," the MAHA-SAMNIPATAPARIVARTA proclaims, "(involves) the (ultimate) sameness of all vehicles, their having converged on the Vehicle of Oneness - a way of comprehending (ultimate) identity (abheda) in the realm of the absolute."

"There comes a time, Your Majesty," it says in the PITAPUTRASAMAGAMANA SŪTRA, "when somewhere in the world in space stands Brahman's palace or that of the Paranirmitavaśavartin deities made of (the seven kinds of) jewels. The hardness pertain to those (palaces), Your Majesty, does not come from anywhere. Then there are the Cakravala and Mahacakravala mountain-ranges, firm, strong, monolithic, and adamant. When arising, even their hardness does not come from anywhere. (Mountains such as) Sumeru, king of mountains, Yugandhara, Nimindhara, Ísadhāra, Vajradhara, Khadiraka, Vinataka, Mount Ásvakarna, Sudarsana, Mahāsudarsana, the 'Exposed and Bare One,' Gandhamadana, Himavanta, or even

Black Mountain stand as long as mountains (may last). The whole world-system 'consisting of three thousand great thousand (worlds)' is definitely established, eighty-four thousand yojanas in height; and in the midst stands the great earth, sixty-eight hundred thousand yojanas in extent. Even that hardness, Your Majesty, when it comes does not come from anywhere.

"There comes a time, Your Majesty, when this world is destroyed. Then this great earth is burnt by fire, destroyed by water or scattered by wind. When it is burnt by fire, not even soot is produced. When, for example, ghee or oil have been burnt by fire, neither soot nor (remaining) ashes can be seen. Similarly, when this world-system 'consisting of three thousand great thousand (worlds)' has been consumed by fire, neither soot nor remaining ashes can be seen. When (the world) is destroyed by water, nothing whatever will remain. When, for example, salt is dissolved in water, nothing at all (of that salt) will remain. Similarly, when this world-system...is destroyed by water, nothing at all will remain.

"Or when (the world) is scattered by wind, nothing whatsoever will remain. When, for instance, (little) birds are smitten by a cyclone, nothing whatever will remain of them. Similarly, when this world-system...is scattered by wind, nothing at all will remain.

"Then, Your Majesty, the arising of the element of earth is empty, and its destruction is empty, too. By its very nature the (externally) arisen element of earth is empty. The same holds good of the internal element of earth. Externally and internally also the remaining elements (of water, fire, air, space, and the element of consciousness - vijñānadhātu) as well as all the existential constituents do not come from anywhere when arising, and when they come to an end, they do not go anywhere either. Their coming into existence is empty, and empty they are by their very nature when they have come into existence."

In the AJĀTAŚATRUPARIVARTA (we read the following):

"King Ajātaśatru (had invited) Bodhisattvas and great Disciples (to lunch) at his palace. Having seen that they had washed their alms-bowls and hands, he sat down in front of the youthful Mañjuśri in order to listen to the Teaching. -

A: Please, Mañjuśri, (help me) to get rid of my wickedness! -

M: That, Your Majesty, even as many Lord Buddhas as grains of sand in the River Gangā would be unable to achieve. -

After (these words) King Ajātaśatru (felt utterly) forsaken and fell to the ground (mahābhūmi) like a felled tree. Thereupon the Elder Maha-Kāśyapa addressed King Ajātaśatru thus: The youthful Mañjuśri, Your Majesty, is an expert teacher employing enigmatic language (saṃdhyābhāṣya), but (you need not be) afraid and alarmed. Just ask him what he meant by his words.

"Then King Ajātaśatru stood up again and asked the youthful Mañjuśri: What is the meaning of your words, Mañjuśri? -

M: What do you think, Your Majesty? Do the Lord Buddhas indulge in discriminatory imagination? - They do not, Mañjuśri. -

M: Well, do they discriminate by producing thoughts? -

A: No, they do not. -

M: Or do they discriminate by suppressing thoughts? -

A: No. -

M: But now, do they discriminate because of the conditioned (state of existence)? -

A: No. -

M: Do the Lord Buddhas discriminate because of their knowledge of the conditioned (state of existence)? -

A: No. -

M: What do you think, Your Majesty? Would it be possible to get rid of anything when there is nothing to be discriminated? -

A: No. -

M: That is what I meant, Your Majesty, when I said that even as many Lord Buddhas as grains of sand in the River Ganga would be unable to redeem you from your wickedness.

"Suppose, Your Majesty, someone wished to dirty the sky, the space (we look up to), with dust, smoke or darkness. What do you think, Your Majesty? Would he be able to do so? -

A: He would not, Mañjuśri. -

M: And, Your Majesty, if anyone said that he cleans up the sky, would he be able to do so? -

A: He would not, Mañjuśri. -

M: Similarly, Your Majesty, the Tathāgatas know that, like the sky, all existential constituents are free from defilements. They do not fancy any defiled dharma that ought to be got rid of or any act of purification. Strongly impressed by such insight (arthavaśā), Your Majesty, I said that even as many Lord Buddhas would be unable to redeem you from your wickedness.

"Moreover, Your Majesty, the Lord Buddhas neither - internally - fancy a mind possessed (by mental defilements) (paryavasthāna, paryutthāna) nor - externally - existential constituents possessed (by defilements). For what reason? Because naturally, Your Majesty, no existential constituents whatever are possessed (by defilements). What is (their) nature is not possessed (by defilements either). What (is called) 'possession' is an impossibility, something that is out of the question. For what reason? All existential constituents, Your Majesty, naturally are detached (vivikta). All dharmas are without self-nature (niḥsvabhāva) because of their not being absolute (apariniṣpanna); they are not absolute because they are not created (asaṃsṛṣṭa); they are not created because they are unborn; they do not exist because they are without an entity (avastu); they are without an entity because they lack the force of activity (akriyābala), and that lack is due to their being motionless (jaḍa); their immobility is due to their not being characterized by intimation (avijñāptilakṣaṇa); they lack intimation because by nature they do not undergo any change (asaṃkrama); their changelessness is due to their desisting from movement (gamananivartana). Owing to their being subject to unchangeableness (niyamadharmā), Your Majesty, all dharmas are without movement, and they are thus subject owing to their not coming into existence; they cannot come into existence in the absence of evolution (avardhana). All existential constituents naturally are luminous (prabhāsvara) and therefore unimpeded (apratibaddha); they are luminous by nature because they are pure (śuddha), and their purity is due to their being like free space (abhyavakāśakalpa). All dharmas, Your Majesty, resemble free space because they are without polarity (apratipakṣa); owing to their being free from duality (advaya) polarity is not found with them; they are non-dual because of the avoidance of extremes (antavivarjana); those are 'avoided' because all dharmas are free from them; all existential constituents, Your Majesty, are infinite, and so they are boundless (aparyanta). There is not a single dharma that is finite, and therefore one cannot (speak of) an end (of dharmas) (aparyavasāna); this is so because all dharmas are without any objective basis (anā lambana), and they are without it so as to be 'set up' by not adhering to perverted views (aviparyāsapratyupasthāna). As far as existential constituents are concerned, there are no perverted views (pertaining to a doctrine of eternity), because existential constituents are not falsely imagined to be permanent, beautiful, happy, or a self. (On the other hand), Your Majesty, all dharmas are 'permanent' by way of guarding against (views of) annihilation; because of their naturally being luminous, they are beautiful and also happy owing to their being free from false discrimination (nirvikalpa). By way of elucidating their not having a self they have a 'self as their essential property' (ātmasvabhāva).

"Your Majesty, all existential constituents are free from wickedness (avipratisāra) because of their being pacified. Owing to their not being determined according to absolute truth they are false (mithyā); they are characterized by clarity and are therefore tranquil (śānta). All dharmas are free from selfish attachment and are consequently without egotism (amama); they are insipid (anāsvāda), for they are characterized by (the taste of) release; they are nameless on account of their not being designated (asaṃjñakṛta); as they are not multiple, they are all identical (asambhinna). All existential constituents share (the taste of) freedom and are on that score all of one taste (ekarasa). They are the climax of signlessness (animittakoṭi) and therefore bear the 'signs' of detachment (vivekalakṣaṇa). The dharmas do not resort to anything (anavatāra) and are 'purged' of (all false) imagination; for that reason they are signless. They are pure, because they are free from all wrong views (dṛṣṭivigata); owing to their having completely transcended the three times (of the past, present, and future), they are wishless (apraṇihita). Since existential constituents have nothing to do with the past, present or future, they are completely cut off (paricchinna) from the three times. They are part and parcel of nirvana (nirvāṇasamavasaraṇa) owing to their being absolutely unborn.

"What do you think, Your Majesty, would any dharma lend itself to defilement when it is unborn and unoriginated? -

A: It would not, Mañjuśri. -

M: Would it be possible to purify (a dharma)? -

A: Impossible, Mañjuśri!

M: On that account, Your Majesty, the Tathāgatas know all existential constituents to be identical with nirvāna, and for this reason they (need) not engage in removing any perplexity. Thus you must exert yourself according to (understanding at the level of ultimate truth which) you must correctly and thoroughly consider

with a mind free from perverted views: As on careful consideration one neither takes up nor lets go any dharma, there is not any (false) identification (sahāvasthāna) with any dharma. 'Redemption' (parisuddha) is (correctly) spoken of when one does not take one's stand on anything whatever. Redemption is Peace (praśama), and what is at peace is 'self-nature'; but 'self-nature' is (really) not self-nature. All existential constituents, Your Majesty, are unconditioned on account of their being without a self, and that, Your Majesty, you should thus patiently accept. You should not give rise to any dharma. For what reason? Because nirvāṇa in which creative activity is conspicuous by its absence, has nothing to do with activity (niṣkriya). What is free from activity and vicissitudes (avipariṇāma) is called nirvāṇa.

"Then King Ajātaśatru took a double piece of cloth (of fine quality) worth a hundred thousand (sc. kār-ṣāpaṇas), rose from his seat and offered (the cloth) to the youthful Mañjuśrī who, however, did not accept it. After that Ajātaśatru let that double piece of cloth fall on the body of the youthful Mañjuśrī. Scarcely had it fallen on his body when Mañjuśrī made it invisible. The king did not see Mañjuśrī any longer but (could) hear (the latter's) voice from above in the air: Your Majesty, just as you do not see my body, so you should regard that wickedness (of yours as being imperceptible); and just as you (should regard) that wickedness, so you should regard all dharmas, and likewise that cloth. Him who regards you should also regard in the same way. To that person you should give that double piece of cloth, Your Majesty, whose body you see. - (The king) placed that double piece of cloth as a present before Bodhisattvas, Disciples... ladies, and attendants. When he did not see them any longer, he entered into meditation to such an extent that apart from perceiving his own body he could not see with his eyes anything at all. Again he heard a voice saying: Give that double piece of cloth to the person whose body you see. Thinking (again) of allotting the cloth, he did not see even his own body any longer, (because) visual perception had totally ceased with him. - The voice went on saying: Your Majesty, just as you do not see anything at all, neither large nor small forms, so you should regard that wickedness (of yours as being imperceptible); and just as (you should) regard that wickedness, so you should regard all dharmas, and likewise him who regards. Thus it must be seen: seeing is not seeing, and he who sees does not really see. Not seeing any existential constituents, Your Majesty, is real seeing. Real seeing, Your Majesty, is non-seeing. - "Thereupon King Ajātaśatru was freed from all arrogance and false discrimination, got up from that meditation and beheld (again) the whole assembly."

"(By means of) these four most excellent (praṇīta) (teachings)," (we learn) from the BHADRAMAYAKARA-SŪTRA:

"Bodhisattvas take into account the (full) meaning (of the discourses); which are the four?

a) Existential constituents come into existence through dependence, not by chance; b) being without a soul (personality), no dharmas whatever arise; c) an existential constituent that dependently originates from (something) is (in reality) unborn, and what is unborn is without essence or non-existent); d) what is without essence is free from destruction because of its being enlightenment."

Also through another treatise the profound teaching (concerning) the nature of all things is set forth. Thus in the BUDDHAVATAMSAKA the Tathāgata addresses Mañjuśrī:

"When Bodhisattvas are in these five ways encouraged (āśvāsana), they 'purify' the first stage (of a Bodhisattva's progressive spiritual development). Which are the five?

a) (A Bodhisattva) is encouraged when he feels himself to be firmly grounded in the knowledge of release, i.e. as to how to be free from false imagination, and when he wants others as well to realize that release of being free from false imagination.

b) He is also encouraged when he feels the insight-knowledge of being free from false imagination to amount to being cleansed of both duality and non-duality; when he feels himself to believe resolutely that dependently (arisen) dharmas have (really) not come into existence, and when he wishes others to share his conviction.

c) He is further encouraged when he reflects how dependently (arisen) dharmas have (really) not come into existence because causes naturally do not become (operative); when he feels himself to believe resolutely that all existential constituents are abodeless, and when he wishes others also to share his conviction.

d) (A Bodhisattva) is encouraged when he reflects how all dharmas are abodeless because partiality and multiplicity have no self-nature; when he feels himself to believe resolutely that the Buddha is like empty space, and when he wishes others to share his conviction.

e) And again he is encouraged when he reflects how the Buddha is like empty space because (the Enlightened One) does not take his stand anywhere in multiplicity; when he feels himself to believe resolutely that the Buddha has nothing to do with (ordinary) mental activity, with imagination or discrimination, and when he wishes others to share his conviction. 'The Buddha has nothing to do with mental activity, ...on account of (his always) realizing insight-knowledge that (arises) spontaneously and effortlessly,' (thus a Bodhisattva thinks), and these are the five (kinds of encouragement to him)."

In the BRAHMAVISEṢACINTIPARIṢCCHĀSŪTRA Jālinīprabha asks (the following question):

"All existential constituents, Brahman, correspond with (their real nature), it is said, and again they do not correspond with it. How is this (to be understood), Brahman? -

B: All dharmas are in accordance with (their real nature), because of their being unthinkable. Dharmas that (are held to be) associated with mind although they are unthinkable, are not in accordance with (reality). All existential constituents are characterized by detachment (viveka) and thus correspond with (their real nature). (The dharmas) that are not associated with detachment are associated with (vain) exertion (adhikāra) and (therefore), as far as their (vain) exertion goes, do not correspond with (their real nature). - J:

What is the origin of existential constituents, Brahman? -

B: It is, son of good family, the acme of dispassionateness and inner detachment (svaviṣayaviveka)."

(The following dialogue is found) in the SAPTAŚATIKA:

"(Lord Buddha): On what do you take your stand, Manjusri, when you practice the Perfection of Wisdom?

M: When I practice it, Exalted One, I do not take my stand on anything. -

The Exalted One: What is the practice of the Perfection of Wisdom (like), Mañjuśri, pertaining to you who does not take his stand on anything? -

M: That practice, Blessed One, (means) to be nowhere established. -

The Exalted One: Which of your 'roots of merit' wax and which wane, Mañjuśri, when you practice the Perfection of Wisdom? -

M: When (I do so), Blessed One, there is not any 'root of merit' of mine that either waxes or wanes. He who (concerns himself with) waxing or waning of something does not practice the Perfection of Wisdom."

In the MAÑJUŚRIVIKURVĀṆAPARIVARTA a devaputra (inquires into the problem of knowledge):

"How do you teach, Mañjuśri, so that by dint of this (teaching of yours) understanding can arise? -

M: The Buddha's insight-knowledge, Devaputra, cannot perfectly be known or discerned by anyone. For what reason? The Buddha's insight-knowledge, Devaputra, cannot perfectly be known or discerned by anyone because it is free from attachment and vain imagining, inexpressible, something that (can)not be made known, independent, beyond words, and something that has nothing to do with (ordinary) mental activity, with imagination or discrimination.

The devaputra: If the Buddha's insight-knowledge cannot perfectly be known, Mañjuśri, how can these Disciples perfectly know it, and how can Bodhisattvas stay without being liable to turning back (avaivartika)?

M: The knowledge that is conveyed by means of letters (or words), Devaputra, is the Tathāgatas' skill in means; but insight-knowledge cannot be made known by words (anaksara).

"It is like this, Devaputra: A fire cannot be made without attrition, but one can make it, if wood used for kindling fire is rubbed. If, Devaputra, from the very beginning, the Tathāgata had set forth in detail the Buddha's insight-knowledge, not a single sentient being would have perfectly understood it. Therefore, the Tathāgata has set it forth by means of his speech (that can be compared to) fire-producing wood. (In the ultimate sense, however,) that insight-knowledge (of his) cannot be made known by words. -

D: Mañjuśri, what is speech that is like fire-producing wood? -

M: By this kind of speech, Devaputra, any such subject is dealt with bearing on vows, austerities, striving for the Perfections, or the attainment of the (thirty-seven) 'conditions favorable to enlightenment.' -

D: And what is speech, Mañjuśri, that is not like fire-producing wood? -

M: It is speech, Devaputra, that is (really) pure and pithy, not bearing on birth, on subsistence or destruction; that speech has nothing to do with conducting or removing, with speech that condemns mental defilements or recommends purification; (that speech has nothing to do with) arousing 'aversion

from worldly things and world-disgust,' with delight in nirvana, and does not aim at 'thorough knowledge,' at giving up, at meditation, realization, attainment, or at 'intuitive comprehension.'"

In the SARVADHARMĀNUPALAMBHĀCETANARATNASAMNICAYA-NIRDESA SŪTRA the Tathāgata says to Mañjuśrī:

"'Sphere of the unthinkable (acintyadhātu),' Mañjuśrī, is always spoken of. What is (the meaning of) 'sphere of the unthinkable'? -

M: It is, Exalted One, the inconceivable (acittaka) sphere neither lending itself to release or measurement through mind nor to discernment through reflection. Nevertheless, Exalted One, it is the very mind that is the sphere of the unthinkable. For what reason?

In respect of mind, (conventionally speaking), it is conceivable, but (at the level of ultimate truth) the very mind is not mind. So, by its very nature, mind does not exist. In reality mind is 'devoid of mind' and does certainly not exist. That, Blessed One, is (the meaning of) 'sphere of the unthinkable.'"

(The next quotation) is from the same source:

The Tathāgata: Do you not 'wear the armor' "Mañjuśrī, of thinking that you will discipline sentient beings? -

M: Since neither lack nor completeness hold true of the sphere of beings, Exalted One, how (could one speak) of disciplining sentient beings or of their complete nirvāṇa? Those, Blessed One, who have set out for the sake of disciplining sentient beings (in their) sphere have embarked upon 'disciplining' empty space. Those who apply themselves to disciplining sentient beings desire to 'discipline' (supreme) enlightenment. All existential constituents, Exalted One, are - enlightenment. And enlightenment, Blessed One, has nothing to do with either mental defilements or purification. That is why the Tathāgata has asked whether I have set out for the sake of disciplining sentient beings. I have not set out for the sake of either disciplining beings or defiling them. For what reason? If there were (just) one living being, Exalted One, and if (I) were to distinguish between mental defilements of sentient beings and their purification, (I would have embarked upon either disciplining or defiling them). But, Exalted One, since no sentient being (really) exists, distinctions between beings' defilements and their purification do not hold good.

"Then, Blessed One, dependent or relative origination and non-obstruction (avirodha) (are spoken of). Since (they are) without (substance and unreal), Exalted One, (at the level of ultimate truth) there are neither mental defilements nor purification (of them). Since all dharmas arise dependently, Blessed One, they are devoid of a nature of their own. Defilements and purification (of them) imply origination in dependence and, therefore, their being un (real). The wise, Exalted One, have understood the meaning of dependent origination implying the nonexistence (of substance or self-nature). There is no difference between those who have understood and dependent origination implying non-existence. When there is no false discrimination, this implies that there are neither mental defilements nor purification.

"Let us take for example, Blessed One, a magician or his pupil (who make) a building with an upper story or such a one with a pavilion catch fire and set them ablaze until there is a conflagration. (On seeing) the spreading flames created by magic, somebody (is frightened) and wishes (to wear) 'armor (sheltering him from fire)' while thinking like this: 'My house with an upper story and pavilion is catching fire and it is being set ablaze; there is a conflagration; flames are spreading (further and further) - I am lost!' Exalted One, is that person not haunted by (quite unfounded) agony? -

Lord (Buddha): So he is, Mañjuśrī. -

M: That being the case, Exalted One, (similarly), he who wishes (to wear) the armor (of discipline)' with a view to disciplining sentient beings, is 'haunted by (quite unfounded) agony.'"

And here is a further quotation) from the same source:

"The Blessed One: What, Mañjuśrī, does 'seeing things as they really are' (bhūtapratyavekṣā) denote?

M: It means, Exalted One, thorough consideration which, however, has in no way anything to do with multiplicity or singleness, and, Exalted One, in the absence of alteration there is freedom from false discrimination. 'Seeing things as they really are' denotes 'not seeing things as they really are.' When taking one's base on seeing things as they really are, Blessed One, one does not entertain thoughts like, 'I am a worldling' or 'I am a holy Disciple.' For what reason? Because one does not consider anything lending itself to either worldliness or holiness. Taking their base on seeing things as they really are, Blessed One, a son or daughter of good family thus rely on it by way of (gaining access to) the absolute (dharmadhātunayena).

(They ) do not posit sameness in respect of anything, and they do not posit diversity, either. They do not distinguish falsely by imagining worldliness to be different from and holiness identical with (the absolute). For what reason? Because apprehension that has to do with identification or differentiation is not (real) apprehension. A monk who either identifies or differentiates does not (really apprehend). On that account a monk who does not distinguish falsely and does not think, 'I like this, I dislike that,' is free from grasping."

In the holy VIMALAKIRTINIRDESA (the following question is asked):

"What is the basis (of disease)? It is grasping objects of sense. So far as there are objects of sense for the basis of grasping, there is a basis of disease. What does grasping objects of sense relate to? It relates to the three realms of existence. And what is the thorough understanding of the basis of that grasping? It is (the thorough understanding that ultimately) there are no objects of sense and that there is nothing to be grasped. What is ungraspable has nothing to do with (the act of) grasping. What (is the meaning of) 'not to be grasped'? 'Not to be grasped' is spoken of by reason of (the fact) that the dualistic views of 'self' and 'other' are not got at."

In the same (discourse the realization of non-duality is referred to):

"The Bodhisattva Priyadarsana said: Form itself is empty, but not because of its destruction - the nature of form is itself emptiness. (On the one hand there are form,) feelings, perceptions, impulses and consciousness, (and on the other hand) emptiness. (Putting it ) like this (implies) dualism. Consciousness itself is emptiness, but not because of its destruction - the nature of consciousness is itself emptiness. He who understands it like this in respect of the five aggregates of attachment and (their real nature) (asmin) is, on account of his insight-knowledge, wise; he realizes non-duality."

In the PRAJÑAPARAMITA the holy Sariputra asks the Venerable Subhuti:

"How can a Bodhisattva be known to be skillful in means when he practices the Perfection of Wisdom? - Subhuti: When a Bodhisattva, a great being, practices the Perfection of Wisdom, Venerable Saradvatiputra, he does not...practice with regard to any of the following: form, feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness, marks of form..., of consciousness, permanence, impermanence, happiness, suffering, self, non-self, peacefulness, wrathfulness, emptiness, non-emptiness, signs, signlessness, wishes, wishlessness, separation, and non separation (in connection with) form, (feelings).., and consciousness. Likewise, (when practicing the Perfection of Wisdom, a Bodhisattva) does not practice (with regard to permanence, impermanence,...) separateness, and non-separateness in (connection with) the elements, sense-fields, dependent origination, with the conditions favorable to enlightenment, with supernatural knowledge, the perfections, 'aids to salvation' (powers), 'grounds of self-confidence,' analytical knowledges, and the special characteristics of the Buddha. And why so?

"For so it is, Venerable Śāriputra, that that is not form which is emptiness of form; and again form is nothing else but emptiness, and emptiness is nothing else but form. The very form is emptiness, and the very emptiness is form;...the very consciousness is emptiness, and the very emptiness is consciousness... In the same way, that which is emptiness of the special characteristics of the Buddha does not (correspond) to the Buddha's characteristics; (and again) the Buddha's characteristics are nothing else but emptiness, and emptiness is nothing else but the Buddha's characteristics. The very emptiness corresponds to the Buddha's characteristics, and the very characteristics of the Buddha are emptiness. Thus, Venerable Sariputra, a Bodhisattva can be known to be skillful in means when he practices the Perfection of Wisdom...

"(A Bodhisattva, a great being, who thinks to himself), 'I practice the Perfection of Wisdom,' does not attain to (anything). (Thinking to himself), 'I do not practice,' he does not attain to anything, either. (Thinking), 'I practice, and I do not practice,' he again does not attain to anything. (And thinking), 'I neither practice nor do I not practice,' he once again does not attain to anything. For what reason? Because thus there is not a single thing got at that has a nature of its own."

In the holy DHARANISVARARĀJAPARIPRCHA SŪTRA (we read the following):

"The Buddhas, the Exalted Ones, do not appear for the sake of diverse discourses (pertaining to different vehicles), (but they appear) in order to enable all sentient beings, after having won Complete and Full

Enlightenment, to attain to the realm of the absolute which is of one taste and without obstructions; (the Exalted Ones) turn the 'irreversible wheel' (of the Doctrine of ekayāna).

"A lapidary, for example, son of good family,... takes unpolished jewels from a jewel-mine, washes them with a strong solution of soda and wipes them with a black hair-cloth. At this point, none the less, he does not stop short at his exertions. Next he dips (the jewels) into a strong solution of quicksilver and then rubs them with (wood) and wool. And he still goes on exerting himself. He dips (the gems) into an effective herbal fluid and then wipes them with a fine cloth. When (an unpolished semi-precious stone, for instance,) has been processed (in this way) and freed from all grit, the product is called a lapis lazuli.

"Similarly, son of good family, the Tathāgata knows the 'realm' of sentient beings with all their taints and, through rousing discourses on impermanence, suffering, non-self, and on offensiveness, makes beings who are attached to samsara's round of birth and death) feel disgust at (samsara). He introduces them to the holy Teaching and Discipline. At this point, none the less, the Tathāgata does not stop short at his exertions. Next he makes them understand the Tathāgata's system (of preaching) through discourses on emptiness, on the groundless(ness of all things), and on wishlessness. And he still goes on exerting himself. Through discourses on the 'irreversible wheel' (of the Doctrine of ekayāna) and the purity of the 'three spheres (of giving, viz. the giver, recipient, and the act of giving)' he causes sentient beings of diverse extraction and dispositions to enter the sphere of the Tathāgata.. Having entered it and having discovered Buddhahood (tathāgatadharmatā) (in themselves), they are called the highest ('field of merit') worthy of veneration."

In the AVAIVARTACAKRA SŪTRA the youthful Mañjuśrī asked the (following question):

"What is the Buddhas, 'the Exalted Ones', preaching the Doctrine like? -

(The Buddha: ) Their preaching the Doctrine is their (turning) the irreversible wheel of the dharma. -

How is it, Blessed One, that the Exalted One preaches the Doctrine by referring to three vehicles? -

Because those sentient beings, son of good family, have a 'zealous interest in the low' and do not comprehend the Vehicle of Oneness Having been guiding them on this account with their skill in means, son of good family, the Buddhas, the Exalted Ones, are endowed with immense skill in means. The Blessed One has appeared at the time of the five degradations, and they (sentient beings) are not resolutely intent on the Vehicle of One-ness."

In the SRIMĀLĀSIMHANĀDASŪTRA it is stated that:

"the so-called complete nirvāṇa (as extinction) is a skillful means of the Tathāgatas. The three vehicles (must in reality be) understood to be one vehicle. By realizing the Vehicle of Oneness, one realizes the Highest, Complete and Full Enlightenment."

And again (we have a quotation) from the holy LANKĀVATĀRA SŪTRA:

"(When) Disciples and pratyekabuddhas (realize the Vehicle of Oneness), they re-awake in the realm that is free from all evil influences thanks to their having discarded (abhavad-) their noxious habit-energy and excessive love of meditation. And, further, they will gain the supremacy of the unthinkable 'body' of the absolute (dharmakāya), after having met all requirements pertaining to the (mundane realm and) to that of supramundane freedom from evil influences." - Nevertheless, (as skill in means) the Tathāgatas preach the Doctrine in multifarious world-systems, teaching it by means of a variety of 'vehicles' - not only three vehicles - through the impact of Discipline, and with the help of a multiplicity of meritorious actions (to be performed by) sentient beings."

In the (Methods of) Salvation of the GANDAVYUHA (a variety of 'vehicles' are alluded to):

"Hardly had in the world-system called Vairocana-jahśrī the Tathāgata Samantajñānaratnārcīśrīgunaketu-rajā become enlightened unto supreme perfect enlightenment when (all the Tathāgatas in the whole universe...turned the Wheel of the dharma so that)...countless sentient beings were established in the stage of the Disciples. (At that time) numberless beings were brought to maturity in respect of enlightenment pertaining to the pratyekabuddhas. Innumerable beings were brought to maturity in respect of enlightenment (resulting in) 'emancipation through forceful splendor.' An infinite number of beings were brought to maturity in respect of enlightenment (called) Possessing the Banner of Impeccable Prowess. An incalculable number of beings were established in enlightenment (resulting in) 'emancipation through the

light of the dharma.' Unnumbered sentient beings were brought to maturity in respect of enlightenment (resulting in) 'emancipation through the luster of the immaculate faculties.' Untold sentient beings were brought to maturity in respect of enlightenment (resulting in) 'emancipation through comprehension of the harmonious functioning of the (five) powers.' Countless sentient beings were established in enlightenment (resulting in) 'emancipation (thanks to) the existing vehicle of the sphere facing the City of the Absolute.' Numberless beings were established in enlightenment (resulting in) emancipation (thanks to) the vehicle with (all) associated methods of (developing) omnipresent supernatural powers.' Innumerable beings were established in enlightenment (resulting in) 'emancipation thanks to the methods of coordinating all endeavors in (one's dharma-) practice. An infinite number of beings were established in enlightenment (resulting in)' emancipation thanks to the methods of proceeding with one's meditation. An incalculable number of beings were established in enlightenment (resulting in) 'emancipation thanks to the methods of the sphere of purity concerning the whole range of sense-objects. Unnumbered sentient beings resolved to aspire after a Bodhisattva's enlightenment. Untold sentient beings were established in a Bodhisattva's path (of training). Countless sentient beings were established in the immaculate path of the perfections. Numberless beings were established in the first.. tenth stage of a Bodhisattva's (spiritual development). Innumerable beings were initiated into a Bodhisattva's career (characterized by) the pre-eminence of his vows, and untold were the sentient beings who were established in the purity of the vows pertaining to the career of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra."

A Bodhisattva should always be favored, and the holy Teaching must always be protected. What is meant by protection of the holy Teaching is sketched out in the SRADDHABALADHĀNA (AVATĀRAMUDRĀ) SŪTRA:

"When the holy Teaching is protected, Mañjuśrī, a Bodhisattva is favored, and when he is favored, the holy Teaching is protected. When such is the case, all living beings are protected. When they are all protected, the Buddha-lineage is rendered indestructible. One should be wishful, first wishing the Buddha-lineage (to be rendered) indestructible, desiring the mental defilements of all sentient beings to be destroyed, all doors to the states of woe to be locked, the boundless, immeasurable happiness of a universal monarch, of Sakra, Brahma, or of the World-Guardians to be enjoyed, and all fetters of Mara to be cut asunder; and finally, one should wish to realize the Highest, Complete and Full Enlightenment, Buddhahood supreme. One should favor a Bodhisattva, on how-ever humble a scale, even though he may just have 'formed the initial resolution (to enter on the course of a Bodhisattva).'"

Further, in the holy ŚĀGARAMATIPARIPRCHA SŪTRA it is said:

"There is one thing, Śāgaramati, that proves appealing in regard to the Bodhisattvas' Great Vehicle: conscientiousness while always being mindful of one's aspiration for Buddhahood. There is another thing: great compassion without there being any attachment to one's own happiness. Again, there is one thing: doing honor with kindly feeling to preachers of the Doctrine as if they were the Master or Preceptor themselves. And an additional one: being untiring in revering and paying homage to the Tathāgatas whether they live (in this world) or have entered perfect nirvāṇa. And last (but not least): attaining to 'the acceptance of all existential constituents as unborn (anutpattikadharmaksānti)' after comprehending that all dharmas according to their own nature are unborn and unoriginated."

"If a Bodhisattva acts in four ways," the BODHISATTVAPIṬAKA declares, "he will not fail (in a future life to win supreme) enlightenment; after his passing away, he will be reborn a universal monarch; according to his earnest wish he will conform to (the practice of collecting) all 'roots of merit'; he will be possessed of immense power like Narayana, and his body will become 'imperishable'; he will be reborn the son of a universal monarch; he will attain to the four brahmic states (brahmavihara); and having been reborn in the Brahma world, he will obtain the supremacy of Brahma.

Which are the four (ways of action)?

- (a) On seeing a stupa of the Tathāgata in ruins, a Bodhisattva is resolutely intent on rebuilding it, (even though he may be unable to do more than) replacing in it just a cracked ball of clay.
- (b) He builds either a stupa for the Tathāgata by an important crossroad where many people meet, a sanctuary, a house (for humanitarian purposes), or an obelisk; he (has) a statue of the Tathāgata made or (any other representation so that by seeing it people) will remind each other of the Tathāgata's virtues - viz.

(with reference to) setting in motion the Wheel of the Doctrine, to entering into ascetic life, (sitting under) the Tree of Enlightenment, vanquishing Mara, (performing) feats of thaumaturgy, pointing out the great parinirvana, or the descent from (the world of) the celestials.

(c) Whenever seeing the Tathāgata's Order of Disciples at variance among themselves, he makes every endeavor to bring about reconciliation.

(d) When (in future) the holy dharma, the Tathāgata's Teaching, will no more be listened to (lit. vidhvamsana), he will exert himself and guard against it lest (even) a single verse (of doctrine) should be forgotten. Taking under his protection the Teaching and its preachers, he will never abandon it even at the cost of his own body and life. These are the four (ways of action)."

In the holy RATNAMEGHA SŪTRA, too, (we find an enumeration of dharmas - ways of action):

"If Bodhisattvas act in ten ways, son of good family, they will be protectors of the holy Teaching. Which are the ten (ways of action)? (a) When in distant future, during the 'last five hundred (years),' the holy Teaching (as an institution) has been destroyed and the Doctrine distorted (so that) sentient beings have recourse to the wrong path, when the torch of insight-knowledge has been put out at a time when there is no Teacher, (a Bodhisattva) will cherish all the holy dharmas, discourses of great extent, profundity, and authority as if they were his mother, while reciting, studying, and mastering them. (b) He will promulgate (the holy dharmas) among others, revealing and explaining them correctly. (c) Those who have grasped (the Doctrine) he will gladden, please, and arouse faith in them who will (thus) benefit. (d) He will make them listen to the holy Teaching with a mind 'free from worldliness,' (e) He will cause the preachers of the Doctrine to be regarded as if they were the Master himself. (f) He will cause the holy dharma to be regarded as 'nectar (of immortality),' (g) as 'the elixir of life,' (h) and as the panacea. (i) Without regard for his body or life, he will always be in quest of the holy dharma, (j) and after his search for (the Highest) his practice will lead to (ultimate) success."

(Here is an additional enumeration of dharmas) from the PRASANTAVINISCAYAPRATIHĀRYA SŪTRA:

"If a Bodhisattva, Bhadrāpāla, is endowed with four traits of character, he protects the holy Teaching. Which are the four? (a) He does not hanker for his own happiness (b) but gives happiness to others. (c) He is full of great compassion (d) and never contents himself with striving for the Highest. These are the four (traits of character)."

(The following) is from a chapter of the preceding discourse being in the same vein as (the foregoing quotations):

"For a thousand years Prince Vimalatejas honored the Exalted One, the Tathāgata Mahāmeru, together with 84000 monks (by providing) them with all requisites of best quality. Then, after a thousand years the Exalted One, the Tathāgata Mahāmeru, said to King Vimalatejas: "Your Majesty, even the sum total of your meritorious gifts, your acts of liberality (performed) for a thousand years, of your pious offerings to the Tathāgata does not equal a hundredth part of, does not stand comparison with the amount of merit (kusalamula) (resulting) from just one inhalation and exhalation of a Bodhisattva who does his level best by striving for the Highest. How much less (could the former's amount of merit be compared with that of a Bodhisattva protecting the holy dharma) by teaching it, by applying himself to studying it, or by making known just one verse consisting of four metrical units and dealing with the perfections! The (latter's) amount of merit is boundless, I say.

So much for your meritorious gifts, Your Majesty, your acts of liberality (mentioned above). (Suppose) all expenses that you had incurred in a (hundred) thousand years were lumped together and utilized for the maintenance of a single monk - and again the same (amount) for each of all members of the order. (The amount of) merit (resulting from your) meritorious gifts and acts of liberality would not equal a hundredth part of, (would not stand comparison with) that pertaining to a Bodhisattva who has devoted himself to teaching and studying (the Doctrine), who is humble, loves the dharma, and thinks to himself after accepting food offered with faith: With the help of this (food) I shall strive for the Highest."

In the holy TATHĀGATAGUHYA SŪTRA (we read):

"How-ever large one may reckon a Bodhisattva's stock of merit - if (he becomes) a protector of the holy Teaching, his (amount of) merit will be all the larger. Even if the Buddha were to make every effort to reckon a dharma protector's (stock of) merit for ten million aeons, (his efforts) would not come to an end."

What is the meaning of 'holy Teaching'? The SRIMALA-SIMHANADA SŪTRA gives an answer:

"The 'holy Teaching' is (another) name for the Great Vehicle. And why (Great Vehicle)? Because the Disciples' and pratyekabuddhas' Vehicle as well as all mundane and supramundane existential constituents that are karmically wholesome derive from the Great Vehicle."

"Protection of the holy dharma," the DHARMASAMGITI-SŪTRA explains, "its mastery, (presupposes) the setting forth, understanding, studying, and reflecting upon the deep discourses delivered by the Tathāgata." (On the other hand) Bodhisattvas who take their stand on habitual imagining (upalambha ) may have revered the Tathāgata for an infinitely long time. But how will they win (supreme) enlightenment unless they receive (the Tathāgata's) prophecy (regarding their would-be Buddhahood)?"

In the BRAHMAPARIPRCCHA reference is made (to the Tathāgata's 'prophecy'):

"Though I had recited the Tathāgatas' names, Brahman, fulfilled my religious duties (dharma) - whatever (they were) - led lives of self-restraint (brahmacarya), and trained myself in the Six Perfections for an aeon or even longer, I did not receive the Tathāgatas' 'prophecy.' For what reason? Because, Brahman, I had taken my stand on self-restraint (as a position). But no sooner had I seen the Tathāgata Dipamkara than I attained to 'the acceptance of (all) existential constituents as unborn'. Thereafter, I received my 'prophecy,' and then I completely transcended all courses of conduct (caryā) (pertaining to a worldling). I achieved the Six Perfections." Thus it is said (in this discourse).

Bodhisattvas who are not resolutely intent on the profundity of the Doctrine are not full of (zeal) to work for their own and others' good. In the CANDRAGARBHAPARI-VARTA (the profundity of the dharma) is mentioned (thus):

"Absolute truth is the Highest, Complete and Full Enlightenment which is not shared by Disciples and pratyekabuddhas. Upon that account it is not possible (for them), by means of any (degree of) conventional truth, to meet with maximum success by accumulating 'roots of merit' (also prerequisite) for the Highest... Enlightenment. By way of illustration, Candragarbha, the great and deep ocean cannot be dried up by means of any (number of) sparks. Similarly, Candragarbha, the ocean of one's own mental defilements cannot be dried up by means of any (degree of) conventional truth. How much less (that of defilements tainting) other sentient beings!"

What is (to be understood by) profundity of the Doctrine and by being resolutely intent on it, is deliberated in the BODHISATTVAPIṬAKA:

"In respect of sublime right views, there are two causes and reasons (for them). Which are they? Another's words and one's own thorough-going attention. One may further ask: What (is the meaning) of 'another's words' and of 'one's own thorough-going attention'? If properly heeding the (question), one will focus one's attention in this way: (Among) those who apply themselves to meditation there (will be persons) who have not heard this Dharma-discourse of the Bodhisattvapitaka, being ignorant of the holy Teaching and Discipline. Having derived pleasure just from meditation and under the impact of pride, they will become conceited. (Owing to their conceit) they will not become altogether free from birth, old age, illness, death, misery, lamentation, distress, grief, and despair - from all that is called pain and affliction. It was the Tathagata who thought of (the consequences of ignorance of the Teaching) and thus mentioned (them). Hearing about actions conforming to (the holy dharma and leading to) the Other Shore (of ultimate release will, in due course, bring about) one's ultimate release from old age and death. (To hear) thus (means) to learn.

"What is a Bodhisattva's thoroughgoing application?

Having thought that it (must) be like this (or that), (one should go by) the following teaching: A Bodhisattva, a great being, does not apply himself to anything at all. What is called thoroughgoing application (must in reality be) called non-application. Furthermore, when a Bodhisattva applies himself thoroughly, he does not articulate, express anything at all. Whence a sound comes cannot (in the ultimate sense) be discerned, (and

a question like) 'where has that sound come from and where is it stopped?' (would) refer to an (imaginary) starting-point and terminal point (pūrvakoṭi ,aparakoṭi) (implying reductio ad absurdum). Regarding all that is looked into - that which was, is, or will be said, in search of him who said, says, or will say (something), (regarding all that is looked into) - that which was, is, or will be said for the sake of renunciation and understanding, there was, is, and will (in reality) be 'silence' (avijñapti - 'non-proclamation'). Such is (a Bodhisattva's) thoroughgoing application - thus it is taught.

"Such being the case, how does a Bodhisattva wisely see? Of that (we) learn in the following:

When a Bodhisattva sees that all existential constituents have by their very nature come to an end, have been pacified, have completely ceased, have been tranquillized, are unborn, unmade, absolutely non-existent, and completely extinct - then, he sees with wisdom. Thinking of that by means of which he sees, he thus 'sees what he does (in reality) not see and think of.' That being the case, wisely seeing is spoken of."

"Again, (we) learn of the following:

A Bodhisattva's wise application is his being free from doubt and perplexity in respect of any dharma, free from obstructions, restrictions concerning the approaches to release (vimokṣasamukhānīyama); with regard to any dharma he perseveres in order to give it up but is free from severance (anupaccheda); he 'perseveres' in order to understand everything correctly, but 'without effort' (aprayatna). To look at all existential constituents correctly, to see them as they really are (yathabhūtam) - that is (the meaning of) right views.

"What does it mean to see all existential constituents as they really are? (Seeing them) means 'not seeing them' Non-seeing refers to the Unborn, and the Unborn is another name for the absolutely Unmade. What is the meaning of 'absolutely unmade'? It is another designation for that which cannot be seen (adṛśya). Such was the meditation of the Tathāgata, and if one sees (like him) that all compounded things are (in reality) unborn, one will win the certainty of perfection (samyaktvaṇīyāma) which is thus called (sublime) 'right views.' One may ask, 'why is that which is called ›winning the certainty of perfection‹ thus set forth?' It is set forth because what corresponds to all dharmas (existential constituents) corresponds to (all) Buddha-dharmas."