



# Entering the Middle Way

## *Madhyamakāvatāra*

Candrakīrti

Translated by Thupten Jinpa

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## The First Ground, Perfect Joy

I pay homage to the gentle lord Mañjuśrī.

Śrāvakas and middle-level buddhas arise from sovereign sages.  
Buddhas are born from bodhisattvas.  
The compassionate mind and nondual cognition  
as well the awakening mind: these are causes of bodhisattvas. 1.1

As compassion alone is accepted to be  
the seed of the perfect harvest of buddhahood,  
the water that nourishes it, and the fruit that is long a source of enjoyment,  
I will praise compassion at the start of all. 1.2

First, with the thought “I am,” they cling to a self;  
then, with the thought “mine,” they become attached to things;  
like buckets on a waterwheel, they turn without control;  
I bow to the compassion that cares for such suffering beings. 1.3

Beings are like reflections of the moon in rippling water;  
seeing them as fleeting and as devoid of intrinsic nature,  
the bodhisattva’s mind falls under compassion’s sway,  
yearning to set free every transmigrating being. 1.4

Through intense dedication with Samantabhadra’s prayers,  
he abides in Perfect Joy; this is called the first ground.  
From that point on, having attained this ground,  
he is hailed by the name *bodhisattva* alone. 1.5

He is born into the lineage of the tathāgatas as well;  
he has utterly purged the three binding factors.  
Such a bodhisattva upholds the state of supreme joy  
and has the power to shake a hundred worlds. 1.6

Stepping on from one ground to another, he travels perfectly to the higher ones.  
At that point the paths to all lower realms are blocked for him;  
at that point all the grounds of ordinary persons cease for him.  
His is described clearly in terms akin to the eighth ārya. 1.7

Even when abiding on the first ground of the mind for full awakening,  
he surpasses those born from the Sage’s speech and the pratyeka-buddhas  
through the power of his merit, and his merit increases ever more. 1.8  
When at Gone Afar, he will also surpass them by his intelligence. 1.8

At this point the first cause of full awakening,  
the perfection of generosity, will become preeminent;  
committed to giving away even his very flesh,  
giving becomes a sign to infer his unseen qualities. 1.9

All living beings eagerly yearn for happiness,  
yet for humans there is no happiness without resources.  
Material resources, in turn, come about from generosity;  
knowing this, the -Buddha spoke on generosity first. 1.10

Those with weak compassion and ruthless minds,  
who seek their own welfare with enthusiasm,  
even for them, the wealth they desire will come  
from generosity, a cause that relieves suffering. 1.11

Indeed it is through the practice of generosity  
that he will swiftly, at some point, meet the āryas.  
He will then cut clean the continuum of cyclic existence,  
and as a result, he will journey to the state of peace. 1.12

Those who keep in mind their pledge to help sentient beings,  
without much delay, attain joy through their generosity.  
Since it's for both the compassionate and the one who is not,  
this discourse on generosity is primary. 1.13

If simply hearing or thinking of the phrase “give me”  
brings such joy to the children of the Conqueror—  
joy not experienced even by the arhats who enter into peace—  
what need is there to speak of the joy when giving away everything? 1.14

Cutting his body and giving it away, he sees from his own pain  
the pain of others, such as their birth in the hells,  
as if he were undergoing these situations himself;  
thus swiftly he strives to cut away all their pain. 1.15

Generosity devoid of the gift, receiver, and giver  
is called a supramundane perfection,  
but when attachment for these three arises,  
it is then said to be a mundane perfection. 1.16

Abiding perfectly in the bodhisattva's mind  
and endowed with light beautifying the sublime ones,  
this ground of Perfect Joy is the water-crystal gem [the moon],  
which dispels all darkness and reigns victorious. 1.17

## The Second Ground, The Stainless

He is endowed with perfect morality and purity;  
even in dreams, he shuns the stain of immorality.  
Since all movements of his body, speech, and mind are pure,  
he accumulates the excellent virtue of all ten courses of action. 2.1

Not only this path of virtue but in all ten deeds,  
he becomes most excellent and pure.  
Just as the radiant autumn moon [adorns the night sky],  
morality adorns him with peace and radiance. 2.2

Should he, though pure, see in terms of intrinsic nature,  
his morality will remain impure because of this.  
Thus with respect to all three elements of discipline,  
he always remains free of the flow of dualistic thoughts. 2.3

Wealth through generosity is found even in the lower realms;  
this occurs when one has fractured the legs of morality.  
When interest and capital itself are both exhausted,  
no prospects remain for one of any future wealth. 2.4

If, when free and living with favorable conditions,  
we do not retain this status we enjoy,  
we will fall into the abyss and be at the mercy of others.  
What could enable us to rise up again from such a state? 2.5

Therefore, having engaged in the discourse on generosity,  
the -Buddha proceeded to the discourse on morality;  
and when qualities spring up in the field of morality,  
enjoyment of their fruits will become continuous. 2.6

Ordinary beings and the speech-born śrāvakas,  
those who are established for self-enlightenment,  
and the children of the conquerors—as to their definite goodness  
and birth in higher realms, the cause is none other than morality. 2.7

Just as the ocean and a corpse do not remain together,  
and just as good fortune and calamity do not keep company,  
likewise the great ones who are governed by morality  
do not wish for the company of immorality. 2.8

*Who* relinquishes *what* and in relation to *whom*—  
when any of these three is objectified,  
such morality is described as mundane perfection;  
free of attachment to these three is supramundane. 2.9

This bodhisattva born of the radiant moon of morality,  
who is not of cyclic existence yet is its glory,  
the stainless who, like moonlight on an autumn night,  
removes the pain from the minds of sentient beings. 2.10

### The Third Ground, The Luminous

Because the fire burning off the fuels of all phenomena  
produces light here, this third ground is called The Luminous.  
Here the child of the Tathāgata perceives  
a copper-colored glow like that of a sunrise. 3.1

Were a disturbed person to slice flesh from the bones  
of the body of a bodhisattva though he be innocent,  
cutting it off ounce by ounce over a prolonged period,  
this will serve to increase his forbearance toward the torturer. 3.2

For a bodhisattva who sees selflessness,  
*who cuts what at what point in time in what manner?*  
He sees all phenomena as images in a mirror,  
and by seeing thus too, he will have such forbearance. 3.3

If you respond with vengeance when someone harms you,  
does your bitterness reverse what was already done?  
Resentment serves no purpose here in this life,  
and it brings more conflicts in the world beyond too. 3.4

He who speaks of exhausting  
the fruits of nonvirtuous actions performed in the past,  
how can he bear to plant the seeds of future pain  
by inflicting harm on others and being angry at them? 3.5

Indeed anger felt toward the Conqueror's children  
destroys in an instant the virtue gathered  
by generosity and morality over a hundred eons;  
thus there is no evil similar to intolerance. 3.6

Wrath disfigures your face and leads you to what is unwholesome;  
it robs your mind of the judgment of what is right and wrong;  
intolerance is swift to throw you to the lower realms.  
But forbearance brings qualities opposite to those just described: 3.7

forbearance makes you attractive and dear to the sublime ones,  
you become wise in knowing what is appropriate and what is not,  
afterward you gain birth as a deva or a human,

and it secures the exhaustion of negative karma. 3.8

Knowing the faults and benefits of anger and forbearance,  
respectively, of ordinary beings and bodhisattvas,  
shun intolerance and cultivate swiftly and constantly  
the forbearance praised by the āryas. 3.9

Forbearance, even dedicated toward perfect -buddhahood,  
is mundane if objectified in terms of the three factors.  
If there is no such objectification, the -Buddha said,  
this is a perfection that indeed transcends the world. 3.10

On this ground the bodhisattva attains absorptions and clairvoyance;  
here attachment and aversion come to exhaust completely.  
Because of this he is at all times also able to destroy  
all the attachment associated with the desire realm. 3.11

The three practices of generosity and so on  
the Sugata lauded mostly for the householder.  
They also constitute what is known as the collection of merit,  
and they are the cause of the -buddha's form body. 3.12

This bodhisattva, who abides in the sun radiating light,  
having first dispelled perfectly the darkness within his own self,  
wishes keenly to utterly destroy the darkness in other beings.  
On this ground, though extremely piercing, no heat of anger remains. 3.13

## The Fourth Ground, The Radiant

All higher qualities follow after diligence;  
it is the cause of merit and wisdom, the two collections.  
Where diligence comes to be set ablaze,  
that ground is the fourth, The Radiant. 4.1

Here the Sugata's children come to have,  
through their special practice of the factors of enlightenment,  
the light of gnosis far brighter than the glow of shining copper.  
Thoughts associated with identity view totally cease. 4.2

## The Fifth Ground, Hard to Conquer

This great one on the ground of Hard to Conquer  
cannot be defeated even by the entire host of māras.  
Excelling in meditative absorption and in the truths of the wise,  
he gains mastery in refined understanding as well. 5.1

## The Sixth Ground, The Manifest

On Directly Facing [aka The Manifest] he abides in the mind of meditative equipoise and turns to the attributes of perfect buddhahood.

This bodhisattva, who sees the truth of dependent origination, attains true cessation by dwelling in wisdom. 6.1

Just as a single man with eyes can easily lead a group of blind men to their desired destination, here too intelligence leads the sightless virtues and guides them to the Conqueror's state. 6.2

One who has realized the utterly profound truth through scripture and through reasoning as well was the noble Nāgārjuna. So I will expound here his tradition as it appears in his treatises. 6.3

Even ordinary persons when hearing about emptiness, sheer joy surges again and again within their heart, tears born of such joy fill their eyes, and their hair stands up in their follicles. 6.4

Such people have the seed of perfect buddhahood. They are the perfect vessels for this teaching; to them you should teach the sublime ultimate truth. For them the ensuing qualities will come to birth. 6.5

Adopting perfect morality, they will always abide by it; they will practice generosity and cultivate compassion; they will practice forbearance and will dedicate thoroughly their virtue to freedom for all beings. 6.6

They will revere those who aspire to perfect awakening. Gaining mastery of ways profound and vast, such persons will gradually attain the ground of Perfect Joy. So all those who thus aspire, pray listen to this path. 6.7

Not originating from itself, and how from something other?  
Not from both, and how from no cause?  
If things originate from themselves, nothing is gained.  
Furthermore, something already born cannot repeat its birth. 6.8

If you conceive that what is once arisen can arise again, the growth of sprouts and so on will never happen in this world; and seeds will reproduce themselves until the end of time. For how can the sprout ever bring about the seed's cessation? 6.9

For you then, there cannot exist a sprout distinct from the seed that causes it, in shape, color, taste, potency, and ripened effects.  
If it is through shunning its prior reality that a thing turns into another thing, how then can the two be identical? 6.10

If for you the seed is not different from the sprout before us, then just like the seed, what you call the sprout would be invisible; or, being identical, just like the sprout, the seed too should be perceived. Thus you should not uphold this thesis [of identity of cause and effect]. 6.11

Because the effect can be seen when the cause is no more, even ordinary people do not accept that the two are one. Thus the postulation that things originate from themselves is untenable in reality as well as in everyday experience. 6.12

If you assert self-arising, the produced and that which produces, as well as the act and the agent, will become identical. Since these are not the same, we reject self-arising, for it entails the unwanted consequences explained at length. 6.13

If something can originate from something other, then pitch darkness can originate from burning flames. In fact, everything could arise from everything, for after all, being other equally pertains to all nonproducing things. 6.14

[*Opponent:*] That which is capable of being produced is called, therefore, the *effect*, and that which is capable of producing it, though other, is the *cause*. Sharing the same continuum, the effect arises from its producer. Hence rice sprouts cannot come from something like barley seeds. 6.15

[*Objection:*] You do not think of barley, lotus pistils, *kiṃśuka* flowers, and so on as producing rice sprouts; indeed they have no power to do so. They do not belong to the same continuum; they share no likeness. Likewise, rice seeds, also being other, differ from their sprouts as well. 6.16

A sprout does not exist at the same time as the seed, so without its correlate, how can seed be “other”? As it is not established that the sprout arises from the seed, you should discard the view that things arise from other. 6.17

You may say that, like the up and down of two sides of a scale, which cannot but be seen to take place at the same time, the arising and ceasing of the produced and producer occur together. Even if they are simultaneous, there is no simultaneity [of seed and sprout] here. 6.18



For as you contend, that which is arising is *about to arise*, so does not yet exist,  
while that which is ceasing, though existent, is *about to disintegrate*.

If this is so, how can such a case be likened to a scale?

It makes no sense to speak of an arising when there is no producer. 6.19

If, for visual cognition, what exists at the same time as itself—  
eyes and so forth, as well as concomitant discrimination, and so on—are its producer,  
what need is there for it to arise, since it already exists?

If you say it does not yet exist, we have already shown the faults of this. 6.20

If the cause is a producer that produces something other,

“Is what it produces existent, nonexistent, both, or neither?”

If existent, what need is there for a producer? If nonexistent, what can a producer do?

If both, again, what use is it? If neither, what use does a producer serve? 6.21

[*Opponent:*] Worldly perspective, grounded in its own views, is authoritative;  
that things come from what is other than themselves is perceived by people.

So what use is reasoning here in this context?

Thus *other-arising* is established; what need have we of reasoning? 6.22

[*Response:*] All entities bear dual natures  
as obtained by correct or false views [of them].

What is seen by perfect vision is the ultimate truth,

and what is seen by false vision is conventional truth, it is taught. 6.23

False vision is also said to be of two kinds:  
that of clear senses and that of impaired senses.

Cognitions deriving from impaired senses are  
held to be distorted compared with those of the unimpaired. 6.24

Everything the six unimpaired senses grasp  
and perceive within everyday experience of the world  
is true from the perspective of the world;  
the rest the world itself defines as false. 6.25

Overcome as they are by ignorance's sleep,  
tīrthikas postulate a “self.”

As with things imagined as real owing to illusion, mirage, and the like,  
this has no existence even according to the world. 6.26

Just as what is perceived by an eye afflicted with disease  
cannot invalidate the perception of those free of such defect,  
likewise the mind deprived of stainless wisdom  
cannot invalidate a pure, untainted mind. 6.27

Because delusion obscures the true nature, it is a *concealer*;

that which is contrived by it and appears to be real  
the Buddha spoke of as *true for a concealer*;  
and fabricated entities are merely *conventional*. 6.28

Through the force of an eye disease, one perceives  
false things such as floating hairs and so on;  
those with clear vision see what is actually so.  
Understand suchness to be like this as well. 6.29

If ordinary perception constitutes valid knowledge,  
suchness will be seen by common folk.  
What need for the āryas then? And what need for ārya paths?  
Yet it's wrong to take the foolish mind as valid as well. 6.30

Since ordinary perception has no validity in every respect,  
no worldly perspective can invalidate in the context of suchness.  
If everyday facts are rejected from a perspective of worldly consensus,  
then this will be invalidated on the authority of everyday experience. 6.31

In everyday experience, a man who simply left the seed  
claims "I fathered this son!" or thinks "I planted this tree."  
So arising from other doesn't exist  
even from the perspective of the everyday world. 6.32

Because the sprout is no other than the seed,  
there is no extinction of the seed at the time of the sprout;  
and because the sprout and seed are not identical,  
it cannot be said that seed exists when the sprout is there. 6.33

If the intrinsic characteristics of things were to arise dependently,  
things would come to be destroyed by denying it;  
emptiness would then be a cause for the destruction of things.  
But this is illogical, so no real entities exist. 6.34

Thus, when such phenomena are analyzed,  
nothing is found as their nature apart from suchness.  
So the conventional truth of the everyday world  
should not be subjected to thorough analysis. 6.35

In the context of suchness, certain reasoning disallows arising  
from self or from something other, and that same reasoning  
disallows them on the conventional level too.  
So by what means then is your arising established? 6.36

Empty things dependent on convergences,  
such as reflections and so on, are not unknown.

And just as from an empty thing like a reflection  
a perception can arise that bears its form, 6.37

likewise although all things are empty,  
they do arise from emptiness in a robust way.  
Since no intrinsic nature exists in either of the two truths,  
phenomena are neither eternal nor annihilated. 6.38

Since actions do not cease in an intrinsic manner,  
they remain potent even in the absence of a foundation consciousness.  
Indeed in some cases, the acts themselves may have long ceased,  
yet their effects will come about without fail; this you should know. 6.39

Having experienced certain things in a dream,  
a fool may continue to lust for them even when awake.  
Likewise, even from actions ceased and lacking intrinsic existence,  
effects will come to be. 6.40

While nonexistent objects are equal in their unreality,  
those with eye disease perceive floating hairs,  
not the forms of just any nonexistent thing.  
Know likewise that ripened acts do not bear fruit again. 6.41

As such, unwholesome effects come from dark acts,  
while wholesome effects are seen to come from virtuous acts,  
and the wise, for whom there is no virtuous or nonvirtuous, become free.  
Thus speculation on karma and effects has been discouraged. 6.42

“Foundation consciousness exists,” “Persons exist,”  
“These aggregates alone exist”:  
such teachings were given for those  
who cannot understand the most profound truth. 6.43

Even though the Buddha was free of identity view,  
he did speak in terms of “I” and “mine.”  
Likewise, though things are devoid of intrinsic existence,  
he spoke of their existence in a provisional sense. 6.44

[*Cittamātra*:] “Apprehending no objects, he perceives no subject,  
and understanding the triple world to be mere consciousness,  
the bodhisattva who abides in the perfection of wisdom  
realizes suchness in terms of consciousness only. 6.45

“Just as in the ocean whipped by windstorm,  
waves rise high one after another,  
so from the seed of all, foundation consciousness,

mere consciousness arises through its own potential. 6.46

“Therefore dependent nature, which is the cause  
of imputed things, has intrinsic existence:

- (1) it emerges in the absence of external objects,
- (2) it actually exists, and (3) it is beyond the realm of concepts.” 6.47

Where is your analogy for this mind with no external reality?  
If you say, “Like a dream, for example,” let’s examine this.  
Since such a mind does not exist for me even in a dream,  
this analogy of yours has no validity. 6.48

If you say that the mind must exist because we remember our dream  
when we wake up, the same must be true of external objects.  
For just as you can recall in terms of “I dreamed this,”  
similar recollection exists for external objects as well. 6.49

You may say, “Since there is no visual cognition in sleep,  
no external object is seen, and thus mental cognition alone exists;  
it’s the aspects of the mind that are grasped as external.  
So as in dreams, it’s the same with waking life.” 6.50

Just as for you no external realities are born in a dream,  
no mental cognitions are born either;  
so all three factors of perception—the eyes, their object,  
and the mind engendered by them—are fictitious. 6.51

For the ears and the rest too, these three factors lack birth.  
And as in dreams, here too in the waking state,  
phenomena are false and mind has no existence;  
there are no objects of experience and no senses either. 6.52

So here, just as with the waking state,  
the three factors of dream exist until woken up—  
upon rousing, the three become no more.  
So it is for those awakened from the sleep of delusion. 6.53

The cognition of one suffering from defective sight  
perceives floating hair because of his malady.  
For such cognition, both floating hair and its perception are true;  
for those who have clear sight, both these things are false. 6.54

If cognition exists without the cognized,  
one should see floating hair even without the malady  
that makes the eyes see such things.  
This is not the case, and so no such cognition exists. 6.55

Now if [you assert] that such perceptions do not occur  
in those who have clear sight because the potentiality has not matured,  
it's not merely that the cognizable objects do not exist.  
But such potential does not exist, so this cognition is not established. 6.56

Potentiality cannot exist for what is *already arisen*;  
for what is *not yet arisen* too, there can be no potentiality.  
Without the qualifier there can be no qualified,  
otherwise even a barren woman's son could have such potential. 6.57

If you speak of potentiality because consciousness will emerge,  
there will be no cognition since there is now no potential.  
“Things that exist through mutual dependence  
have no true existence.” So the sublime ones have taught. 6.58

If consciousness arises from the maturing of potentiality already past,  
it will have then emerged from a potential extraneous to itself.  
And since the moments of this continuum would be alien to each other,  
anything and everything could emerge from anything. 6.59

You may say that though these moments are distinct,  
they have no separate continua, so therefore  
the objection does not apply. But this thesis is unproven.  
For such a single shared continuum is untenable. 6.60

Attributes of Maitreya and Upagupta,  
who are distinct, cannot belong to a single continuum.  
Things different from each other through intrinsic characteristics  
could not logically be part of a single continuum. 6.61

[*Cittamātra*:] “The arising of visual perception takes place  
from its own potentiality wholly and at once.  
This potentiality, which is the basis of such consciousness,  
is what is termed ‘the physical eye organ.’” 6.62

You say, “Not knowing that perceptions emerging from the senses—  
such as the simple perception of blue—  
come from their own seeds with nothing outer to grasp,  
people speak of apprehending external objects. 6.63

“In dreams, where no external forms are present,  
mind assuming their aspects arises from their ripened potentiality.  
So just as in dreams, in waking states too,  
the mind exists with no external reality.” 6.64

[*Refutation:*] Since without sight, mental cognitions  
that perceive blue and so on occur in a dream,  
why would such a perception not arise from its ripened potential  
for a blind person without eyes? 6.65

If, according to you, there is the ripening of potentiality  
for the sixth consciousness in dreams but not in an awake blind person,  
then just as there is no ripening of potentiality of the sixth for the blind,  
why can't one say that it does not exist in dreams either? 6.66

So just as eyelessness is not a cause for such ripening,  
in dreams too, sleep is not the cause [for such activation].  
So you must concede that even in a dream,  
the dream sight and its objects are causes for false subjects. 6.67

Whatever responses they may present  
can be viewed as akin to their thesis.  
Therefore this contention is brought to an end.  
The buddhas never taught that real entities exist. 6.68

The yogis who, on the basis of their guru's instruction,  
see the ground as filled with skeletons,  
here too, all three factors must be seen as devoid of arising.  
This is thus described as [meditation] attending to a fictitious object. 6.69

If these objects of foulness meditation are,  
for you, just like your objects of sense perception,  
then when other persons direct their mind to it,  
they too should cognize it; this means they are not fictitious. 6.70

The same is true of someone with an eye disease;  
so too is a preta's perception of a river as a stream of pus.  
In brief, this is the point: just as there is no cognizable object,  
understand that there is no cognizing mind either. 6.71

Now if this entity *dependent nature*—  
free of duality and devoid of object and of subject—exists,  
by what means is its existence known?  
Without observing it, you cannot say it exists. 6.72

Cognition that is aware of itself is not established.  
If you say this reflexive awareness is proven by later recollection,  
this is not so. For the evidence you cite remains itself unproven,  
and what is not established cannot be a valid proof. 6.73

Even if reflexive awareness were allowed [for the sake of argument],

it would still be illogical for memory to recall [prior cognition];  
the two being different, it would be like the recollection of someone with no prior  
knowledge.

This reasoning destroys all other aspects [of the purported proof] as well. 6.74

Apart from the recollection of the experience of the object,  
for us, there is no recollection that is extraneous;  
therefore the memory "I saw that" can occur.

This too is within the norms of worldly convention. 6.75

Therefore, since no reflexive awareness exists,  
what is it that cognizes your *dependent nature*?  
Since agent, object, and action cannot be identical,  
the claim that cognition apprehends itself is untenable. 6.76

If this entity that is your *dependent nature*,  
which has no arising and is uncognized, can still exist,  
why would something not fit to be existent,  
such as the son of a barren woman, offend you? 6.77

Now if dependent nature does not exist in the slightest manner,  
what then can be the cause for conventional realities?  
Because you remain attached to a substantially real,  
you demolish all facts of worldly convention. 6.78

Those who remain outside the master Nāgārjuna's way,  
they have no means for attaining true peace.  
They have strayed from the truths of convention and of suchness,  
and because of this failure, they will not achieve liberation. 6.79

The conventional truth is the means,  
while the ultimate truth is its end.  
Those who fail to know the distinction between the two  
will enter wrong paths through false conceptualization. 6.80

The manner in which you assert your dependent nature  
we do not accept even on the conventional level.  
And yet to gain results for the sake of the world,  
we speak of things' existence even though they do not exist. 6.81

Just as things do not exist for those arhats  
who have shunned the aggregates and abide in peace,  
if something does not exist from the perspective of the world,  
then even in terms of the everyday world, we do not say that it exists. 6.82

If you think that the everyday world does not invalidate you,

then, using [conventions of] the world, refute this [conventional truth].  
You should thus enter into a dispute with the world,  
and we will follow whoever prevails from this. 6.83

“The bodhisattva who is directly facing The Manifest  
realizes the threefold world to be merely consciousness”;  
this statement is made to reject an eternal self or creator  
and to understand that mind alone is the creator. 6.84

Therefore, to enhance the minds of the wise,  
the Omniscient One spoke in the *Descent into Laṅkā* sutra  
diamond-like words crushing the tīrthikas' lofty peaks;  
this was done to help get to the true intent. 6.85

Based on their own treatises, the tīrthikas  
postulate such things as the person and so on.  
Seeing none of these to be the agent, the Buddha said  
that mind alone is the creator of the world. 6.86

Just as the word *buddha* refers to  
“one who has blossomed into suchness,” so the sutras  
speak of “mind only” because the mind is primary in the world.  
The meaning of such sutras is not that matter has no existence. 6.87

For if the Buddha knew the world to be mind only  
and, on that basis, did engage in the rejection of matter,  
why then would the Great One proclaim in the same sutra  
that the mind was born from delusion and karma? 6.88

It is the mind that constructed the vast diversity  
of both the domain of sentient beings and their universe as well.  
The Buddha said that all beings are born of karma;  
there is no karma without the mind. 6.89

Even though matter does exist,  
it has no status of a creator like the mind,  
so what is being denied is a creator other than the mind;  
it is not that matter is being negated. 6.90

While remaining within the truth of the everyday world,  
all five aggregates known to the world do exist.  
When we speak of the arising of the gnosis of suchness,  
then, for the yogi, these five aggregates will be no more. 6.91

So if there is no matter, do not hold that there is mind,  
and if there *is* mind, do not hold that there is no matter.



In the wisdom sutras the Buddha rejects them equally,  
but in the Abhidharma he speaks of the existence of both. 6.92

Even after you have undone the structure of the two truths,  
the substantial reality you assert remains unproven.  
Thus you should know that from their very outset,  
phenomena are unborn in reality but born in terms of the world. 6.93

The sutras that state what are perceived as external do not exist,  
and it is the mind that is perceived in diverse forms.  
Such statements are intended for those extremely attached to forms,  
to help such people turn away from matter; so it is only provisional. 6.94

The Buddha himself stated this to be only provisional,  
and reasoning too proves it to be only provisional.  
As for other sutras that may be of same type,  
they too are indicated by this scripture to be provisional. 6.95

Once cognizable objects are shown to be no more  
then negation of cognition is easily obtained, the buddhas said.  
Thus if there is no object, cognition is easily negated as a consequence;  
so the buddhas first negated the objects of cognition. 6.96

Thus having understood this account of the scriptures,  
understand those sutras that present what is not true suchness  
as provisional and interpret them accordingly,  
and know those that bear on emptiness are definitive. 6.97

Arising from both [self and other] is also not logical,  
for it is vulnerable to the objections already raised.  
This is neither found in the world nor accepted in terms of suchness,  
for *arising* is untenable in terms of either pole of self or other. 6.98

If there can be arising from no cause at all,  
then anything could come always from anything.  
There would then be none of the manifold efforts of people,  
such as sowing seeds for the sake of raising a crop. 6.99

If sentient beings had no causes at all,  
they would be ungraspable, like blue lotuses in the sky.  
Yet we do perceive the world in all its color and brilliance.  
So, like our own cognition, know that beings come from causes. 6.100

The elements do not have that nature by means of which  
you say that they become objects of cognition.  
How can you, whose mind is so thickly covered by darkness,

ever correctly understand facts about the world beyond? 6.101

You should know that when you negate the world beyond,  
you're viewing the nature of things in a distorted manner.  
You'll thus possess a body that supports such a denigrating view,  
just as when one asserts self-existence of the elements. 6.102

That these elements do not exist in such a manner has already been shown.  
In that arising from self, something other, and both  
as well as from no cause have all been refuted above,  
the elements cannot exist in terms not already covered. 6.103

In that there is no arising from self, other, or both,  
or independent of a cause, entities are devoid of intrinsic existence.  
However, since dense ignorance enshrouds the world like thick clouds,  
phenomena are misperceived in distorted ways. 6.104

Just as through a malady of the eyes some falsely perceive  
floating hair, double moon, peacock feathers, swarms of flies, and so on,  
likewise, through the power of delusion those who are unwise  
perceive all sorts of conditioned things with their cognitions. 6.105

“Karma comes from delusion and not when delusion is absent”:  
such statements are doubtless for the understanding of unwise alone.  
The wise, who have dispelled the thick darkness of ignorance  
with the sun of excellent intellect, realize emptiness and become free. 6.106

If entities do not exist in ultimate reality,  
then like a barren woman's son, they will have no existence  
even on the conventional level; so therefore  
things do exist through their intrinsic nature. 6.107

You should first argue with those with an eye disease  
who see such unarisen things as floating hair; ask them,  
“Why is it you see such things but not the son of a barren woman?”  
Then you can refute those afflicted by the ills of ignorance. 6.108

If indeed such unarisen things as dream objects, gandharva cities,  
mirage water, magical illusions, mirror reflections, and so on can be seen,  
given they too are nonexistent [just like the son of a barren woman],  
how is it you see these but not the other? 6.109

So although things do not arise in ultimate reality,  
unlike the son of a barren woman, they do serve  
as objects perceived in the context of the everyday world.  
Therefore your argument remains inconclusive. 6.110

In itself, the son of a barren woman has no arising,  
either in reality or in the context of the everyday world.  
Likewise, all things do not arise in and of themselves,  
either through their essence or in terms of the everyday world. 6.111

Therefore the Buddha declared that all phenomena are  
primordially tranquil and devoid of arising  
and that they transcend the bounds of sorrow.  
Thus things have no arising at any time. 6.112

Things such as vases do not exist in ultimate reality,  
yet they exist as well-known entities of the world.  
Since all entities are likewise the same,  
the consequence that they are like a barren woman's son is not entailed. 6.113

Because entities do not arise  
from no cause, from causes such as Īśvara,  
from self, from other, or from both;  
they arise entirely through dependence. 6.114

In that things originate entirely through dependence,  
such concepts [as self-arising] cannot withstand analysis,  
so this reasoning of dependent origination  
rips to shreds the entire matrix of false views. 6.115

Such concepts would be in order if real entities did exist;  
that no such entity exists has already been analyzed.  
Without such an entity, those concepts would not come to be;  
for example, without fuel there can be no fire. 6.116

Ordinary beings are chained by conceptualization;  
yogis, who do not conceptualize, become free.  
The wise have said that the very cessation of conceptualization  
is the fruit of refined analysis. 6.117

Analysis in the treatise is not out of fondness for debate;  
it expounds suchness because it's aimed at freedom.  
If other philosophical systems are undone  
in the course of expounding suchness, however, this is not a fault. 6.118

Attachment to one's own view and likewise  
aversion for others' views: all of this is just thoughts.  
Therefore it is by eliminating attachment and aversion  
and engaging in analysis that one swiftly gains freedom. 6.119

Seeing with their wisdom that all afflictions and all faults stem from the identity view grasping at the perishable collection, and knowing that *self* is the focus of this identity view, the yogi engages in the negation of selfhood. 6.120

That self is the consumer, a permanent entity, and a non-creator; it is devoid of the qualities and inert. This is what the *tīrthikas* postulate. On the basis of slight and minor variations, the *tīrthikas* diverge into different positions. 6.121

Like a barren woman's child, it's devoid of arising, so such a self simply does not exist. It also cannot be the basis for grasping at an "I." It cannot be claimed to exist even on the conventional level. 6.122

Since all the various attributes of such a self as proposed in one treatise after another by the *tīrthikas* are undone by this logical proof that "it is unarisen," which they accept, none of the attributes of their self remain tenable. 6.123

Thus no self separate from the aggregates exists, for there is no apprehension of self apart from the aggregates. It's also unacceptable to be the basis for beings' "I"-clinging, for the identity view is present even in those unaware of such self. 6.124

Those who have spent many eons in the animal realm and so on do not perceive this unborn permanent entity, yet one sees that "I"-clinging operates in those beings as well. There is thus no self that is separate from the aggregates. 6.125

A self that is separate from the aggregates does not exist; the object of the identity view is thus the aggregates alone. Some assert the basis of this identity view to be all five aggregates, others the mind alone. 6.126

Now if the aggregates are the self, then since they are multiple, the self would be multiple. The self would also be substantial; viewing it would not be an error because doing so would pertain to a substantial reality. 6.127

The self would definitely terminate at the moment of nirvana, and prior to nirvana, the self would rise and vanish every instant. With no agent, none of its effects could be, and acts done by one would bear fruits reaped by others. 6.128

You may say, "There is no fault because the instants share same continuity,"

but we have already shown through analysis the defects of such continua.  
Therefore the aggregates and the mind cannot be the self.  
“The world is finite” and so on have not been declared. 6.129

Furthermore, when the yogi sees the truth of no-self,  
for you, he would definitely see phenomena to be nonexistent.  
If you say it is eternal self that has been negated, then,  
for you, the aggregates or mind cannot constitute the self. 6.130

This means, according to you, that the yogi who sees no-self  
has not realized the suchness of form and so on,  
and so he would engage with form through objectification,  
giving rise to attachment and so on. He knows not form's true nature. 6.131

You assert the aggregates to be the self  
because the Buddha has said the aggregates are the self.  
But this statement rejects a self that is separate from the aggregates;  
also he said in other sutras that form is not self and so on. 6.132

In that it has been stated in other such sutras  
that form and feelings are not self, and discrimination too is not,  
mental formations are not self, and consciousness too is not,  
the Buddha does not accept the statement that the aggregates are the self. 6.133

When it's stated that the aggregates are the self,  
this refers to the collection, not to the individual aggregates.  
And yet the collection cannot be the savior, the tamed, or the witness;  
the collection cannot be the self because it does not exist. 6.134

Were the collection the self, since a chariot and the self are alike,  
the mere collection of chariot parts would constitute the chariot.  
The sutra states that the sentient is dependent upon the aggregates,  
thus their mere convergence cannot be the self. 6.135

If their shape is the self, since that is a property of physical things,  
the body alone would be the self for you then.  
The collection of mind and so on could not be the self,  
for they possess no shape configuration at all. 6.136

That the *appropriator* and the *appropriated* are one is illogical,  
for this would mean the object of an act and the agent are the same.  
If you think, “the agent doesn't exist, but the object of the act does,”  
this is incorrect for there is no act done without a doer. 6.137

Thus the Buddha said the self is dependent upon  
these six of earth, water, fire, wind, consciousness, and space,

and also on the six sense faculties of the eyes and so on,  
which are in turn the bases for contact. 6.138

He also said the self is conceived on the basis of  
the mind and mental factors. Therefore self is neither  
identical to any of these factors, nor is it their mere collection.  
Thus the thought "I am" does not grasp any of these. 6.139

You say that it's eternal self that is negated when no-self is realized,  
yet you do not consider that to be the basis of "I"-grasping.  
So your claim that the knowledge of no-self definitely eradicates  
the view of self is most astounding indeed! 6.140

This is like a man who, seeing a snake in the cracks of his walls,  
seeks to clear the doubt about whether there is an elephant in the room,  
hoping thereby to remove his fear of the snake.  
Alas! He will be an object of ridicule by others. 6.141

The self does not exist in the aggregates;  
nor do the aggregates exist in the self.  
If they were separate, such notions might be plausible.  
Since they are not different, these notions are mere concepts. 6.142

Self cannot be said to own the aggregate of form;  
since self does not exist, such ownership is meaningless.  
One owns a cow through difference or a body through inherence,  
but self is neither identical to nor different from the body. 6.143

The body *is* not self, nor does the self *possess* the body;  
self does not exist *in* the body, nor does the body exist *in* the self;  
in these four terms understand all the remaining aggregates.  
These are considered the twenty views of self. 6.144

When the scepter of wisdom realizing no-self crushes  
the mountain of self view, these twenty high peaks  
belonging to the mighty range of identity view  
will all be demolished together as well. 6.145

Some assert a substantially real person that is inexpressible  
as one or different [from the aggregates], as permanent, impermanent, and so on.  
It is claimed to be knowable by six classes of consciousness;  
and this is held to be the basis for "I"-grasping as well. 6.146

Just as you do not take mind's distinctness from body to be inexpressible,  
you cannot conceive substantial realities to be inexpressible.  
For if self exists in some manner as a real entity,

then, like the mind, it too will be real and not inexpressible. 6.147

For you, given that a vase is not a substantial reality,  
it thus remains ineffable apart from its form and other features;  
likewise, self too would be ineffable apart from the aggregates.  
Therefore consider not the self to exist in its own right. 6.148

You do not take consciousness to be different from itself  
but think it to be different from form and other aggregates.  
In all things these two aspects [of identity and difference] can be seen,  
and because the self lacks these reality attributes, it does not exist. 6.149

Therefore the basis of "I"-grasping is not a real entity;  
self is not something different from the aggregates, nor is it the aggregates themselves;  
the aggregates are not its support, nor does the self possess them;  
this proves that the self exists in dependence on the aggregates. 6.150

A chariot cannot be said to be different from its parts;  
it is not identical with the parts, nor does it possess the parts;  
it is not in the parts, nor do the parts exist in it;  
it is not the mere collection, nor is it the shape. 6.151

For if the mere collection constitutes the chariot,  
the chariot would exist even when the parts are not assembled;  
since there can be no parts without the bearer of the parts,  
that shape alone is the chariot is illogical as well. 6.152

For you, just as shapes exist previously in each of the parts,  
if these very shapes were to persist when the chariot is formed,  
then, just as there is no chariot in the unassembled parts,  
in the assembled parts too, there could be no chariot. 6.153

If within the chariot that is right here and now,  
the wheels and so on have acquired different shapes,  
this fact would be perceived; but is not the case.  
Hence shape alone cannot be the chariot. 6.154

Given that collection has no reality for you,  
the shape you mean cannot be that of the collection.  
For how can a be shape defined  
on the basis of something utterly unreal? 6.155

Just as you admit here in the case of a chariot,  
know that effects that are unreal can come to be  
in dependence upon unreal causes;  
you should understand the same in all instances. 6.156

This also reveals the untenable nature of the claim  
that perceptions like that of a vase come from real form and so on.  
With no arising, form and so on have no existence as well.  
For this reason too, things cannot subsist in shapes. 6.157

Although the chariot does not exist in any of the seven terms,  
both in ultimate reality and in terms of the world;  
we here impute the chariot in dependence on its parts,  
without analysis and through everyday convention alone. 6.158

It is the *bearer of the parts* and the *constituted*;  
the chariot itself is referred to as the *agent* of going;  
for people it is established as the *appropriator*.  
Undermine not the known conventions of the world. 6.159

How can that which does not exist in any of the seven terms  
be said to exist at all? Yogis find no such existence.  
As such they also enter ultimate reality with ease,  
so we should accept a thing's existence as shown here. 6.160

If there is no chariot, then there could be  
no parts-bearer and hence no parts either.  
Just as when the chariot has burned no parts remain,  
when the fire of wisdom burns the bearer, parts are burned too. 6.161

Similarly, through being known to the world,  
and in dependence on the aggregates, elements, and six sense bases,  
self too is considered the appropriator.  
The appropriated are the *object* and self is the *agent*. 6.162

Self does not exist as a real entity, so it is not immutable;  
nor is it not mutable; it does not arise or disintegrate;  
it possesses no attributes like permanence and so on;  
it has no existence in terms of identity or difference. 6.163

On the basis of this the thought grasping at an "I"  
arises constantly in beings, and associated with this  
thoughts grasping at "mine" arise—such a self exists  
as a convention unanalyzed due to delusion. 6.164

When there is no agent, the object of action is no more,  
so "mine" cannot be if there is no "I."  
Thus viewing the "I" and mine to be empty,  
yogis will attain total freedom. 6.165



Vases, woolen cloth, shields, armies, forests, garlands, trees,  
houses, carts, rest houses, and all such things  
that people designate based on their bases, know these likewise.  
The Buddha, for one, did not quarrel with the world. 6.166

The parts, qualities, attachment, defining characteristics, fuel and so on,  
the whole, quality-bearer, object of attachment, the characterized, fire and so on,  
none of these exist when subjected to sevenfold chariot analysis.  
Yet they exist in another way, through everyday conventions of the world. 6.167

If a thing produces an effect, it is indeed a cause on that account;  
if no effect is produced, with this absence, there can be no cause.  
Yet effects too come to arise when there is the cause.  
So tell me what comes from what, and what precedes what? 6.168

If you say that a cause produces the effect through contacting it,  
cause and effect will be not distinct since they will share the same potency.  
If they are indeed distinct, then a cause will not differ from non-causes.  
Yet apart from these two, there is no other conception [of causal relation]. 6.169

Since your cause produces no effects, there cannot be what you call “effects”;  
also a cause devoid of an effect would have no reason to be called a “cause.”  
In that both cause and effect are like illusions for us, we are not vulnerable to these ob-  
jections.  
And yet the things of the everyday world would still have existence. 6.170

“Does your refutation refute by coming into contact with what is being refuted?  
Or does it do so without coming into contact? So are you not guilty of the same fault?”  
“Indeed when you speak in such a manner, you undermine your own position,  
and your refutation will not have the power to refute what you are refuting. 6.171

“Since your objections rebound to your words as well, you are committing a logical fal-  
lacy;  
and so with no sound logic, you deny the existence of all phenomena.  
The sublime ones will never agree with you; and with no position of your own,  
you are also simply abusing the norms of refutation.” 6.172

The objection you have just raised—“Does your refutation refute  
what is to be refuted without coming into contact or by contacting it?”—  
will certainly apply to someone who has a thesis.  
Since I have no such thesis, these consequences do not follow. 6.173

Just as the characteristics present in the sun can be seen  
in its reflection, such as when there is an eclipse,  
yet one can't speak in terms of whether the sun touches its reflection,  
nonetheless, things originate through dependence as mere conventions. 6.174

Also, though unreal, a mirror image exists to help make up one's face.  
In just the same way, understand that through reasoning,  
which has the power to cleanse the face of wisdom,  
one can realize the conclusion even with no objective evidence. 6.175

If our proof inferring the thesis possessed real existence,  
and if the thesis being proven had real existence as well,  
then the arguments about contact and so on could apply.  
Since this is not the case, you are only frustrating yourself. 6.176

It is easy for us to make others realize  
that all things lack real existence, but you cannot  
easily make others apprehend intrinsic existence.  
So why ensnare the world in a web of flawed logic? 6.177

Understand other remaining refutations from what has been said above.  
Rebut too others' response to our argument about whether [a cause] contacts [its effect]  
and so on,  
and recognize also how ours is not an instance of flawed refutation.  
In brief, understand all other refutations from what we have already outlined. 6.178

To help free beings, the Buddha taught no-self  
in twofold terms, that of phenomena and that of persons,  
and again for the sake of diverse trainees, he expounded these two  
in other diverse terms through further enumerations. 6.179

After teaching in an elaborate way  
sixteen kinds of emptiness,  
the Buddha summarized these into four,  
and he held these to be the great way as well. 6.180

Since their very nature is emptiness,  
the eyes are devoid of eyes;  
so are the ears, nose, and tongue;  
the body and mind too are thus defined. 6.181

Because they do not endure eternally  
and because they do not disintegrate,  
the absence of intrinsic existence of the six senses  
such as eyes is *inner emptiness*. 6.182

Because such is their nature,  
form is devoid of form;  
sound, smell, taste, touch,  
and mental objects are likewise empty. 6.183

That form and so forth have no intrinsic nature  
is accepted as *outer emptiness*.  
The lack of intrinsic existence of both  
is *inner and outer emptiness*. 6.184

That all things lack intrinsic existence,  
this the wise describe as emptiness.  
Emptiness itself is in turn held  
to be devoid of essential emptiness. 6.185

This emptiness of what is called emptiness  
is known as the *emptiness of emptiness*.  
It was taught to counter the grasping thought  
that emptiness is something real. 6.186

Space pervades all the worlds  
and also the beings these worlds contain,  
and it exemplifies the immeasurable thoughts.  
Space is a great immensity in all directions. 6.187

That space itself is devoid of all ten directions,  
this is the *emptiness of great immensity*.  
It was taught to counteract  
clinging to great immensity as real. 6.188

Since nirvana is the supreme goal,  
it is the ultimate and the transcendence of sorrow.  
That it is devoid of itself  
is *emptiness of the ultimate*. 6.189

To counter the grasping thought  
that nirvana is something real,  
the knower of the ultimate truth  
taught this emptiness of the ultimate. 6.190

The three realms, coming from their conditions,  
are described with certainty to be conditioned.  
That they are empty of themselves  
was taught as *emptiness of the conditioned*. 6.191

That which has no arising and duration  
and lacks impermanence is unconditioned.  
That it is empty of itself  
is *emptiness of the unconditioned*. 6.192

That which is free of extremes  
is referred to as beyond extremes.  
That it is empty of itself is referred to as  
*emptiness of beyond extremes*. 6.193

Since samsara has neither  
a beginning point nor a final end,  
it's referred to as beginningless and endless.  
With no coming and going, it is dream-like. 6.194

That this existence is empty of itself  
is described with certainty  
in the treatises as *emptiness  
of what is beginningless and endless*. 6.195

“To discard” means to reject  
and definitely refers to casting aside.  
“Not to discard” means to not abandon,  
meaning not to be shunned at all. 6.196

And what is not to be discarded  
is, in turn, empty of itself,  
and this is therefore called  
*emptiness of not to be discarded*. 6.197

Since the essence of things  
such as those that are conditioned is not invented  
by śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas,  
nor by bodhisattvas or tathāgatas, 6.198

the essence of conditioned things and so on  
is termed their intrinsic nature.  
And this being empty of itself  
is *emptiness of intrinsic nature*. 6.199

The eighteen elements, six sensory contacts,  
and six feelings that arise therefrom,  
all things both material and nonmaterial,  
all phenomena both conditioned and unconditioned—6.200

that all these phenomena are empty  
of themselves [is *emptiness of all phenomena*].  
The formable and so on lack their own beings;  
this is *emptiness of defining characteristics*. 6.201

*Form* is defined as capable of materiality;

*feeling* has the nature of an experience;  
*discrimination* apprehends the signs;  
*mental formations* construct. 6.202

Awareness of specific objects  
is the defining mark of *consciousness*.  
*Aggregates* are characterized by suffering,  
and the *elements*' nature is akin to a venomous snake. 6.203

*Sense fields*, the Buddha said,  
are the doorways to the arising [of suffering].  
All that is dependently originated is  
characterized by composition. 6.204

Giving is what defines the perfection of *generosity*,  
*discipline* is the absence of torment,  
*forbearance* is the absence of anger,  
*diligence* is the absence of unwholesome action. 6.205

*Meditative absorption* is characterized by focus,  
*wisdom* by the absence of attachment.  
These then are the defining characteristics  
of the six perfections. 6.206

*Meditative absorptions* and the *immeasurables*,  
likewise the absorptions of the *formless states*—  
the knower of perfect truth said these  
are characterized by unperturbed serenity. 6.207

*Thirty-seven factors* lead to enlightenment;  
their nature is to decisively drive forth from samsara.  
The nature of *emptiness* is unobjectifiable;  
as such it is utter absence. 6.208

*Signlessness* is peace itself.  
The nature of the *third door*  
is the absence of suffering and delusion.  
The nature of the *liberating factors* is utterly freeing. 6.209

The *ten powers* of the Buddha are defined  
as that which bring utter certainty,  
while the Savior's *four fearlessnesses*  
have the nature of total firmness. 6.210

His *perfect knowledge of specific domains*  
is defined by absence of deficiency in confidence and so on.

That which brings about beings' welfare,  
is described as his *great loving kindness*. 6.211

That which protects those who suffer  
defines his *great compassion*;  
his *sympathetic joy* is defined by utter joy;  
his *equanimity* is unadulterated. 6.212

The *unshared attributes* of the Buddha,  
described as eighteen in number,  
are defined as irremovable,  
since they cannot be stolen from the Buddha. 6.213

The Buddha's *wisdom of omniscience*  
is defined as direct perception.  
Since all other knowing remains partial,  
it is not held to be direct perception. 6.214

That which defines the conditioned  
and that which defines the unconditioned  
are devoid of themselves.  
This is *emptiness of defining characteristics*. 6.215

This present moment does not endure;  
the past and future have no existence;  
in that the three cannot be perceived anywhere,  
they are referred to as the "unobservable." 6.216

This unobservability is  
itself empty of its own being;  
it does not endure eternally nor disintegrate;  
so this is *emptiness of the unobservable*. 6.217

Since they originate from their conditions,  
things lack existence as composites.  
The composite is itself empty of composite,  
and this is *emptiness of nonthings*. 6.218

In brief, the term *thing* is used  
to refer to the five aggregates.  
They are empty of themselves,  
and this is called *emptiness of things*. 6.219

In brief, *nonthing* is used  
to refer to unconditioned phenomena.  
These nonthings are empty of themselves,

and this is *emptiness of nonthings*. 6.220

The absence of intrinsic nature  
is *emptiness of so-called nature*.  
In that nature is never contrived,  
*intrinsic nature* is the name ascribed to it. 6.221

Whether the buddhas appear in the world  
or whether they do not appear in the world,  
all things are empty, and this is proclaimed  
to be their transcendent reality. 6.222

This is the “perfect endpoint” and “suchness”  
and *emptiness of transcendent reality*.  
This is how these enumerations of emptiness  
are proclaimed in the Perfection of Wisdom sutras. 6.223

Thus illuminated by the rays of wisdom's light,  
the bodhisattva sees as clearly as a gooseberry on his open palm  
that the three realms in their entirety are unborn from their very start,  
and through the force of conventional truth, he journeys to cessation. 6.224

Though his mind may rest continuously in cessation,  
he also generates compassion for beings bereft of protection.  
Advancing further, he will also outshine through his wisdom  
all those born from the Buddha's speech and the middle buddhas. 6.225

And like a king of swans soaring ahead of other accomplished swans,  
with white wings of conventional and ultimate truths spread wide,  
propelled by the powerful winds of virtue, the bodhisattva would cruise  
to the excellent far shore, the oceanic qualities of the conquerors. 6.226

## The Seventh Ground, Gone Afar

Here on Gone Afar, the bodhisattva will enter cessation  
instantly and within a single moment.  
He attains as well blazing perfection of skillful means. 7.1

## The Eighth Ground, The Immovable

To attain again and again virtues superior to the earlier ones,  
the great being will enter The Immovable  
and thereby attain the state of irreversibility.  
His aspirations become perfectly refined,  
and he'll be roused by the buddhas from his cessation. 8.1

Free of attachment, his mind no longer remains with faults;  
thus all stains are destroyed on the eighth ground along with their roots.  
With afflictions ceased, he becomes unrivaled in the three realms,  
yet a buddha's boundless space-like resources lie beyond his reach. 8.2

Though samsara has ceased, he displays himself for samsaric beings  
through diverse forms gained through ten controlling powers. 8.3

### The Ninth Ground, Perfect Intellect

On the ninth the bodhisattva's power becomes perfectly refined,  
and he attains the spotless qualities of four kinds of perfect knowledge. 9.1

### The Tenth Ground, Cloud of Dharma

On the tenth ground he will receive supreme empowerment from all the buddhas,  
and his superior gnosis will reach here its perfection as well.  
As a heavy downpour descends from water-laden clouds, so from him,  
the Dharma rain will fall freely to water the crop of beings' virtues. 10.1

### The Qualities of the Ten Grounds and the Resultant Ground

On the first ground the bodhisattva sees a hundred buddhas  
and knows as well that he is blessed by them all.  
At that point he can endure for a hundred eons,  
and he will know perfectly what came before and what will follow. 11.1

This wise one will enter and exit a hundred meditative absorptions;  
a hundred world systems he can tremble and illuminate;  
through his supernatural feats he can ripen a hundred beings to maturity;  
he will journey to a hundred buddhafiels. 11.2

This offspring of the Sovereign Sage will open a hundred Dharma doors,  
and within his body he will display a hundred other forms.  
Those hundred bodhisattva forms thus displayed  
will each match his beauty, wealth, and retinue. 11.3

The wise one on Perfect Joy, having attained such qualities,  
attains the same on The Stainless but increased a thousandfold,  
and on the next five grounds these qualities expand.  
His qualities increase first to a hundred thousand, 11.4

and then increasing a thousandfold on the next;  
next a hundred million, then ten billion,  
then one trillion, and after this ten million trillion.



He thus attains perfectly all these qualities. 11.5

The one on the Immovable ground,  
who is free of concepts, attains such a magnitude  
of qualities they equal the number of atoms  
in a hundred thousand billionfold worlds. 11.6

The bodhisattva residing on Perfect Intellect  
attains qualities thus described  
increased to the count of all the atoms  
in ten times a hundred thousand countless worlds. 11.7

On the tenth ground, to say the least, his qualities  
lie beyond the bounds of speech;  
equaling the count of all atoms.  
Such a total is a countless quantity indeed. 11.8

Such a bodhisattva can, within every pore,  
display countless buddhas together with bodhisattvas.  
Likewise, he can display within every single instant  
celestial beings, demigods, humans, and so on. 11.9

Just as moonlight can shine bright in a cloudless night sky,  
he strives again on the ground that gives rise to the ten powers,  
and in Akaniṣṭha he will find the object of his striving, supreme peace,  
which is unrivaled as the ultimate culmination of all qualities. 11.10

Just as space remains indistinguishable even within different vessels,  
no differentiations of phenomena exist in suchness.  
Since he perfectly realizes everything in terms of a single taste,  
the buddha, the excellent mind, perceives the knowables in a single instant. 11.11

“If ultimate reality is pacification, then the mind will never perceive it,  
yet there can be no knowledge of an object without the mind as a knowing subject.  
And in the absence of a *knowing* mind, what *knowledge* can there be? This is a contra-  
diction in terms.  
Also, with no knower how can you teach about it to others, saying, ‘It is thus’?” 11.12

When no-arising *is* suchness and that mind too has no arising,  
it is by assuming its aspect then, as it were, the mind perceives suchness.  
Just as for you, when the mind takes the aspect of an object, it perceives it,  
so in dependence on convention, we say the mind can know suchness. 11.13

Through his enjoyment body sustained by merit  
and through the force of his emanations from space and others,  
sounds reverberate declaring the truth of ultimate reality;

from these the world too comes to understand suchness. 11.14

The wheel set in motion  
through long and strenuous labor by a strong potter,  
spins freely, and pots are seen to be produced thereupon,  
even when no further immediate effort is made. 11.15

Likewise, without exerting any immediate effort,  
thanks to his aspiration and beings' merit,  
the enlightened deeds of the one abiding in  
the dharmakāya are inconceivable indeed. 11.16

Burning away the tinder of all objects of knowledge,  
there is the state of peace, the buddhas' perfect dharmakāya.  
In such a state there is neither arising nor cessation,  
and with mind ceased, it is actualized by the body. 11.17

This body of peace, radiant like the wish-granting tree,  
resembles the wish-granting jewel that without forethought  
grants riches of the world to beings until they gain freedom.  
It will be perceived by those free of conceptual elaboration. 11.18

The buddha displays within a single instant,  
and within a single causally concordant form body,  
all his previous births now ceased, clear and without error;  
all these lives he displays in their vividness. 11.19

The sage in whatever buddhafi elds there were,  
their bodies, deeds, strengths, and powers;  
and whatsoever retinues of disciples were assembled;  
whatsoever physical forms the bodhisattvas assumed; 11.20

whatsoever teachings he gave and ways of life he assumed;  
whatsoever deeds he had engaged in having listened to Dharma,  
and whatever quantities of offerings he made—  
all this the buddha displays within a single body. 11.21

Likewise his discipline, forbearance, diligence, meditative absorption,  
and wisdom, whatever practices he had engaged in in the past,  
without any omission and in clearest detail,  
all of this he displays within a single pore. 11.22

He shows how the buddhas of the past, those yet to come,  
and those in the present throughout the expanse of space  
teach the Dharma in a resounding and clear voice, and  
how they remain in the world to relieve beings' pain. 11.23

While aware that from first embracing the awakening mind  
up to the essence of enlightenment, all their deeds share  
the character of optical illusions, he displays them as his own  
within a single instant and inside a single pore. 11.24

Likewise, the deeds of the bodhisattvas of three times,  
and the deeds of ārya pratyekabuddhas and śrāvakas,  
all these without omission as well as those of others  
he displays within a single pore. 11.25

This pure enlightened activity can, as if through a mere wish,  
display within a single atom an entire world system stretching to the ends of space  
and display an atom that pervades countless world systems,  
without the atom expanding or the world contracting. 11.26

Free of discursive thought, a buddha can display  
in every single instant until the end of time  
deeds countless in their diversity,  
unmatched by the atoms in Jambudvīpa. 11.27

The power to know what is correct and incorrect;  
likewise the power to know the ripening of karma;  
the power to know the diverse aspirations of beings;  
and the power to know the diverse elements. 11.28

Likewise to know faculties, superior and not superior;  
the power to know all the different paths;  
and the power to know meditative absorptions, liberating factors,  
concentrations, and meditative attainments. 11.29

The power to know past existences;  
likewise to know deaths and rebirths of beings;  
and to know the cessation of the contaminants—  
these then are the ten powers of a buddha. 11.30

“That from such and such a cause certain effects will arise  
is certainly correct” has been declared by those who know such truths;  
what is contrary to this statement is incorrect.  
Such unobstructed knowledge of limitless facts is described as a power. 11.31

With respect to extremely diverse fruitional effects of these karma,  
that of the desired and the undesired, their opposite, and their exhausting factor,  
the knowledge that penetrates these with unimpeded potency and force—  
a knowledge that pervades all three times—is described as a power. 11.32

Knowing the yearnings that emerge from factors such as attachment, their extreme diversity, such as inferior, intermediate, and extraordinary, knowing even the aspirations veiled by other factors— such pervasive knowledge that engages all three times is a power. 11.33

The buddhas skilled in differentiating the elements have stated that the nature of the eyes and so forth constitutes an element. The knowledge of the fully awakened buddhas is infinite. So that which penetrates all the diverse elements is held to be a power. 11.34

Sharp acumen in thought and so on is called one with superior faculty; the intermediate and inferior are described as not of superior faculty. The mastery of all faculties, such as the eyes, and their correlations, this knowing, free of attachment and impediment, is described as a power. 11.35

Certain path leads to buddhahood, while others to pratyekabuddha and śrāvaka enlightenment; yet others lead to the realms of hungry ghosts, animals, devas, humans, hell beings, and so forth. The knowledge of these, free of impediment, is held to be a power. 11.36

In accord with the various yogis there are in the diverse worlds, their meditative absorptions, eight liberating factors, and concentrations, as well as the different meditative attainments, such as the nine— unimpeded knowledge of these is described as a power. 11.37

To know the past lives of self and others across deluded existences, knowing these lives of each and every numberless being, their bases, places, and so on— knowing all this is described as a power. 11.38

The births and deaths of sentient beings, each and every one, their births inhabiting worlds reaching to the edges of space, the knowledge that penetrates all these right at the time and in their varied details— unimpeded and utterly pure, this is held to be a power. 11.39

Through his power of omniscience, a buddha can know the swift ceasing of the afflictions as well as their imprints; he also knows the cessation of afflictions of śrāvakas and others brought forth by their cognition. This knowledge, unimpeded, is accepted as a boundless power. 11.40

Birds do not stop flying because there is no more sky; they do so when they have exhausted their strength. Likewise śrāvakas and the like, as well as bodhisattvas, cease declaring the buddha's qualities, infinite as space. 11.41

Therefore how could someone like me

know and speak of the buddha's qualities?  
Nonetheless, since the noble Nāgārjuna has described them,  
I have spoken briefly, setting hesitation aside. 11.42

Emptiness is the profound,  
other qualities the vast.  
By understanding the profound and the vast,  
these [twin] qualities are obtained. 11.43

Once more, you who possess an unchanging body appear in the three worlds;  
through emanations you show coming, birth, enlightenment, and turning the wheel of  
peace.  
And all beings indulging in devious behavior, ensnared in a network of expectations,  
you lead them with compassion to the state beyond sorrow. 11.44

No other means to dispel all the stains exist apart from  
the knowledge of suchness. The suchness of phenomena admits of no differentiation,  
and the subject, mind, that knows it is likewise undifferentiated.  
Thus the Buddha taught to us beings a single, unmatched vehicle. 11.45

So long as degenerations engendering faults are present in sentient beings,  
they will not enter the profound truth, the realm of a buddha's experience.  
And so the Sugata, with his wisdom and compassionate skillful means,  
has taken the pledge, proclaiming, "Sentient beings I will free." 11.46

Therefore, just as a wise [captain] conjures [images of] beautiful towns,  
to relieve the frustrations of travelers journeying to an isle of gems,  
you set forth vehicles to help soothe the minds of your disciples;  
you spoke differently to those whose minds are trained in utter absence. 11.47

As many as the atoms in all the worlds  
within the sphere of the sugatas, however many there might be,  
for that many eons you've entered the enlightened state,  
but this secret of yours should not be divulged in words. 11.48

As long as all beings have not gone to the state of supreme peace,  
and as long as space itself remains undestroyed,  
how can there be an entry into supreme peace for you, Conqueror,  
you who were brought forth by mother wisdom and nursed by compassion? 11.49

The extent to which you are compassionate toward worldly beings,  
beings who feed on poisoned food because of the defect of their ignorance,  
such is not found even in the pain of a mother whose child has just consumed poison.  
So Savior, do not journey to supreme peace. 11.50

Through their unskillfulness, beings cling to notions of *things* and *nonthings*,

which give rise to the pains of birth and destruction, and of loss and gain of wanted and unwanted;  
beings also fall to evil destinies. So this world finds itself within your tenderness.  
Through your compassion, Blessed One, you turn from peace and forsake your nirvana.  
11.51

This system has been explained by the monk Candrakīrti  
drawing from the *Treatise on the Middle Way*,  
in perfect accord with the scriptures,  
and in accord with oral instructions. 11.52

Just as outside this [tradition of the] *Treatise*,  
no scriptures set forth this teaching as it is,  
likewise the system found here is not found elsewhere.  
O learned ones, be sure of this fact! 11.53

Terrified by the blinding color of the utterly vast ocean of Nāgārjuna's wisdom,  
some have shunned and kept their distance from this most wonderful tradition.  
Yet moistened by the dew, these stanzas opened like the buds of water lilies.  
Thus the hopes of Candrakīrti have now been realized. 11.54

This suchness just explained is most profound and terrifying, yet people with past habituation will certainly realize it;  
others, however, despite vast learning, will fail to comprehend.  
Thus, seeing those other traditions as constructed by the authors' own minds as akin to the treatises that set forth propositions on self,  
forsake admiration for treatises and systems contrary to this one. 11.55

May the merit of speaking about the excellent tradition of the master Nāgārjuna extend to the edges of space itself,  
may such merits shine bright as autumn stars amid the mind's sky darkened by afflictions,  
and through the force of having obtained merits resembling a shining gem on a serpent's hood,  
may the entire world realize suchness and swiftly travel to the Sugata's ground. 11.56



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