CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPTION OF THE TEN STAGES OF THE BODDHISATTVA

The conception of Bodhisattvas in the Mahāyāna was a corollary to its Buddhological speculation. The Theravādins believe that only Gautama Buddha was born as Bodhisattva in his previous existences, commencing with his birth as Sumedha Brāhmaṇa up to his last existence in the Tusita heaven, just before his advent to the mortal world. As a Bodhisattva, he lived the life of an average being acquiring merits and avoiding demerits as far as possible. In some existences, he sacrificed everything including his body (ātmabhāva) in order to acquire the six (according to Mahāyāna) and ten (according to Hinayāna/Theravāda faith) supreme virtues designated as Pāramitās or Pārami-s.

According to the Mahāsāṃghika Lokottaravādis, in his last existence as Siddhārtha Gautama he was not conceived in his mother’s womb, nor was he actually born like an ordinary human being in the biological form. He only appeared to be ignorant, leading a family life and making efforts for his so-called emancipation, and so forth.

The Mahāyānists are believed to have enriched and developed the Theravāda concept of Bodhisattva. They argued that there were among the worldly
beings such individuals who were in a position to develop Bodhicitta, fulfill the Pāramitā-s and become a Buddha. The development of the Bodhicitta requires that the adept must dedicate himself in his several lives to the service of others, and should not desire his own emancipation unless and until all others have attained it, because seeking one’s own emancipation before that of others would mean that he has not developed the virtue of self-sacrifice to the fullest extent.

a) The Definition of the Term Bodhisattva

The term “Bodhisattva” literally means “one who has attained enlightenment as his/her essence”, from Bodhi (awakening or enlightenment) and sattva (essence). It is not simply another term for a Buddha, though: a bodhisattva is a being who is destined for enlightenment rather than one who has gained it already. A bodhisattva is also normally thought of as consciously working towards enlightenment: you can’t call someone a Bodhisattva just because he might be enlightened in the future if he has not started making an effort yet. For this reason, the earliest use of the term “Bodhisattva” refers to Siddhartha Gautama before he gained enlightenment, and also in his previous lives.

In the Theravada tradition, as in early Buddhism, however, this is the only use of the term. There is only one Buddha per age, who is the trailblazer who discovers the Dharma. So for each age, at any rate, there is only one Bodhisattva.
One of the difficulties this created in Early Buddhism was that there
seemed to be two classes of enlightenment: the trailblazer’s enlightenment of the
Buddha and the follower’s enlightenment of the arhata. At the same time, by
about 500 years after the death of the Buddha, a reaction was developing against
narrowness that it was thought was developing in the tradition. To become an
arhata, it seemed, all one needed to do was to become a monk or nun, follow the
rules, get on with one’s practice of the Eightfold Path and one would get there. To
the early Mahāyānists, this seemed an assumption over-focused on self-fulfillment
to the exclusion of the Enlightenment of others. Mixed in with this, there may
have been some lay resentment of over-sheltered monks. After all, the Buddha had
devoted after enlightenment fifty years of his life to helping others. So, as an
alternative two interlinked new ideas developed.

First was that the arhata had not gained full enlightenment and that
everyone could go on to gain the full enlightenment of the Buddha. To become a
full Buddha, not just an arhata, was the ideal for everyone, whether monks or lay-
people. This was the ideal expressed particularly in the Avatamsaka Sutra.

Second idea was that till the time when we all reach Buddhahood, we
should become Bodhisattvas. This meant that there was no longer only one
Bodhisattva in every age, but potentially any number. The Bodhisattva is striving
for enlightenment for all sentient beings from the start.
As we know the concept of Bodhisattva is one of the most important in the Buddhist tradition. The term is frequently mentioned in early as well as later Buddhism. Etymologically, the term “Bodhisattva” is derived from the Budh, originally meaning to “be awake”. The noun Bodhi comes to the meaning: (i) knowledge, (ii) enlightenment, (iii) the knowledge possessed by a Buddha¹.

It appears that in the Anguttara Nikaya the term bodhi denotes both the means and the end, viz., Aparihanīya Dhamma and Nibbana respectively².

When the term “Bodhi” is combined with the term “satta”, the Sarvastivādins take it to mean the wisdom of the holy man who attains a stage beyond defilement of all kinds³.

The term “Buddhi” is etymologically associated with the term “Bodhi”, though its usage is cited here from the Brahmanic systems of philosophy. In the Sankhya-Yoga systems of Philosophy “Buddhi” means only the first product of the evolution of the Prakriti. At the psychological level Prakriti is called “Buddhi”⁴. According to the Encyclopedia of Buddhism⁵, etymologically the term can be separated into two parts, bodhi and sattva: bodhi, from the root budh, to be awake, means “awakening” or “enlightenment” and sattva, derived from satta, the present participle of the root as, “to be”, means “a being” or, literally, “one who

² A, IV, 23  
³ Buddhist Scriptures, 20.  
⁵ Encyclopedia of Buddhism, III, 224.
is”, a sentient being. Hence, the term is taken to mean “one whose essence is Enlightenment” or “enlightened knowledge”. By implication, it means a seeker after Enlightenment, a Buddha-to-be. There is also a suggestion that the Pali term may be derived from bodhi and satta, (Skt. Sakta) “one who is attached to or desires to gain Enlightenment”.

The concept of Bodhisattva, along with that of the Buddha and of the Cakravartin (world-ruler), was in vogue in India even before the appearance of Gautama Buddha. When Prince Siddhartha, who later became Gautama Buddha, took conception in the womb of Queen Maya, a seer predicted that Suddhodana's future son would be either a world-ruler (Cakravartin) or a Buddha.

Sammasambodhi or Perfect Enlightenment is an impersonal universal phenomenon occurring in a particular context both in time and in space and a Buddha is thus a person who re-discovers the Dhamma, which had become lost to the world and proclaims it anew. When Gautama Buddha appeared, however, he himself as well as others used the term Bodhisattva to indicate his career from the time of his renunciation up to the time of his enlightenment. Later, its use was extended to denote the period from Gautama's conception to the enlightenment and, thereafter, to all the Buddha-s from their conception to Buddhahood. By applying the doctrine of karma and of rebirth, which had general acceptance even in pre-Buddhist India, the use of the term was further extended to refer to the past
lives not only of Gautama Buddha, but also of those rare beings who aspire for Perfect Enlightenment.

The oldest Theravāda tradition, as contained, for example, in the Mahapadana Suttanta⁶, gives details of the six Buddha-s prior to Gautama. This discourse is attributed to the Buddha himself, who gives the time, caste, family, length of life, etc. of these predecessors of his. In the Buddhavamsa, a later work belonging to the Khuddaka Nikāya, the number increases to twenty-five with Gautama Buddha as the last and this number remains fixed in Theravāda tradition. However, these enumerations by no means imply that they are exhaustive. In the Mahapadana Suttanta, the Buddha starts the story of the six Buddha-s merely by saying that ninety-one kalpa-s ago there was such and such a Buddha, implying thereby that such beings were not limited in number. From this it follows that, if the Buddha-s are innumerable, the bodhisattvas too must be innumerable.

When prince Siddhartha attained Enlightenment, he did so as a human being and lived and passed away as such. As mentioned earlier, he himself admitted that he was a Buddha and not a deva or any such supernatural being. He was only the discoverer of a lost teaching. His greatness was that he found out what his contemporaries could not discover at all or discovered only incompletely. He was a genius by birth who achieved the highest state possible for man. Both intellectually and morally, he was a great man, a superman (mahapurisa). In all

the stages of his life, from conception onwards, something extraordinary was seen in him.

**What is a Buddha?**

Encyclopedia of Buddhism\(^7\) defines the Buddha as a generic name, an appellative – but not a proper name – given to one who has attained enlightenment. This word is the passive past participle derived from the root ‘budh’ (to wake, to wake up, to perceive, to learn, to understand).

The use of the word “Buddha” in its Buddhist sense began with its application to Gautama (Skt. Gautama,), known to his contemporaries also as Shakyamuni - the founder of what came to be known as Buddhism. Gautama was born in what is now Nepal, more than 2500 years ago, attained Enlightenment, taught the truth (Pali: Dhamma, Skt: Dharma), which he had realized and died at the age of eighty. Gautama generally called him as Tathagata), Bhagavat (Bhagava), the Blessed One, Shakyamuni, but later he is stated as Supreme Teacher, Buddha as below:

“I am the one who is worthy of being revered in this world; I am the Supreme Teacher; I am the only one who has attained the most perfect Enlightenment”

\(^7\) See The Bodhisattva Doctrine In Buddhist Sanskrit Literature, p.3
In contradistinction to the Rūpakāya, the Mahāyānists speak the Buddha’s Dharma kāya. A Buddha is the embodiment of dharma, which is his real Body. He is also identified with all the constituents of the universe. This Body, which is also called Saddharmakāya, Bodhikāya, Buddhakāya, Prajñākāya, Svābhavikakāya (essential Body), is invisible and universal. All beings “live and move and have their being in it”. It is the same as the Absolute Reality (tathatā), which is also one and indivisible for the entire Universe.

b) The Bodhisattva Ideal in Mahayana Buddhism

i. Bodhisattva Ideal

The figure of the Bodhisattva — one who seeks Enlightenment for the sake of all beings — is central to Mahayana Buddhism. The Bodhisattva Ideal lays special emphasis on compassion as essential to the Buddhist path. Drawing on all aspects of the Buddhist tradition, Sangharakshita’s main emphasis is on the earlier and most basic teachings of the Buddha (which precede the Mahāyāna). However, he suggests that the Bodhisattva ideal is a central aspect of Buddhism as a whole, and that its expression by the Mahāyāna is not a later development but the reassertion of something that was implicit in the Buddha’s teaching from beginning. Transcendental Wisdom necessarily includes Compassion.

To consider the Bodhisattva ideal is to place one's hand on the very heart of Buddhism. The Bodhisattva's life exemplifies the resolution of the conflict
between our own desires and the needs of others. Sustained by a deep understanding gained through meditation and reflection, the Bodhisattva works tirelessly for the benefit of all. The development of inner calm and positivity that leads to true wisdom is balanced by an active and genuine concern for others that flowers into great compassion.

The Bodhisattvas in Avatamsaka Sūtra as Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, Samantabhadra, etc., are the symbolic characters of Bodhisattva’s ideal.

The most prominent Bodhisattva in this regard is Avalokitesvara. The word “Avalokiteśvara” is derived from the Pali verb oloketi which means “to look at, to look down or over, to examine or inspect.” The word avalokita has an active signification, and the name means, “the lord who sees (the world with pity).” The text known as Karandavyuha (8th century AD) explains that he is so called because he views with compassion all beings suffering from the evils of existence. It is interesting to note here that a dominant feature in the description of Avalokiteśvara is his capacity to “see” the suffering of others. No wonder then that he is often represented with a thousand eyes symbolizing his all encompassing ability to view with compassion the suffering of others, thus sharing in their sorrows, a first step towards their ultimate alleviation. Not only that, he further has a thousand hands too which help in the mammoth task of delivering innumerable beings to their ultimate spiritual fulfillment.
The Bodhisattva’s loving Kindness is not merely universal brotherhood, for it embraces all sentient beings including animals without exception of any lesser animal.

In addition to Avalokiteśvara, two other important Bodhisattva-s are Mañjuśri and Maitreya. The Bodhisattva Mañjuśri is a symbol of the transcendental wisdom that is a discriminative cause of enlightenment and emancipation.

Once at a meeting of numerous Bodhisattva-s at the house of Vimalakīrti, the lay disciple of Buddha, a debate developed on the meaning of non-duality, an essential precept of Buddhist thought. After many Bodhisattvas had finely expressed their opinions on the subject and their success at understanding its essence, it came to Mañjuśri’s turn. He got up and announced that all the previous speeches were themselves conditioned by linguistic limitations and were subtly dualistic. When Mañjuśri turned to Vimalakīrti and asked for his views, Vimalakīrti just maintained silence, thus demonstrating the truth of Mañjuśri’s statement.

This story is a beautiful reflection on the irony of scholarship attempting to express itself through a medium (language), which contains within itself a contradiction of the very fundamental ideals which it proposes to expound. In this particular case, Mañjuśri identifies this sublime and intrinsic inconsistency.
A Bodhisattva meditates on these three characteristics, but not to such an extent as to attain Arhatship, for to do this would be deviating from his goal. It is by this wisdom that realizes intuitive truth which are beyond discrimination between existence and non-existence, Nirvana and rebirth, etc... it is by means of this highest knowledge that a Bodhisattva finally comes to the realization of the egolessness of all things, thus entering upon the path of Tathāgatahood.

This future Buddha known as Maitreya is beloved to be still in the Tushita heaven, in the state of a bodhisattva. It is believed that Gautama Buddha himself enthroned him as his successor.

The word “Maitreya” is derived from the Sanskrit word for friendliness. Thus this bodhisattva is fundamentally said to embody the qualities of amiability and an attitude of well-meaning sympathy.

The notion of a Bodhisattva sacrificing his complete physical self or at least parts of it conforms to a similar notion expounded in ancient Buddhist texts. For example, the “Shat-sahasrika Prajñā-pāramitā” (5th century AD) says: “Besides wealth and material objects, a bodhisattva should be ready to sacrifice his limbs for the good of others, his hand, foot, eye, flesh, blood, marrow, limbs great and small, and even his head.” Indeed, in the Jataka tales, which are legendary stories about bodhisattvas, there abound numerous instances where they are shown sacrificing parts of their bodies or even their lives to save that of another.
A persistent paradox regarding Maitreya is his visualization as an entity of the future. This presents a contrast to much of Buddhist practice and teaching which emphasizes the importance of the present, the current moment. This is sometimes referred to as the timeless eternal. According to the Buddhist viewpoint, time does not exist as some external container, but is the vital expression and enactment of our own being right now. Time does not exist separate from our own presence.

A verse of the Lotus Sutra wrote shortly about the previous life of Maitreya as follows,

“…This mystic light, teacher of the law,
At that time had a pupil,
Who was always a lazy spirit,
Greedily attached to fame and gain,
Tireless in seeking fame and gain,
Addicted to enjoyment in noble families
Casting aside that which he had learned,
Forgetting everything and dull of apprehensions,
Who because of these things,
Was called fame seeker,
He also by practicing good words
Was enabled to see numberless Buddhas...
And to follow them, aliking the Great way,
Perfecting the six Pāramitās,
And now has seen Sakya, the lion.
He will afterwards become a Buddha
And will be named Maitreya,
Who shall widely save living creatures
Countless in number..."  

ii. Bodhisattva vows

In the various Bodhisattva vows⁹ (sometimes called the Bodhisattva Precepts) of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the bodhisattvas take vows stating that they will strive for as long as Samsara endures to liberate all sentient beings from Samsāra and deliver them into Nirvāṇa. The Bodhisattva does not seek Bodhi (Awakening) solely for him/herself, but chiefly for the sake of freeing all other beings and aiding them into the bliss of Nirvāṇa. This can be done by venerating all Buddhas and by cultivating supreme moral and spiritual perfection, to be placed in the service of others. Bodhisattvas vow to amass inconceivable amounts of merit (punya), which they will dedicate to all other sentient beings, so as to help them attain Nirvana and Awakening. Such great vows are made out of compassion and the bodhisattva devotes his powers to helping others attain Nirvana. A fine example of a Bodhisattva vow is found at the very end of the Avatamsaka Sūtra.

⁸ See Bunno, Fold Lotus Sutra, ch.1.p.49
The mark of a bodhisattva in the Mahayana is that he/she has taken the bodhisattva vow. The bodhisattva vow is solemnly made before one’s master in a special ritual, and involves four pledges:

* To save all beings from difficulties.
* To destroy all evil passions.
* To learn the truth and teach others.
* To lead all beings to Buddhahood.

This is obviously a mind-bogglingly immense undertaking, but the bodhisattva vows to do it nevertheless. However many beings there may be, the bodhisattva will save them from Samsara and lead them not just to Arhatship, but to Buddhahood. What’s more, the bodhisattva will not 'cross the threshold' into enlightenment him/herself, until this goal is achieved. If the Bodhisattva were to do this, they would pass into parinirvana and no longer be reborn, and so would no longer be able to help other beings, so the bodhisattva is traditionally envisaged as pausing on the brink, turning back, and voluntarily taking rebirth to help others.

However, the Bodhisattva does not work for himself or herself alone until he/she reaches this exalted point: rather he/she sets out from the start to save all sentient (i.e. conscious) beings and is as much concerned with their progress as his/her own. Related to this is the doctrine of anatta (insubstantiality) and the implications the Mahayana believe this to have: that we are not in fact ultimately distinct from others, but actually our interests are at one with theirs. If the idea that
we exist separately from others is ultimately one of the illusions of Samsara, it
would seem contradictory that we should gain enlightenment for ourselves. The
Mahāyāna doctrine of the Bodhisattva faces this difficulty head-on.

For this reason, it may be helpful not to take the idea of the bodhisattva
pausing at the threshold of enlightenment too literally. This may simply be a way
of expressing the insight that our enlightenment is ultimately one with that of
others. To follow the Bodhisattva ideal, then, we may need to give up the idea of
“gaining enlightenment” (as though enlightenment was a sort of thing one gains),
and simply think of making progress alongside others.

**Preparation for the vow:**

Naturally, such an enormous vow is not to be undertaken lightly, and in the
Mahayana tradition, it is only taken as the culmination of a period of intense
preparation. This preparation attempts to bring about the arising of the Bodhicitta
(the aspiration towards enlightenment), the desire to bring about the enlightenment
of all sentient beings which should accompany a sincerely-made Bodhisattva vow.
The vow should only be made as the external sign of this internal opening, which
involves a shift in perspective rather like that of a religious conversion.
Sangharakshita describes the arising of the Bodhicitta as 'the most important event
that can occur in the life of a human being'.
The greatest of Bodhisattvas are fully attained beings -- that is, they have reached a state where they could extinguish their own individual existence in Nirvāṇa -- but they have vowed to remain in the midst of Samsāra to help other beings reach enlightenment. It is typical of the Bodhisattva path that one makes a vow not to achieve one's own final liberation from Samsara until a specified number of sentient beings have been brought to liberation. These vows sometimes use astronomical numbers to specify the number of beings to be saved, and this symbolizes the intent of Bodhisattvas to develop their spiritual abilities to very high levels so that they might be used in service of others. This is an especially important characteristic of Celestial Bodhisattvas, such as Mañjuśrī or Avalokiteśvara, whose spiritual powers are so great that they are, in effect, gods. As such, they have many devotees, both among the laity and in monastic communities.

It is important to recognize, however, that normal people can also be understood as Bodhisattvas, since their own quest for enlightenment is very closely commingled with works of compassion for others. Within Mahāyāna compassion for the suffering of others tends to be a higher priority than liberation for one's self. Or, more properly put, focus on compassion is understood to be one of the most powerful vehicles to facilitate liberation, both for others and for one's self. Since, after all, being concerned with the welfare of others diminishes selfishness; Mahayanists understand the cultivation of compassion to be one of the best ways towards the elimination of ego, desire, and suffering for one's self.
Becoming a Bodhisattva is a huge step in helping not only yourself, but also every other sentient being, both seen and unseen. Most people are self-motivated and work primarily to solve their own problems, keeping others a distant second. Should someone do an act of kindness, repayment is generally expected whether in the form of a thank you or further praise.

A Bodhisattva is motivated by pure compassion and love. Their goal is to achieve the highest level of being: that of a Buddha.

When someone first enters the way of the Bodhisattva, they develop Bodhicitta, or, mind of enlightenment. Even as a person strives towards such an exalted goal, they feel as though they are limited by the fact that they, too, are suffering. So that they can be of aid to others, they decide to become Buddha-s for a Buddha is capable of unlimited compassion and wisdom.

According to the Lankāvatāra sūtra (4th century BC) “A Bodhisattva” wishes to help all beings attain nirvana. He must therefore refuse to enter nirvana himself, as he cannot apparently render any services to the living beings of the worlds after his own nirvana. He thus finds himself in the rather illogical position of pointing the way to Nirvāṇa for other beings, while he himself stays in this world of suffering in order to do good to all creatures. This is his great sacrifice for others. He has taken the great Vow: “I shall not enter into final nirvana before all beings have been liberated.” He does not realize the highest liberation for himself, as he cannot abandon other beings to their fate. He has said: “I must lead
all beings to liberation. I will stay here till the end, even for the sake of one living soul.”

Mahāyāna Buddhism is based principally upon the path of a bodhisattva. According to Jan Nattier, the term Mahāyāna (“Great Vehicle” was originally even an honorary synonym for Bodhisattvayāna, or the “Bodhisattva Vehicle.” The Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra contains a simple and brief definition for the term bodhisattva, which is also the earliest known Mahāyāna definition. This definition is given as “Because he has enlightenment as his aim, a Bodhisattva-mahāsattva is so called.”

Mahāyāna Buddhism encourages everyone to become bodhisattvas and to take the bodhisattva vows. With these vows, one makes the promise to work for the complete enlightenment of all sentient beings by practicing the six perfections. Indelibly entwined with the bodhisattva vow is merit transference (pariṇāmanā).

In Mahāyāna Buddhism life in this world is compared to people living in a house that is on fire. People take this world as reality pursuing worldly projects and pleasures without realising that the house is on fire and will soon burn down (due to the inevitability of death). A bodhisattva is one who has a determination to free sentient beings from Samsara and its cycle of death, rebirth and suffering. This type of mind is known as the mind of awakening (Bodhicitta). Bodhisattvas take bodhisattva vows in order to progress on the spiritual path towards Buddhahood.
Bodhicitta or the “Thought of Enlightenment” is an important concept common to Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Though not directly mentioned, the idea is explicit in Theravada Buddhism. It was in Mahayana, however, that the Bodhicitta concept developed along both ethical and metaphysical lines and this development is found in Tantrism, too, wherein it also came to be regarded as a state of great bliss. In Mahayana it developed along pantheistic lines, for it was held that Bodhicitta is latent in all beings and that it is merely a manifestation of the Dharmakaya (Body of Law).

In Mahayana, altruism became the sole motive for the development of the Bodhicitta and this change is well represented by the character of Avalokiteshvara, the great compassionate being who abandoned his own emancipation for the sake of others.

Alongside with the development of the ethical aspect, Bodhicitta also developed on the metaphysical side. This development is seen in the works of such Buddhist philosophers as Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu and Sthiramati. D.T. Suzuki quotes Nagarjuna, who explains this concept thus:

“Bodhicitta is free from all determination, i.e., it is not included in the categories of five skandha-s (factors of existence), twelve ayatana-s (elements of sense-perception), eighteen dhatu-s (physical elements), it is not particular
existence which is palpable. It is non-atmanic, universal. It is uncreated and its self-essence is void.”¹⁰

In the Bodhisattva path, the most momentous moment is the generation of the thought of Enlightenment (Bodhicitta). The Bodhicitta is a combined result of wisdom and compassion and the Bodhisattva which has been formulated by bhumi as follows: “All beings should I lead to Nirvana, by means of the three vehicles. And even when I have led all beings to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana”¹¹

c. The Ten Stages of the Bodhisattava

The Ten Stages Sutra (Sanskrit: Daśabhūmikasūtra-śāstra, Dasabhūmikabhāṣya; also known as the Sutra of the Ten Stages or Daśabhūmika Sutra, is an early, influential Mahayana Buddhist scripture written by Vasubandhu in Sanskrit and translated into Chinese by Bodhiruci and others during the 6th century. The sutra also appears as the final chapter of the Avatamsaka. In this sutra, the Buddha describes ten stages of development that a Bodhisattava must progress through in order to accomplish full Enlightenment and Buddhahood, as well as the subject of Buddha nature and the awakening of the aspiration for Enlightenment.

The most important sections are the Daśabhūmika, which describes the levels (bhūmi) traversed by a Bodhisattva, and the final chapter, the Gaṇḍavyūha.

¹¹ See The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom, p.124
which depicts the journey of a youth named Sudhana as he visits one teacher after another, eventually seeing a total of 53. The ten stages are

1. The first is the stage of Joy (Pramudita).
2. The second is the stage of Purity (Vimala).
3. The third is the stage of Illumination (Prabhakari).
4. The fourth is the stage of Flaming Insight in which one attains the perfection of bravery or effort (Virya).
5. The fifth is the stage of Utmost Invincibility (Sudurjaya).
6. The sixth is the stage of Mental Presence (Abhimukhi).
7. The seventh is the stage of Far-Going (Durangama).
8. The eighth is the stage of Immovability (Acala).
9. The ninth is the stage of Good Wisdom (Sadhumati).
10. The tenth is the stage of Ideal Cloud (Dharmamegha).

The first stage, as stated above, is called Pramuditā or Gotravihāra (Joyful stage). The Bodhisattva at the very beginning of the Ten Stages is like an infant who has just left the sagely womb and been born into the lineage of the Tathagatas. He perfects the conduct of benefiting self and benefiting others, and is certified as to his sagely location. Hence he gives rise to great happiness.
This Bodhisattva is so called because he feels keen delight when he knows that he will soon attain Bodhi and promote the good of all things\(^\text{12}\).

A Bodhisattva enters the first stage immediately after the production of the thought of enlightenment. He rejoices exceedingly as he remembers the teaching of the Buddha and thinks of the discipline of the Bodhisattvas. He realizes that he has now risen above the worldly life and also delivered from the fear of unhappy rebirth. He does not think of self and firmly established in this stage through faith, devotion, aspiration, preparation, mercy, compassion, etc., reverence of the Buddha's teaching and perseverance in accumulating the roots of merits. He cultivates honesty, sincerity and truthfulness and develops the different factors of enlightenment. He takes ten great vows and wished that his vows many endure and extend as far as the universe and all space. He especially practices the Paramita of Dāna (the perfection of giving) without neglecting the other Pāramitā-s.

The second stage is Vimalā or Adhimukticaryā vihāra (pure stage). This Bodhisattva is so called because he is free from all defilements. The Bodhisattva becomes replete with pure precepts and renounces all actions that are contrary to morality and comportment. Hence, on this ground, he leaves the filth of afflictions behind.

He especially cultivates the Sīla pāramitās (the perfection of precepts) without neglecting other Pāramitā-s.

\(^{12}\) See *The Bodhisattva Doctrine In Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, p. 284.
The third stage is Prabhākarī or Pramuditā vihāra (stage of illumination). This Bodhisattava’s thoughts are now pure, constant, unworldly, dispassionate, firm, resolute, ambitious, noble and magnanimous. He realizes all phenomena are transient, impermanent and momentary and his body is like a burning house that is burning with the fire of passion, hatred and error. He therefore cultivates an attitude of still greater aversion and indifference to all things of the world. He longs to attain his own Buddha knowledge, which is incomparable and confers security, happiness and salvation on all. He cultivate the Pāramitā of skānti (the perfection of patience) without neglecting the other Pāramitās. He practise meditation and four unlimited mind e.g. loving kindness (maitri), compassion (karunā), joy (mudita) and impartiality (upekshā) and acquires the power of performing miracle, supernatural power of hearing, the power of reading the thoughts of others, the power of remember former birth and supernatural power of vision. The fetters of kāma, rūpa, bhava and aridya become weak, those due to wrong views have been already destroyed.

From supreme Samādhi, the wondrous teaching, and four types of Dharani, the Bodhisattva gives rise to the Three Wisdoms: the wisdom of hearing, the wisdom of consideration, and the wisdom of cultivation. From the attainement of those kinds of wisdom, he emits a sublime light.

The fourth stage is Aracismaṭī or Adhīsila vihāra (stage of Blazing wisdom). This Bodhisattva now gains entrance to the light of the doctrine by
reflecting on the nature of the worlds, of consciousness, of three realms of sensuous desire, of form and of formlessness, noble and magnanimous aspiration. 

He matures and perfects his knowledge by his firm resolution and his faith in the three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha). He realizes that all things arise and disappear and non-production is their nature. He practices the thirty-seven conditions leading to Bodhi. He gets rid of all wrong views based on the belief in the permanent atma. He especially cultivates the Pāramitā of Virya (the perfection of energy) without neglecting the others Pāramitā-s.

At this stage, the Bodhisattva achieves a dazzling wisdom light that consumes the tinder of all afflictions. Whereas the former three grounds are still located in the world, this ground marks the beginning of a world-transcending position.

The fifth stage is Sudurjayā or Adhicitta Vihāra (stage of Utmost Invincibility). This Bodhisattva is so called because he performs the difficult feat of maturing others and guarding his own mind.

The Bodhisattva regards all the principals Buddhahood, past, present and future, with pure thought and equanimity. He thinks in the same way of conduct, meditation, speculation, knowledge of the right way and the perfection of all things. He comprehends the Four Noble Truths and other aspects of truth e.g. relative truth, absolute truth, the truths of characteristics, of division, of origination, of decay, of non-production and truth of appearance and Buddha
knowledge. He realizes that all things are empty, futile and worthless. He cultivates the Pāramitā of Dhyāna (the perfection of meditation) without neglecting the other Pāramitās. He also acquires knowledge of arts and sciences like writing, arithmetic, medicine, etc. He preaches the doctrine and obtains the Dhāranī-s for his protection.\(^{13}\)

Upon this stage the Bodhisattva testifies to the interaction between wisdom of relative truth and the non-discriminating wisdom of absolute truth. Through the mutual and non-obstructive functioning of those two kinds of wisdom, he accomplishes clever expedient means, such as the Five Sciences, to teach living beings. On this level he transcends the world and yet completely accords with the world. Since this is a position that is difficult to surpass, it is called Difficult Conquest.

The sixth stage is Abhimukhī or Adhiprajñā Vihāra (stage of Mental presence). This Bodhisattva is so called because he practices the Pāramitā of Prajñā (the perfection of wisdom), now stands face to face with Samsāra (transmigratory existence) and Nirvāna. This Bodhisattva now understands the ten aspects of equality and sameness of all things and phenomena. He understands that all things are empty and characterless, they are like a dream, an optical illusion, an echo, and the disc of the moon seen in the water, and therefore he is absolutely free from desire. He comprehends the formula of the Pratitya-samutpāda and realizes that all

\(^{13}\) See Dutt N., *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p.116-117
sins and errors depend on the mind. He gets rid of the notions of “I “and “Other”.

He experiences many Samādhi-s relating to the principle of emptiness. His thoughts are now perfectly firm, steady, profound and pure. He resolutely sets his face towards the Buddha-knowledge. He especially cultivates the Pāramitā of Prajñā (the perfection of wisdom) without neglecting the other Pāramitā-s.

The Bodhisattva gives rise to great Prajna wisdom through contemplation of the Twelve Links of Causal Co-production and is no longer caught up in the discrimination of purity and defilement. Thus there is the manifestation of sublime conduct.

The seventh stage is Dūrangama or Adhiprajñā Vihāra (stage of Far-Going). This stage is characterized by cultivation that is without an appearance and without effort. Since effortless functioning is accomplished, the Bodhisattva far transcends all the conducts of the Two Vehicles, hence the name” Far-Going”.

This Bodhisattva now acquires great wisdom in the choice of expedients for helping others. He understands that all Buddha-s are identical with their spiritual cosmic body, participates in the infinite attributes of the Buddha-s and sees their multifarious physical bodies. He discerns the thoughts and feelings of others. He practices all ten Pāramitā-s at each moment. This stage witnesses the complete fulfillment of the practical aspects of a Bodhisattva’s discipline and now he begins to attach more important to its meditative and metaphysical aspects. He has conquered all the passion and sins and is free from them. His thought, words and
deeds are pure and he is in possession of all the factors of enlightenment. He attains liberation but does not realize personal Nirvāṇa. He enters the great ocean of Buddha knowledge and is free from any bondage of the world.

The eighth stage is Acalā or Dhiprajñā vihāra (stage of Immovability). As a reward of the Bodhisattva conduct, the Bodhisattva has now reached the state which is without marks and without interval; hence the name 'Not Moving.' At this stage, the Bodhisattva casts off the activities of production within the Three Realms--the realms of desire, form, and formlessness. He also attains the Patience with Non-Production. Through the wisdom of the contemplation of marklessness, he is 'not moved' by all afflictions.

He understands the process of the evolution and involution of the universe. He knows the exact member of atoms in the different elements, of which the universe is composed. He assumes different bodies and shows them to the people as he thinks fit. He acquires the ten powers. He especially cultivates the Pāramitā of Pranidhāna (the perfection of aspiration) without neglecting other Paramita-s and he pervades the whole world with the felling of friendliness.

The ninth stage is Sādhumatī or Sābhismiskāra sābhoga-nirnimitta Vihāra (stage of Good Wisdom). The Bodhisattva attains the Four Unobstructed Eloquencies and perfects the merit of being a great Dharma Master. He is able to speak Dharma that perfectly suits the potentials of all living beings. Hence, on this ground, he achieves “Good wisdom.”
He now knows all phenomena and principles truly and certainly whether they are mundane or supra mundane, conceivable or inconceivable, compounded and uncompounded. He knows everything about the minds and hearts of men and about meritorious and demeritorious actions. He becomes great preacher and acquires the four- fearlessness (Partisamvidā-s). He is protected by the Dhāranī-s and he experiences many Samādhi-s.

The tenth stage is Dharma-meghā or Aṇabhoga-nirnimitta vihāra (stage of Ideal Cloud). This Bodhisattva is so called because he is pervaded by the modes of concentration and magic spells, as clouds occupy space. This Bodhisattva now enters on the stage of consecration and experiences many great meditations. He acquires a glorious body that is seen in a celestial lotus adorned with jewels. He emits some rays, which destroy the pain and misery of all living beings.

By this stage, the Bodhisattva attains a vast Dharma body. He is full and accomplished, like a huge Dharma cloud that protects all under heaven, and which sends down Dharma rain to nourish all beings. In this way the Bodhisattva benefits sentient creatures in boundlessly inconceivable ways.

After the ten Bhūmis, according to Mahāyāna Buddhism, one attains complete enlightenment and becomes a Buddha.

Book thirty-nine, entitled Entering the Dharma Realm, is the longest book of the Sutra and well known as an individual Sutra by the Sanskrit title
Gaṇḍavyūha. In the text, a pilgrimage undertaken by the youth Sudhana to visit fifty-three worthies, religious and secular is described:

“Sudhana, to accommodate and benefit all living beings are explained like this: throughout the oceans of worlds in the ten directions exhausting the Dharma Realm and the realm of empty space, there are many different kinds of living beings. That is to say, there are those born from eggs, the womb-born, the transformationally born, as well as those who live and rely on earth, water, fire, and air for their existence. There are beings dwelling in space, and those who are born in and live in plants and trees. This includes all the many species and races with their diverse bodies, shapes, appearances, life spans, families, names, and natures. This includes their many varieties of knowledge and views, their various desires and pleasures, their thoughts and deeds, and their many different deportments, clothing and diets.

“It includes beings who dwell in different villages, towns, cities and palaces, as well as gods, dragons, and others of the eight divisions, humans and non-humans alike. Also there are footless beings, beings with two feet, four feet, and many feet, with form and without form, with thought and without thought, and not entirely with thought and not entirely without thought. I will accord with and take care of all these many kinds of beings, providing all manner of services and offerings for them. I will treat them with the same respect I show my own parents,
teachers, elders, Arhatas, and even the Thus Come Ones. I will serve them all equally without difference.

“I will be a good doctor for the sick and suffering. I will lead those who have lost their way to the right road. I will be a bright light for those in the dark night, and cause the poor and destitute to uncover hidden treasures. The Bodhisattva impartially benefits all living beings in this manner.

“Why is this? If a Bodhisattva accords with living beings, then he accords with and makes offerings to all Buddha-s. If he can honor and serve living beings, then he honors and serves the Thus Come Ones. If he makes living beings happy, he is making all Thus Come Ones happy. Why is this? It is because all Buddha-s, Thus Come Ones, take the Mind of Great Compassion as their substance. Because of living beings, they develop Great Compassion. From Great Compassion the Bodhi Mind is born; and because of the Bodhi Mind, they accomplish Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment.

“It is like a great regal tree growing in the rocks and sand of barren wilderness. When the roots get water, the branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits will all flourish. The regal Bodhi-tree growing in the wilderness of Birth and Death is the same. All living beings are its roots; all Buddha-s and Bodhisattvas are its flowers and fruits. By benefiting all beings with the water of Great Compassion, one can realize the flowers and fruits of the Buddha-s and Bodhisattva-s wisdom.
“Why is this? It is because by benefiting living beings with the water of Great Compassion, the Bodhisattvas can attain Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment. Therefore, Bodhi belongs to living beings. Without living beings, no Bodhisattva could achieve Supreme, Perfect Enlightenment.

“Good man, you should understand these principles in this way: When the mind is impartial towards all living beings, one can accomplish full and perfect Great Compassion. By using the Mind of Great Compassion to accord with living beings, one perfects the making of offerings to the Thus Come Ones. In this way the Bodhisattva constantly accords with living beings.

“Even when the realm of empty space is exhausted, the realms of living beings are exhausted, the karma of living beings is exhausted, and the afflictions of living beings are exhausted, I will still accord endlessly, continuously in thought after thought without cease. My body, mouth, and mind never weary of these deeds...

The Bodhisattva path is retold in a dramatic fashion in the last chapter, which related the pilgrimage of the youth Sudhana, who during his search for enlightenment meets various teachers, each of whom represents to its doctrinal orientations, the scripture makes extensive use of the Tathāgatagarbha doctrine and the attendant concept of Buddha-nature, which are integrated into a larger theoretical framework that also incorporates the Mādhyamika school’s teachings
on Sunyata (Emptiness) and the Yogacara school’s theories of consciousness and reality.

In Avatamsaka sūtra, chapter 40, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Samantabhadra, wishing to restate his meaning, contemplates everywhere in the ten directions and speaks in verse.

“Before the Lions Among Men throughout the worlds of the ten directions, In the past, in the present, and also in the future, with body, mouth, and mind entirely pure, I bow before them all, omitting none.

With the awesome spiritual power of Samantabhadra's vows, I appear at the same time before every Thus Come One, And in transformed bodies as numerous as motes of dust in all lands, Bow to Buddha-s as numerous as motes of dust in all lands.

In every mote of dust are Buddha-s as numerous as motes of dust, each dwelling amid a host of Bodhisattvas. Throughout motes of dust in endless Dharma Realms it is the same: I deeply believe they all are filled with Buddha-s.

- With oceans of sound I everywhere let fall Words and phrases, wonderful and endless, which now and through all the eons of the future, Praise the wide, deep sea of the Buddhas' merits and virtues.
Flower garlands supreme and wonderful, Music, perfumes, parasols, and canopies, and other decorations rich and rare, I offer up to every Thus Come One. Fine clothing, superior incense, Powdered and burning incense, lamps and candles, each one heaped as high as mount Sumeru, I offer completely to all Tathāgata-s. With a vast, great, supremely liberated mind, I believe in all Buddha-s of the three periods of time; with the strength of Samantabhadra's conduct and vows, I make offerings to all Thus Come Ones everywhere.

For all the evil deeds I have done in the past, Created by my body, mouth, and mind, from beginningless greed, anger, and delusion, I now know shame and repent them all.

I rejoice in the merits and virtues Of all beings in the ten directions, The Learners and Those-Past-Study in the Two Vehicles, And all Thus Come Ones and Bodhisattvas.

Before the Lamps of the Worlds\textsuperscript{14} of the ten directions, who have just accomplished Supreme Bodhi, I now request and beseech them all to turn the foremost, wondrous Dharma wheel.

If there are Buddha-s who wish for Nirvana, I request with deep sincerity that they dwell in the world for a long time To bring benefits and bliss to

\textsuperscript{14} Lamps of the Worlds, Lamps of the Future: metaphors or the Buddha-s.
every being. I worship those with blessings, praise them and make offerings; I request that the Buddha-s remain in the world and turn the Dharma wheel; The good roots gained from following and rejoicing in merit and virtue and from repentance and reform, I transfer to living beings and the Buddha Way.

- I study with the Buddha-s and practice the perfect conduct of Samantabhadra; I make offerings to all the Thus Come Ones of the past and to all present Buddha-s throughout the ten directions. All future Teachers of Gods and Men Whose aspirations and vows have been completed, I will follow in study throughout the three periods of time And quickly attain Great Bodhi. In all lands of the ten directions, vast, great, pure, and wonderfully adorned, All Tathagata-s sit beneath regal Bodhi trees, while assemblies circumambulate them. I vow that every being in all directions Will be peaceful, happy, and without worry. May they obtain the proper Dharma's profound aid, and may all their afflictions be wiped away, without exception while striving to attain Bodhi, I will gain the knowledge of past lives in all destinies. I will always leave home-life and cultivate pure precepts, without outflows\textsuperscript{15}, never broken, and without stain. Be they gods, dragons, yaksha-s, Humans, non-human, and the rest, In the many languages of all such living beings, With every sound I will speak the

\textsuperscript{15} Without outflows: i.e., unconditioned (transcendental). Anything free of the three marks of greed, anger and delusion.
Dharma. I will cultivate the pure Paramita-s with vigor, and never abandon the Bodhi Mind. I will banish all obstructions and defilements, and fulfill all wondrous practices. From all delusions, karma, and demon-states, amid all worldly paths, I will be freed, as the lotus does not touch the water, As sun and moon do not stop in space.

- Ending the sufferings of the paths of evil, And to everyone equally bringing joy, May I for eons like the motes of dust in all lands ever benefit all in the ten directions. Always in accord with living beings, cultivating through all future eons the vast conduct of Samantabhadra, The unsurpassed Great Bodhi will I perfect. May all who cultivate with me assemble with me in one place, our karmas of body, mouth, and mind the same, as we cultivate and study all practices and vows. With all advisors good and wise who aid me by explaining Samantabhadra's deeds, I vow always to congregate together: May they never be displeased with me. I vow always to meet Thus Come Ones face to face And the hosts of disciples who gather around them. I will raise offerings which are vast and great, Untiring to the end of future eons.

I will hold high the subtly wondrous Buddhadharma and illuminate all the practices of Bodhi; I will be ultimately pure in Samantabhadra's way, practicing until the end of time.
Inexhaustible blessings and wisdom I cultivate throughout all worlds; by concentration, wisdom, skillful means, and liberation, I will gain an endless store of merits and virtues.

In one mote of dust are lands as numerous as motes of dust; In each land are incalculable numbers of Buddha-s. In every place where Buddha-s dwell I see the host assembled, endlessly proclaiming all the practices of Bodhi.

In ten directions everywhere, throughout the sea of lands, every hair-tip encompasses oceans of past, present and future16. So, too, there is a sea of Buddha-s, a sea of Buddha lands; pervading them all I cultivate for seas of endless time.

The speech of all Tathāgata-s is pure; each word contains an ocean of sounds. According with what beings like to hear, The Buddhas' sea of eloquence flows forth.

All Tathāgatas of the three periods of time forever turn the wonderful Dharma wheel, with these inexhaustible seas of words and languages. I understand all with my deep wisdom.

I can penetrate the future and exhaust all eons in a single thought. In a single thought I completely enter all eons of the three periods of time.

16 This stanza expresses a key concept of the Avatamsaka School: the complete interpenetration of time and space.
In one thought I see all Lions of Men Of the past, present, and future; I constantly fathom the Buddhas' states, Their magical liberations and their awesome strength.

On the tip of an extremely fine hair, Appear jewelled lands of past, present and future; Lands on hair-tips as numerous as dust motes in all lands of the ten directions, I deeply enter, adorn, and purify.

All Lamps of the Future that light the world, Complete the Way, turn the Dharma wheel, and rescue living beings, as they perfect the Buddha-s' work and manifest Nirvana, I draw near and attend to each one and obtain:

The spiritual power to go everywhere swiftly; The power to enter the Mahayana universally through the Universal Door; The power of wisdom and conduct to cultivate merits and virtues universally; The subtle spiritual power to shield all with Great Compassion;

The power to purify and adorn [all] with supreme blessings everywhere; the power of wisdom which is unattached and independent; The awesome spiritual powers and the powers of concentration, wisdom, and skill-in-means; The power of universally accumulating Bodhi;

The power of good karma which purifies all things; the power to eradicate all afflictions;

The power to subdue all demons;
The power to perfect Samantabhadra's conduct.

The sea of lands I everywhere adorn and purify, and I liberate all living beings, without exception. With skill I make selections from among the sea of Dharma-s and enter deeply into the wisdom sea.

I cultivate the ocean of practices to purity, Perfect and complete a sea of vows. I draw near to a sea of Buddhas and make offerings, and cultivate without fatigue for a sea of time.

To all Tathāgata-s of the three periods of time, With Bodhi, conduct, and vows most supreme, I completely offer up my perfect cultivation; With Samantabhadra's practices, I awaken to Bodhi.

Each Tathāgata has an elder disciple Named Samantabhadra, Honored One. I now transfer all good roots, and I vow to perform deeds of wisdom identical to his.

I vow that my body, mouth, and mind will be forever pure and that all practices and lands will be also. I vow in every way to be identical to the wisdom of Samantabhadra.

I will wholly purify Samantabhadra's conduct and the great vows of Mañjuśrī as well.
All their deeds I will fulfill, leaving nothing undone. Till the end of the future I will never tire.

Infinite and measureless is my cultivation; Boundless merit and virtue I obtain. Amid limitless practices I will dwell in peace, and penetrate the strength of spiritual powers.

Manjusri has wisdom, courage and bravery; Samantabhadra's conduct and wisdom are the same. I now transfer all good roots in order to follow them in practice and in study.

In the three periods of time, all Buddhas praise such vows as these, lofty and great. I now transfer all good roots, wishing to perfect the supreme practices of Samantabhadra.

I vow that when my life approaches its end, All obstructions will be swept away; I will see Aimitabha Buddha, And be born in his land of Ultimate Bliss and Peace When reborn in the Western Land, I will perfect and completely fulfill, without exception, these Great Vows, to delight and benefit all beings.

The Assembly of Aimitabha Buddha is completely pure; when from a matchless lotus I am born, I will behold the Tathagata's Measureless light as He appears before me To bestow a prediction of Bodhi.
Receiving a prediction from the Thus Come One, I will take countless appearances and forms, and with wisdom power vast and great, pervade ten directions to benefit all the realms of living beings.

Realms of worlds in empty space might reach an end, and living beings, karma and afflictions be extinguished; but they will never be exhausted, And neither will my vows.

With myriad jewels in boundless lands in all directions, I make decorations and offerings to the Thus Come Ones. For eons as numerous as the motes of dust in all lands, I bring the foremost peace and joy to gods and humans.

Yet, if anyone believes in these Great Vows, as they pass by the ear but a single time, and in search of Bodhi thirstily craves these vows, The merits and virtues gained will Surpass these offerings.

With bad advisors forever left behind, from paths of evil he departs for eternity, Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

Easily obtaining the blessings of long life, Assured of a noble rebirth in the human realm, before long he will perfect and complete the practices of Samantabhadra.
In the past, owing to a lack of wisdom power, the five offenses of extreme evil he has committed; in one thought they can all be wiped away by reciting The Great Vows of Samantabhadra.

His clan, race, and color, marks and characteristics with his wisdom are all perfected and complete; Demons and externalists will have no way to harm, and he will be a field of merits in the Three Realms.

To the regal Bodhi free he will quickly go, and seated there subdue hordes of demons. Supremely and perfectly enlightened, he will turn the Dharma wheel, to benefit the host of living beings.

If anyone can read, recite, receive, and hold high Samantabhadra's Vows and proclaim them, His reward only the Buddhas will know, And he will obtain Bodhi’s highest path.

If anyone recites Samantabhadra's Vows, I will speak of a portion of his good roots: In one single thought he can fulfill the pure vows of sentient beings.

The supreme and endless blessings from Samantabhadra's conduct I now universally transfer. May every living being, drowning and adrift, Soon return to the Land of Limitless Light!

When the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Samantabhadra finished speaking these pure verses on the Great Vows of Samantabhadra before the Thus Come One, the youth Sudhana was overwhelmed with boundless joy. All the Bodhisattvas were
extremely happy as well, and the Thus Come One applauded saying, “Good indeed, good indeed!"

At that time, when the Bodhisattva Universal Worthy Mahasattva had finished speaking these pure verses on his Great Vows before the Thus Come One, the youth Sudhana was overwhelmed with boundless joy. All the Bodhisattvas were extremely joyful as well, and the Thus Come one applauded, saying, “Excellent indeed, excellent indeed!”

At that time, the World Honored One proclaimed this Supreme Dharma Door of the Inconceivable State of Liberation for all the sages and Bodhisattvas, with Māñjūśrī Bodhisattva as their leader.

Also present were all the great Bodhisattvas and the six thousand Bhikshus who had matured, with Maitreya Bodhisattva as their leader. All the great Bodhisattvas of the worthy kalpa, led by the Immaculate Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, were present also.

All the great Bodhisattvas who in one lifetime would be the next Buddha-s and who were in a position to anoint the crown gathered together with all the assemblies of Bodhisattva Mahasattva-s, as numerous as fine dust-motes in an ocean of lands, who came from the remaining worlds of all the ten directions. They were headed by the great, wise Shariputra, Mahaudgalyayana, and others. All the great sound-hearers, along with all the people, gods, and lords of all
worlds, as well as dragons, yaksha-s, gandharva-s, asura-s, garuda-s, kinnara-s, mahogara-s, humans, non-humans, and so on, and the entire great assembly, upon hearing what the Buddha had said, were all exceedingly joyful, and faithfully accepted it, and put it into practice.