

# On Skillfulness in Ways & Means

(*S. Upāya Kauśalya Parivartaḥ*, *C. Fāngbiàn Pǐn*, *J. Hōben Pon*, 方便品)

**A comprehensive study of the second chapter of The Lotus Sūtra**

Including a full English translation of Zhìyǐ's commentary on this chapter in his  
'Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra' (*C. Fāhuá Wénjù*, *J. Hokke Mongu*, 法華文句)

&

And appendixes with translations of other supporting commentaries attributed to  
Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Zhìyǐ & Nichiren

Introductions, translations and footnotes  
By Peter Lunde Johnson

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Dedicated to An Lạc

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## **Part #2:**

**On the words in the first section of prose that  
summarize the teaching about the dual  
(provisional & transcendental) knowledge**

**From Volume 3 of  
The Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra  
(C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句)**

## Part #2: On the words in the first section of prose that summarize the teaching about the dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge

### Introduction

This short section of prose is recited in liturgies of the Tiāntái/Tendai Schools but it is especially central to the liturgy of Nichiren School. The Japanese pronunciation of the text is therefore provided here in the translation of this section for those who are familiar with this liturgy.<sup>111</sup>

The beginning of this chapter is set up by The Sūtra on Infinite Meanings and the first, introductory chapter of The Lotus Sūtra, which serve as prologues to this second chapter.

- \* In the (likely apocryphal) three chapters of The Sūtra on Infinite Meanings (Ananta Nirdeśa Sūtra, 無量義經), after his great blessings are praised, the Buddha Śākyamuni is asked what methods of practice bodhisattvas should cultivate in order to quickly realize the perfect universal enlightenment of the Buddha. The Buddha explains the dialectical principle through which the true purpose of life has been taught and then enters into a deep resolve of meditation grounded in its infinite meanings (ananta nirdeśa pratiṣṭhā samādhi, 無量義處三昧).
- \* As the introductory chapter of The Lotus Sūtra (Nidāna Parivartaḥ, 序品) begins, the Buddha has already entered into this deep meditation. Many auspicious omens (nimitta prabhāsa, 光瑞) then arise, including the raining down of blossoms from heaven, the quaking of the earth, etc. The Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī ('With the Subtle Virtue of Transcendental Discernment') explains to the Bodhisattva Maitreya ('With Loving Kindness') that he has seen these omens before and predicts that the Buddha Śākyamuni will now teach The Lotus Sūtra, the most profound and sublime of all the Buddhas' teachings (as previously explained on pages 6-8).

As the second chapter begins, the Buddha rises up from this meditation and addresses Śāriputra: In his commentary on the text of this second chapter On Skillfulness In Ways & Means, Zhìyǐ begins by explaining the reason for the Buddha arising from his deep meditation and, without being asked, teaching The Lotus Sūtra to Śāriputra, his disciple with the greatest capacity for intellectually understanding the most sublime nature of life's purpose.

This first section of prose, which concludes with the citing of the ten mutually dependent aspects found in the transcendental nature all of life's purpose, is the essence of 'the summary teaching' of this chapter, in contrast to the elaboration which will come afterwards. This summary teaching is about the dual (provisional and transcendental) knowledge of (first) all the Buddhas in general and (then) the Buddha Śākyamuni in particular. First it summons words to describe this dual knowledge and then it refers to that which is inconceivable about it, beyond any words.

In speaking to Śāriputra, the Buddha summons words about the dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge, first in terms of all the Buddhas generally and then in terms of his own life in particular. In each case:

1. First he praises this dual knowledge to arouse faith in it.
2. Next he explains it to produce an understanding of it.
3. Finally he concludes on it, going beyond any attachment to words or mistaken beliefs about it that are based on the making of different mental distinctions (vikalpa, 分別).

Going beyond the words: There are many different levels in the process of going beyond dualities to fully penetrate the dialectical principle of the middle way (madhyamā pratipad, 中道理) and so transcend all attachments to words and mistaken beliefs, but ultimately there is a seamless integration with this principle, beyond any dualities such as self vs. other, subjective vs. objective, provisional vs. transcendental, etc. The minds of sentient beings cling to these dualities in order to distinguish the nature of life's purpose, just as it sees the world as a reflection of their own self-centered existence.

The seamless integration of the dialectical principle with sentient existence is not just a theoretical speculation. It is really only understood through a depth of faith and nobility of purpose that goes beyond one's own life and entails the full measure of one's devotion to life's most sublime purpose. Only the most noble among us (the Buddhas) can truly understand the highest significance of this 'meaning'.

The inconceivable object of meditation on the sphere of life's purpose as a whole: In concluding about this 'transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes' (S. *sarva dharma tattvasya lakṣaṇa*, C. *zhūfǎ shíxiāng*, J. *shohō jissō*, 諸法實相), this first prose portion of the chapter concludes with a listing of the 'ten mutually dependent aspects found in the transcendental nature of life's purpose' (*daśāṅgaḥ yathātatham*, C. *shí rúshì*, J. *jū nyoze*, 十如是). This will be covered in our translation of the third section of Zhìyǐ's commentary about this chapter, which is on the inconceivable object of meditation, the transcendental the sphere of life's purpose (S. *dharma dhātu*, C. *fǎjiè*, J. *hokkai*, 法界).

## **Part #2: On the words in the first section of prose that summarize the teaching about the dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge**

**An outline of this chapter's words in this first section of prose**

**The first main section of prose**

- 1. The Buddha brings up the subject without being asked**
- 2. Summoning words of praise about the dual knowledge**
  - a. *Summoning* the dual knowledge of *all the Buddhas*
    1. Praising the dual knowledge of all the Buddhas
      - a. Praising the knowledge that is transcendental
      - b. Praising the knowledge that is provisional
    2. Explaining the dual knowledge of all the Buddhas
      - a. Explaining the knowledge that is transcendental
      - b. Explaining the knowledge that is provisional
    3. Concluding on the dual knowledge of all the Buddhas
      - a. Concluding on the knowledge that is transcendental
      - b. Concluding on the knowledge that is provisional
  - b. *Summoning* the dual knowledge of *the Buddha Śākyamuni*
    1. Praising the dual knowledge of Śākyamuni
      - a. Praising the knowledge that is transcendental
      - b. Praising the knowledge that is provisional
    2. Explaining the dual knowledge of Śākyamuni
      - a. Explaining the knowledge that is transcendental
      - b. Explaining the knowledge that is provisional
    3. Concluding on the dual knowledge of Śākyamuni
      - a. Concluding on the knowledge that is transcendental
      - b. Concluding on the knowledge that is provisional
- 3. Going beyond words on this dual knowledge**
  - a. *First, bringing up the reason it is beyond words*
    1. The (subjective) knowledge that is beyond words
      - a. The provisional knowledge
      - b. The transcendental knowledge
    2. Revealing the object of knowledge (the objective reality) that is beyond words
      1. The object of transcendental knowledge
      2. The object of provisional knowledge
  - b. *That which is beyond any words*
    1. The termination of words
    2. Only the most noble can fathom it
      - a. It is inexpressibly broad
      - b. It is inexpressibly deep
    3. *The inexpressible (dialectical) principle that is the foundation for the inconceivable sphere of life's purpose*
      - a. Summarizing the transcendental meaning found in the sphere of life's purpose, the object of provisional and transcendental knowledge
      - b. Elaborating on it by listing its ten mutually dependent aspects



## Part #2: On the words in the first section of prose that summarize the teaching about the dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge

The text in this chapter's first section of prose

At this time the Blessed One arose fully mindful from his deep state of meditative resolve and addressed Śāriputra:

"The knowledge of the Buddhas is very deep and infinitely broad. The gateway into this knowledge is difficult to understand and difficult to penetrate. Students of life's purpose and those only spiritually awakened in their own lives are unable to comprehend it. This is because the Buddhas have been intimately close to countless hundreds, thousands and millions of enlightened beings, fulfilling their endlessly different purposes. They have been diligent and courageous, and the praise of their names has been heard everywhere. Having realized a very deep purpose that has never been known, they have followed every opportunity to teach of it to those with prejudices that have made it difficult to understand."

"Śāriputra, since I have attained perfect enlightenment and descended into this world, I have broadly propagated teachings about the true nature of life's purpose and explained its different causes and conditions with various kinds of illustrations, using countless skillful ways and means to guide sentient beings and free them from their attachments. This is because The One Who Has Descended Into This World is perfectly endowed with the ways and means of delivering the knowledge and vision of enlightenment."

"Śāriputra, this knowledge and vision of The One Who Has Descended Into This World is broad and great, deep and far-reaching. Endowed with infinite, unobstructed power and fearlessness, perfect penetration of meditative resolve and emancipation from attachments, it deeply enters into that which is boundless, realizing the true nature of all of life's purposes that has never been known."

"Śāriputra, The One Who Has Descended Into This World is able to make all kinds of distinctions and is skillful in explaining all of these purposes, speaking in terms that are kind and gentle, and pleasing all minds."

"Śāriputra, to grasp the essence of these words, the Buddha has perfectly realized all of the infinite, boundless purposes of life that have never been known."

"No more, Śāriputra, there is no use in explaining this any further. This is because the Buddha has realized the ultimate nature of life's purpose that is most rare and difficult to understand and can only be fathomed between the Buddhas: the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes."

"These are the mutually dependent aspects found in these purposes:

Just as-it-is, being an outer appearance,  
Just as-it-is, being an inner nature,  
Just as-it-is, being an existential reality,  
Just as-it-is, being a spiritual power,  
Just as-it-is, being a force with karmic influence,  
Just as-it-is, being an immediate cause,  
Just as-it-is, being a sustaining condition,  
Just as-it-is, being an immediate effect,  
Just as-it-is, being a final reward, and  
Just as-it-is, being a perfect consistency from beginning to end."

The text of this first section of prose in Chinese/Japanese/English

妙 法 蓮 華 經 方 便 品 第 二  
Myō Hō Ren Ge Kyō Hō Ben Pon Dai Ni  
Sublime Purpose Lotus Blossom Sūtra Ways Means Chapter Number Two

爾 時 世 尊 從 三 昧 安 詳 而 起 告  
ni ji se son jū san mai an jō ni ki gō  
At this time world blessed from samādhi calm clear then arose addressed

舍 利 弗 諸 佛 智 慧 甚 深 無 量  
sha ri hotsu sho buts- chi e jin jin mu ryō  
Śāriputra: All Buddhas knowledge discernment very deep without limit

其 智 慧 門 難 解 難 入,  
go chi e mon nan ge nan nyū  
This knowledge discernment door hard to understand hard to enter

一切 聲 聞、 辟 支 佛 所 不 能 知。  
is-sai shō mon hyaku shi butsu sho fu nō chi  
All voice hearers pratyeka- buddhas this not able to know

所 以 者 何? 佛 曾 親 近 百 千 萬 億  
sho i sha ga? butsu zō shin gon hyaku zen man oku  
This because it what? Buddha before intimately close 100 1000 10000 100000

無 數 諸 佛, 盡 行 諸 佛 無 量 道 法,  
mu shu sho butsu jin gyō sho butsu mu ryō dō hō  
without count many Buddhas fully practice many buddhas without limit path purposes

勇 猛 精 進 名 稱 普 聞,  
yū myō shō jin myō shō fu mon  
brave valiant diligent name praise universally heard

成 就 甚 深 未 曾 有 法,  
jō ju jin jin mi zō u hō  
attain reach very deep not yet before existing purpose

隨 宜 所 說 意 趣 難 解。  
zui gi sho setsu i shu nan ge  
follow opportunities here teach intent aim difficult understand

舍 利 弗! 吾 從 成 佛 已 來, 種 種 因 緣,  
sha ri hotsu go jū jō buts- i rai shu ju in en  
Śāriputra I since attained enlightened already come kinds kinds causes conditions

種 種 譬 喻, 廣 演 言 教  
 shu ju hi yu kō en gon kyō  
 kinds kinds comparisons illustrations spread broadly spoken teachings

無 數 方 便, 引 導 眾 生 令 離 諸 著。  
 mu shu hō ben in dō shu jō ryō ri sho jaku  
 without count ways means lead guide host of living make free of all attachments

所 以 者 何? 如 來 方 便  
 sho i sha ga? nyo rai hō ben  
 This because it what? One That Has Come ways means

知 見 波 羅 蜜 皆 已 具 足。  
 chi ken ha ra mitsu kai i gu soku  
 knowledge vision pāramitā all already endowed perfectly

舍 利 弗! 如 來 知 見, 廣 大 深 遠  
 sha ri hotsu! nyo rai chi ken kō dai jin on  
 Śāriputra one that has come knowledge vision broad great deep far

無 量 無 礙, 力、 無 所 畏、  
 mu ryō mu ge riki mu sho i  
 without limit without restriction power nowhere fear

禪 定、 解 脫 三 昧, 深 入 無 際,  
 zen jō ge datsu san mai jin nyū mu sai  
 meditative resolve emancipation samādhi deeply enter without bounds

成 就 一 切 未 曾 有 法。  
 jō ju is-Sai mi zō u hō  
 attain reach all of the not yet before existing purposes

舍 利 弗! 如 來 能 種 種 分 別,  
 sha ri hotsu nyo rai nō shu ju fun betsu  
 Śāriputra one that has come capable kinds kinds divided distinctions

巧 說 諸 法, 言 辭 柔 軟, 悅 可 眾 心。  
 gyō sets- sho hō gon ji nyū nan et- ka shu shin  
 skillful teaching all purposes speak terms softly gently pleasing satisfying all minds

舍 利 弗! 取 要 言 之, 無 量 無 邊  
 sha ri hotsu! shu yō gon shi mu ryō mu hen  
 Śāriputra take essence words on this without measure without bounds

未 曾 有 法, 佛 悉 成 就。  
 mi zō u hō butsu shitsu jō ju  
 not yet before existing purpose Buddha completely attain reach

止， 舍 利 弗！ 不 須 復 說。  
 shi sha ri hotsu fu shu bu setsu  
 stop Śāriputra no need further teach

所 以 者 何？ 佛 所 成 就 第 一 希 有  
 sho i sha ga? buts- sho jō ju dai ichi ke u  
 This because it what? Buddha here attain reach number one rare to have

難 解 之 法。 唯 佛 與 佛 乃 能 究 盡  
 nan ge shi hō yui butsu yo butsu nai nō ku jin  
 difficult understand 's purpose only Buddha with Buddha so able ultimately fathom

諸 法 實 相  
 sho hō jits- sō  
 All purposes true aspect

所 謂 諸 法  
 sho i sho hō  
 Here are all purposes

如 是 相， 如 是 性， 如 是 體，  
 nyo ze sō nyo ze shō nyo ze tai  
 as it-is appearance as it is nature as it is essence

如 是 力， 如 是 作， 如 是 因  
 nyo ze riki nyo ze sa nyo ze in  
 as it is power as it is force as it is cause

如 是 緣， 如 是 果， 如 是 報  
 nyo ze en nyo ze ka nyo ze hō  
 as it is condition as it is effect as it is reward

如 是 本 末 究 竟 等。  
 nyo ze hon mats- ku kyō tō  
 as it is beginning end ultimately equal

## Part #2: On the words in the first section of prose that summarize the teaching about the dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge

The Text of Zhìyǐ's Commentary From Volume 3 of The Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra

爾 時 世 尊 從 三 昧 安 詳 而 起 告 舍 利 弗  
ni ji se son jū san mai an jō ni ki gō sha ri hotsu  
At this time world blessed from samādhi calm clear then arose addressed Śāriputra

“At this time the Blessed One arose fully mindful from the deep resolve of meditation and addressed Śāriputra:”

### 1. The Buddha brings up the subject himself

**At this time** (S. atha khalu, J. ni ji, 爾時): This is a reference to the suitability of the time.

**Question:** The Buddha was always in a deep resolve of meditation (S. samādhi, J. sanmai, 三昧). Why was it said here that he then arose from it (S. vyutthitaḥ, J. ni ki, 而起) and was fully mindful (S. smṛtimān saṃprajānaṃstataḥ, J. an jō, 安詳)?

**Answer:** Since ancient times, the Buddhas have all taught of the time of this sūtra.

1. Directly after entering into a very deep resolve of meditation grounded in the infinite meanings (S. ananta nirdeśa pratiṣṭhā samādhi, 無量義處三昧) descending from the dialectical principle, the Buddhas rise up to teach The Lotus Sūtra. Now this Buddha was also doing this. This expressed *accomplishing the objective through the worldly method of adapting to needs & desires of sentient beings* (S. laukika siddhānta, 世界悉檀).
2. With compassion he arose from deep meditation, traveling throughout the world to teach about this transcendental nature of life's purpose. Neither entering into this deep meditation nor arising from it to teach were false when it was done to increase the faith of his disciples. This expressed *accomplishing the objective through arousing the personal capacities of sentient beings that are noble & worthy* (S. prātipauruṣika siddhānta, 為人悉檀).
3. With compassion he arose from deep meditation. His mind was serene, but always illuminated. Still, he had to enter into the resolve of deep meditation to properly teach about the transcendental nature of life's purpose. His teaching would have been flawed if his mind was distracted. This expressed *accomplishing the objective through correcting errors & healing sickness* (S. pratipākṣika siddhānta, 對治悉檀).
4. With compassion he arose from deep meditation. Upon entering into it he connected with the ultimate nature of the dialectical principle, with his mind calmly grounded in its transcendental meaning. He arose from this resolve of meditation to make others calmly grounded in its transcendental meaning. This expressed *accomplishing the objective through the unfolding of the transcendental meaning* (S. pāramārthika siddhānta, 第一義悉檀) (found in the dialectical principle).

With compassion he arose from the resolve of deep meditation. Having accomplished these four objectives, it is said that he **arose fully mindful** (J. an jō ni ki, 安詳而起).

**Addressed Śāriputra** (J. gō sharihotsu, 告舍利弗): This is a reference to addressing the disciple with the highest knowledge realized on the lesser vehicle of attaining freedom from affliction on the individual level. The Buddha wished to correct the fallacies found in knowledge of lesser purposes and reveal knowledge of the nature of life's greater, transcendental purpose. This has the same meaning as 'discarding the conventional

understanding and opening up the cover of the box', as explained in ten parts in volume nine of The Profound Meaning of The Lotus Sūtra.<sup>110</sup> This is the reason for these words of the sūtra. On this, The Discourse on The Lotus Sūtra attributed to Vasubandhu<sup>2</sup> says:

"The Buddha entered into a very deep resolve of meditation (S. samādhi, 三昧) that was still, undisturbed and endowed with the continuous remembrance of proper mindfulness (S. samyak smṛti, 正念). Observing with knowledge of the transcendental nature of life's purpose, he arose from this meditation, manifesting the unshakeable power of mastery that is only realized by an enlightened being who has descended into this world."

This is the correct meaning of this passage. The Buddha's objective is accomplished through being undisturbed in realizing the ultimate meaning that transcends this world. When the four different means of accomplishing the Buddha's objective (S. catvāri siddhānta, 四悉檀)<sup>7</sup> are performed without any obstacles or hesitations, there is said to be mastery of them.

*(Meditation in) the Cross-Legged Posture* (S. paryāṅka bandha āsana, 加趺坐):

1. Since ancient times, there have been as many Buddhas and students of life's purpose who have fully cultivated this practice as there are sands along the River Ganges.
2. (Meditation in) the cross-legged posture awakens one to an awareness of evil, generates a mind of reverence towards others and enables one to deeply enter the transcendental sphere of life's purpose (S. dharma dhātu, 法界). And does it not also bring about contentment to those in the spheres of human society and the heavens of meditation?
3. It is not just the acceptance or use of a worldly method, nor is it merely a superficial practice. It is able to break the devil's army<sup>99</sup> of emotional disturbances (S. kleśas, 煩惱).
4. It is also able to inspire the three paths of spiritual awakening.<sup>4</sup>

I reason this is the same idea as the four means of accomplishing the Buddha's objective.<sup>7</sup>

*Focusing attention on that before one through mindfulness of purpose with introspection*

(S. pratismṛti upasthāna, 繫念在前):

*Question:* Why do other sūtras speak about focusing one's attention on that before one?

*Answer:* Upon turning away from the illusions found in the (objective reality of) form and all of the mental associations (S. samjñā, 想) that are ever rising up from the sphere of life & death (S. saṃsāra, 生死) that are endowed with emotional disturbances (S. kleśas, 煩惱), one observes that which is before one's face with the serenity of spiritual freedom (S. nirvāṇa, 涅槃). In accomplishing this, one makes four kinds of understanding:

*Question:* What is it that is observed before one's face (in mindfulness with introspection)?

*Answer:* This is explained in four parts.

1. The face of an ordinary person reveals the physical desires that are aroused and able to produce pleasure. Although they are ultimately found everywhere throughout the body, of the nine places where waste flows from the body, seven are the orifices of the face. And so, in meditating on impurity, one focuses on the face to master these desires.
2. The six projections of consciousness are also expressed in the face; vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell and mental perception. Even the most exalted conditions of the mind, those expressing all that is worthy and noble,<sup>19</sup> are ultimately empty and devoid of any real self-centered existence. Because of this, one focuses on the face and realizes its emotional feelings correspond with the nature of emptiness.
3. When one observes the face, one is able to distinguish the objects found in each of these six different fields of consciousness; the visible forms, audible sounds, physical contacts, flavors, aromas and mental objects or objectives. And so, in making all of these different mental distinctions and associations, one focuses on the face.



4. And of the six parts of the body (the head, the four limbs and the torso), the head and its face are the most high, best expressing the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of **life's purposes** (S. sarva dharma tattvasya lakṣaṇa, C. zhūfǎ shíxiāng, J. shohō jissō, 諸法實相). Because it reveals the most purposeful and meaningful expression of reality, one focuses on the face.

These express meditation on the four subjective spheres of mindfulness with introspection (S. catvāri śmṛty upasthānāni 四念處).<sup>20</sup>

2. **In summoning words about the dual knowledge**, there are two parts:

- a. Summoning the dual knowledge of all the Buddhas
- b. Summoning the dual knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni
- a. **First, there is summoning the dual knowledge of all the Buddhas (collectively)**

The summoning of words on this will be in three parts:

1. First, praising it
2. Next, explaining it
3. Finally, concluding on it

1. **Praising the dual knowledge of all the Buddhas** is in two parts

- a. Praising the knowledge that is transcendental
- b. Praising the knowledge that is provisional

諸	佛	智	慧	甚	深	無	量
sho	buts-	chi	e	jin	jin	mu	ryō
All	Buddhas	knowledge	discernment	very	deep	without	limit

**“The knowledge of the Buddhas is very deep and infinitely broad.”**

a. **Praising the knowledge of all the Buddhas that is transcendental**

With there being **the knowledge of all the Buddhas** (J. sho butsu- chi e, 諸佛智慧), so the dialectical principle is found in the transcendental nature of life's purpose.

\* Because it goes beyond the three kinds of provisional knowledge<sup>4</sup> applied in the influence of others, it is said to be **of the Buddhas** (J. sho butsu, 諸佛).

\* Because it reveals the ultimate purpose for one's own practice, it is called **the knowledge** (J. chi e, 智慧).

The existential reality (essence) of this knowledge is also called the three-fold knowledge of the single mind (一心三智).<sup>22</sup>

**Very deep and infinitely broad** (J. jinjin muryō, 甚深無量) is a term of praise.

\* This explains that the knowledge of the Buddhas is as deep as the ultimate dialectical principle found in the transcendental nature of life's purpose.

Because of this, it is said to be **very deep** (J. jinjin, 甚深).

\* It is ultimately as broad as the whole of the transcendental sphere of life's purpose (S. dharma dhātu, 法界), and so it is also said to be **infinitely broad** (J. muryō, 無量).

In being very deep and infinitely broad, its vertical depth and horizontal breadth are likened to the depth of a tree's roots and breadth of its spreading branches.

A stream's size is based on the distance from its source. With the transcendental knowledge being praised like this, the provisional knowledge is as well.

b. Praising the knowledge of all the Buddhas that is provisional:

其	智	慧	門	難	解	難	入,
go	chi	e	mon	nan	ge	nan	nyū
This	knowledge	discernment	door	hard	to understand	hard	to enter

一 切	聲	聞、	辟 支	佛	所	不	能	知。
is-sai	shō	mon	hyaku shi	butsu	sho	fu	nō	chi
All	voice	hearers	pratyeka-	buddhas	this	not	able	to know

**“The gateway into this knowledge is difficult to understand and difficult to penetrate. Students of life’s purpose and those only spiritually awakened in their own lives are unable to comprehend it.”**

- \* **The gateway into this knowledge** (J. go chi e mon, 其智慧門): Because the preliminary ways & means are endowed with the power to move one’s practice forward along the noble path, they are called ‘gateways’ (J. mon, 門). From these gateways (of meditation) one penetrates and reaches the dialectical principle of the middle way (S. madhyamā pratipad, 行中道) that is said to be the ‘transcendental’ knowledge. The preliminary methodologies that prepare one for the noble path are those which are called the ‘provisional’ knowledge.
- \* **Difficult to understand and difficult to penetrate** (J. nange nannnyū, 難解難入): This is a term of praise for it. Without a comprehensive plan, one will not end up with anything of great usefulness.
- \* Through *the seven skillful ways & means*<sup>21</sup> (on the lesser vehicle) one is unable to fathom it. Through *the ten-fold abode of mindfulness*<sup>23</sup> (on the bodhisattva’s greater sense of purpose) there is the beginning of **understanding** (J. ge, 解).
- \* Through *the ten levels of grounding*<sup>23</sup> there is its full **penetration** (J. nyū, 入). In indicating it from beginning to end, it is possible to comprehend that which is difficult to reveal through one’s own life or awaken through another in the meantime. Therefore, it is specifically said that **students of life’s purpose and those only spiritually awakened in their own lives are unable to comprehend it** (J. issai shomon hyakushibutsu sho funō chi, 一切聲聞辟支佛所不能知). Because their attachments (to their own practices and realizations) are particularly strong, their faults are specifically corrected here.
- \* **Unable to fully comprehend it** (J. funō chi, 不能知): The nature of life’s purpose is primarily defined by both the provisional & the transcendental knowledge found in the Buddha’s own practice. Sentient beings who stray from this knowledge are without this spiritual capacity. Because of this, it is said that they do not fully comprehend it.
  1. With the sudden illumination of *The Garland Sūtra* (S. Avataṃsaka, 華嚴經), they were like the deaf, dumb and blind, and so it was said they did not fully comprehend it.
  2. In *The Sūtras on the Broad Meaning of the Greater Vehicle* (S. Vaipulya, 方等經) they were scolded for just remaining in their own grass huts and seeking personal guarantees of their own emancipation. And so it was said they did not fully comprehend it.



3. In *The Sūtras on Transcendental Discernment* (S. Prajñā, 般若經), the Buddha turned the wheel of the bodhisattva doctrine but, due to their nihilistic misunderstandings, they did not have enough aspiration to embrace its purpose for even the time it takes to consume a single meal of it. And so it was said they did not fully comprehend it.
4. Now that sentient beings had opened up and aroused a great spiritual capacity, in *The Lotus Sūtra* (S. Saddharma Puṇḍarīka, 法華經) the Buddha issued forth a ray of light that shook the ground, and so it was the same as it was long ago, with the path of all the Buddhas being the same. However, because they still harbored doubts and confusions, it was said that they still did not fully comprehend it.

Bodhisattvas with especially sharp capacities now and then were able to comprehend it, but those with duller capacities were like those on the two lesser vehicles (who only seek their own freedom from affliction) and so they were also not fully able to do so.

\* **The gateway** (S. samanvāgata, J. mon, 門) (penetrating the true meaning): On this, Fǎyún from the Monastery 'House of Light' (Guāngzhái Sì, 光宅寺)<sup>2</sup> held that the ways & means on the two lesser vehicles (of only seeking one's own freedom from affliction on an individual level) constituted 'the gateway to this knowledge' described in the sūtra. This would necessitate that it was a teaching that was given by the Buddha but then later withdrawn (as partially false). If this was the gateway to the transcendental knowledge to be realized, why would The One Who Has Descended Into This World now correct those on these lesser vehicles, saying they did not comprehend the transcendental knowledge? If they did not comprehend this knowledge of the Buddhas, it would follow that the ways & means on these lesser vehicles were not really a gateway into transcendental knowledge. Those that offered this as a gateway were of very shallow ability and were never aware of a gateway into the transcendental knowledge in the first place. Now we understand that, with there being the transcendental knowledge of the Buddhas, there are its ways & means. With this knowledge as the gateway, one enters into the knowledge of the Buddhas. As it is said in *The Sūtra on the Necklace of the Bodhisattvas' Fundamental Practice* (Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī Pratyāyoga Sūtra, 菩薩瓔珞本業經):

"The observation of duality is the gateway into the ways & means of attaining entry into the dialectical principle (S. madhyamā pratipad, 行中道) and the truth of its ultimate meaning (S. paramārtha satya, 第一義諦)."

This is also saying that each of the four gateways<sup>5</sup> of the three (provisional) doctrines are all equally ways & means for attaining entry into the middle way. This understanding at the Monastery 'House of Light' (Guāngzhái Sì, 光宅寺) was that all observations of duality are but a single observation and that there are twelve gateways (the four gateways of each of the three provisional doctrines)<sup>12</sup> that are all but a single, identical gateway. But with these ways & means of knowledge being the gateways, there would really only be the attainment of entry into the knowledge of ways & means. It would mean that one could equally enter into realization of the Buddha's transcendental knowledge through any of the four gateways found in any of these three provisional doctrines.<sup>12</sup> In truth, one only attains entry into the Buddha's knowledge through the gateway of the Buddha's knowledge. As explained

before, The Chapter on Skillfulness in Ways & Means is about making *the perfect cause*. This is the gateway into transcendental knowledge of one's own practice, what this sūtra now praises as 'the gateway into this knowledge'. This is a reference to *the four gateways into the perfect doctrine*<sup>12</sup> being this single gateway. With this real, transcendental knowledge being the gateway, one enters into the ways & means of this knowledge and so fully illuminates the truths about duality. This is what is meant here. In explaining it like this, abundant riches of meaning are opened up. How is it like the relatively petty and trifling ideas that were taught at the 'House of Light' Monastery? And if one only depends upon the explanation in the Discourse attributed to Vasubandhu<sup>2</sup> about the traditional teachings (S. Āgamas, 阿含) being the gateway into the Buddha's knowledge, it would necessitate first opening up and gradually going through all of the different provisional doctrines to penetrate it. Based on that explained here, this is possible to understand.

1. *Explaining the dual knowledge of all the Buddhas* is also in two parts

- a. Explaining the knowledge that is transcendental
- b. Explaining the knowledge that is provisional

a. Explaining the knowledge of all the Buddhas that is transcendental

所	以	者	何?	佛	曾	親	近	百	千	萬	億
sho	i	sha	ga?	butsu	zō	shin	gon	hyaku	zen	man	oku
This	because	it	what?	Buddha	before	intimately	close	100	1000	10000	100000
無	數	諸	佛，	盡	行	諸	佛	無	量	道	法，
mu	shu	sho	butsu	jin	gyō	sho	butsu	mu	ryō	dō	hō
without	count	many	Buddhas	fully	practice	many	Buddhas	without	limit	path	purposes

**"This is because the Buddhas have been intimately close to countless hundreds, thousands and millions of Buddhas, fulfilling their endlessly different purposes."**

From **This is because** (J. sho-i sha ga, 所以者何? ): At the 'House of Light' Monastery it was said that this part *praises* the transcendental knowledge of the Buddha *Śākyamuni*. Now we submit that these words actually *explain* the transcendental knowledge of *all the Buddhas*. In saying **The Buddhas have been intimately close to countless hundreds, thousands and millions of Buddhas, fulfilling their endlessly different purposes** (J. buts-zō shin gon, hyaku zen man oku mushu sho butsu, jingyō sho butsu, muryō dōhō, 佛曾親近，百千萬億無數諸佛，盡行諸佛，無量道法):

- \* Because they have met many Buddhas, sought them out and served them, this transcendental knowledge is *very deep* (J. jinjin, 甚深).
- \* Because they have fulfilled the purposes of so many different noble paths, this transcendental knowledge is *infinitely broad* (J. muryō, 無量).
- \* In being infinitely broad, the *horizontal breadth* of the transcendental knowledge is explained.
- \* In being very deep, its *vertical loftiness* is explained.

b. Explaining the knowledge of all the Buddhas that is provisional

勇 猛 精 進 名 稱 普 聞,  
yū myō shō jin myō shō fu mon  
brave valiant diligent name praise universally heard

“They have been diligent and courageous, and the praise of their names has been heard everywhere.”

- \* The gateway into this knowledge is difficult to understand and difficult to penetrate. In being **diligent and courageous** (J. yūmyō shōjin, 勇猛精進), they have been able to enter into this gateway that is difficult to penetrate.
- \* Having penetrated it, they have received boundless blessings and the excellence of their virtues has been esteemed in this world. Because of this, **the praise of their names has been heard everywhere** (J. myōshō fumon, 名稱普聞)

It is also possible to analyze this passage like this:

- \* Having been **diligent and courageous** (J. yūmyō shōjin, 勇猛精進), they are able to penetrate the gateway into this transcendental nature of life’s purpose. This explains that the provisional knowledge is *very deep* (J. jinjin, 甚深).
- \* Because **the praise of their names has been heard everywhere** (J. myōshō fumon, 名稱普聞), the provisional knowledge is described as being *infinitely broad* (J. muryō, 無量).

Upon observing that the words of provisional knowledge are neither deep nor broad, one reveals the meaning and purpose of the transcendental knowledge that they are based on.

3. From “Having realized a very deep”... (J. jōju jinjin, 成就甚深...), there is **concluding on the dual knowledge of all the Buddhas**. This is also in two parts:
  - a. Concluding on the knowledge that is transcendental
  - b. Concluding on the knowledge that is provisional
- a. Concluding on the knowledge of all the Buddhas that is transcendental

成 就 甚 深 未 曾 有 法,  
jō ju jin jin mi zō u hō  
attain reach very deep not yet before existing purpose

“Having realized a very deep purpose that has never been known ...”

In saying **Having realized a very deep purpose that has never been known** (J. jōju jinjin mizōu u hō, 成就甚深未曾有法):

- \* Upon summoning the ultimate nature of the dialectical principle, the transcendental nature of life’s purpose is said to be **realized** (J. jōju, 成就) .
- \* Deliverance to the other shore (S. pāramitā, 到彼岸底) of spiritual freedom (S. nirvāṇa, 涅槃) is said to be **very deep** (J. jinjin, 甚深).

b. The conclusion on the provisional knowledge of all the Buddhas

隨	宜	所	說	意	趣	難	解。
zui	gi	sho	setsu	i	shu	nan	ge
follow	opportunities	here	teach	intent	goal	difficult	understand

**“... they have followed every opportunity to teach of it to those with prejudices that have made it difficult to understand.”**

- \* In properly adapting the proper capacity of the audience, it said that **they have followed every opportunity** (J. zuigi, 隨宜) to teach of it.
- \* In going far beyond the knowledge of the seven skillful ways & means<sup>21</sup> (employed in attaining freedom from affliction on an individual level), it can be **difficult to understand** (J. nange, 難解). In following emotional feelings, perception of the dialectical principle is murky and there are **prejudices** (S. abhiprāya, J. i shu, 意趣) that make it *more difficult to understand*.
- \* With complete (transcendental) discernment of the meaning, its purpose is revealed, and so it is said to be *easier to understand*.

The Summary of the Greater Vehicle (S. Mahāyāna Saṃgraha, 攝大乘論) says:

“In the sūtras of complete meaning (S. nītārtha, 了義)<sup>95</sup> one depends upon the words to analyze the meaning. In the sūtras of incomplete meaning (S. neyārtha, 未了義)<sup>95</sup> one depends upon the meaning to analyze the words.”

This is the meaning here. And for some there is another understanding:

- \* **Having realized a very deep purpose that has never been known** (J. jōju jinjin mizō u hō, 成就甚深未曾有法) concludes the part on the provisional and transcendental knowledge of *one’s own practice*.
- \* **They have followed every opportunity to teach of it to those with prejudices that have made it difficult to understand** (J. zuigi sho setsu, i shu nange, 隨宜所說, 意趣難解): This concludes the part on the provisional and transcendental knowledge of *influencing others*.

- a. Next, from ‘Since I have attained perfect enlightenment and descended into this world...’ (J. go jū jōbutsu irai, 吾從成佛已來), **there is summoning the dual (provisional and transcendental) knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni (in particular)**

Earlier understandings about this asserted that the provisional and transcendental knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni were each summoned here, reasoning that:

- \* **Since I have attained perfect enlightenment and descended into this world** (J. go jū jōbutsu irai, 吾從成佛已來) was *praise* of his provisional knowledge.
- \* **This is because The One Who Has Descended Into This World is perfectly endowed with the ways & means of delivering the knowledge and vision of enlightenment** (J. sho i sha ga? nyorai hōben chicken haramitsu kai i gusoku, 所以者何? 如來方便知見波羅蜜皆已具足) was *an explanation* of his provisional knowledge.
- \* **The knowledge and vision of The One Who Has Descended Into This World is broad and great** (J. nyorai chicken kōdai jinnon, 如來知見, 廣大深遠) was *praise* of his transcendental knowledge.

- \* **Endowed with infinite, unobstructed power and fearlessness, penetration of meditative resolve and emancipation from attachments, it deeply enters into that which is boundless, realizing the true nature of all of life's purposes that has never been known.** (J. muryō muge riki mushō i, zenjō gedats- sanmai, jinnyū musai, jōju issai mizō u hō, 無量無礙, 力、無所畏、禪定、解脫三昧, 深入無際, 成就一切未曾有法) was an *explanation* of his transcendental knowledge.
- \* **The One Who Has Descended Into This World is able to make all kinds of distinctions and is skillful in explaining all of these purposes, speaking in terms that are kind and gentle, and pleasing all minds** (J. nyorai nō shuju funbetsu, gyō sets- shohō, gonji nyūnan, etka shushin, 如來能種種分別, 巧說諸法, 言辭柔軟, 悅可眾心) there were *words concluding* on his dual (transcendental & provisional) knowledge .

And before these words were also analyzed from beginning to end in three ways:

1. In terms of *opening it up into many & integrating it into one*:
  - a. In praising the dual knowledge of *all the Buddhas* together, it was said that the existential reality of the two kinds of knowledge was everywhere the same.
  - b. In separately praising the dual knowledge of *the Buddha Śākyamuni*, it was said that the merits and the applications of these two kinds of knowledge were distinguished (by individual Buddhas) in uniquely different ways.
2. In terms of *the source & the manifestation*:
  - a. In summoning the gateway to penetrating the source (J. honmon, 本門) of the spiritual life (S. dharma kāya, 法身) that takes on different manifestations, there was praise of the transcendental knowledge of *all the Buddhas*.
  - b. In summoning the gateway to penetrating its manifestation (J. shakumon, 迹門), a response of this spiritual life (S. nirmāṇa kāya, 應身) that was able to reveal its source, there was praise of the provisional knowledge of *the Buddha Śākyamuni*.
3. In terms of *one's own practice & the influence of others*
  - a. *All the Buddhas* reveal the nature of their own practice through first grasping the transcendental knowledge.
  - b. *The Buddha Śākyamuni* was said to have revealed the transformation of others through first guiding (spiritual) children with provisional knowledge.

And so there were all the different manifestations that arose and then perished from the totally perfect existential reality of the spiritual life (S. dharma kāya svabhāva, 法身體) that is impossible to fully comprehend. In being attached to one of its manifestations, the ultimate nature of this purpose was lost.

Now we explain that the meaning here is not quite like this. In just depending upon a sequence of words, the meaning should be easy enough to understand. One does not need to get involved in all sorts of twisted arguments about (the Buddha Śākyamuni vs. all the other Buddhas). When the sūtra speaks of the path of all the Buddhas being the same, how could there be any conflicting understandings among them? It would be like there being people who praise obedience and filial piety but then go out and beat up their parents.



And so, in summoning words about the dual knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni, there are again three parts:

1. First there is praise of this dual knowledge
2. Next there is an explanation of it, and
3. Finally there is a conclusion on it.

1. *First there is the praise of this dual knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni*

Again, it is in two parts:

- a. Praise of the transcendental knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni
- b. Praise of the provisional knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni

a. First, on praise of the transcendental knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni:

舍	利	弗!	吾	從	成	佛	已	來,
sha	ri	hotsu	go	jū	jō	buts-	i	rai
(Śāriputra)			I	since	realized	enlightened	already	come

“Śāriputra, since I have attained enlightenment and descended into this world”

**Since I have attained perfect enlightenment and descended into this world**

(J. gojū jō butsu i rai, 吾從成佛已來): If the transcendental knowledge was not totally perfect, the path to enlightenment would not be realized. With it being so, the sūtra speaks of having **attained perfect enlightenment** (J. jō butsu, 從成). Because each and all are able to realize it, there is praise of this transcendental knowledge.

b. On praise of the provisional knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni:

種	種	因	緣,	種	種	譬	喻,
shu	ju	in	en	shu	ju	hi	yu
kinds	kinds	causes	conditions	kinds	kinds	comparisons	illustrations

廣	演	言	教	無	數	方	便,
kō	en	gon	kyō	mu	shu	hō	ben
spread	broadly	spoken	teachings	without	count	ways	means

引	導	眾	生	令	離	諸	著。
in	dō	shu	jō	ryō	ri	sho	jaku
lead	guide	host of	living	make	free of	many	attachments

“I have broadly propagated teachings about the true nature of life’s purpose and explained its different causes and conditions with various kinds of illustrations, using countless skillful ways and means to guide sentient beings and free them from their attachments.”

**Explaining the different causes & conditions** (J. shuju innen, 種種因緣) in the transmission of enlightenment between Buddhas (teachers) and sentient beings (disciples): This refers to the teachings of the Buddha during the forty years that preceded The Lotus Sūtra, adapting the dual (provisional & transcendental)

knowledge to the different understandings of sentient beings through the three kinds of influence on others.<sup>4</sup> It is because of this that the sūtra speaks about all the different ‘causes & conditions’ found in the Buddha’s purpose, which are respectively the Buddha’s sympathy (upanayana, 感) for the potential capacities of sentient beings and the Buddha’s response to them (nirmāṇa, 應).

**Various kinds of illustrations** (J. shuju hiyu, 種種譬喻):

- \* In the sūtras about the lesser vehicle of attaining freedom from affliction on the individual level there were different kinds of analogies and illustrations such as those of the (inner hollowness of a) banana tree and the (lack of cohesive substance in a) spray of water.
- \* In the sūtras about the greater vehicle of life’s purpose there were such illustrations as those of a magic fortress<sup>9</sup> and an image in a mirror, etc.
- \* In depending on descriptions from The Commentary on the Longer Sūtra About the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Upadeśa, 大智度論), the teachings on the lesser vehicle are said to be like milk while the teachings on the greater vehicle are like clarified butter (ghee). **I have broadly propagated teachings** (J. kōen gonkyō, 廣演言教): This is being able to summon limitless different kinds of meaning from the single nature of life’s purpose.

**Countless skillful ways & means** (J. mushu hōben, 無數方便): This refers to going far beyond the seven kinds of skillful ways & means.<sup>21</sup>

**To guide sentient beings and free them from their attachments** (J. indō shujō ryōri shojaku, 引導眾生令離諸著):

1. In teaching about the propagation of the ten virtuous kinds of actions,<sup>62</sup> they are freed from attachments to the three roads of evil.
  2. In teaching about the purity of intent in these ten virtuous acts,<sup>62</sup> they are freed from attachments to the sphere of desire.
  3. In teaching the doctrine on the three baskets,<sup>89</sup> they are freed from attachments to self-centered views and intentions with ulterior motives that are afflicted.
  4. In teaching about the greater sense of purpose in the bodhisattvas, they are freed from attachment to the serenity of spiritual freedom (S. nirvāṇa, 涅槃).
  5. In teaching about perfect enlightenment, they are even freed from attachments to the noble path and devotion to its greater sense of purpose.
2. Next, From ‘This is because ...’ (J. sho i sha ga, nyorai hōben, 所以者何, 如來方便 ...) there is *the explanation of the dual knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni*.

所	以	者	何?	如	來	方	便
sho	i	sha	ga?	nyo	rai	hō	ben
This	because	it	what?	One	That	Has	Come
						ways	means

  

知	見	波羅蜜	皆	已	具	足。
chi	ken	ha ra mitsu	kai	i	gu	soku
knowledge	vision	pāramitā	all	already	endowed	perfectly

**“This is because The One Who Has Descended Into This World is perfectly endowed with the ways and means of delivering this transcendental knowledge and vision.”**

- a. **The One Who Has Descended Into This World** (nyorai, 如來) is a reference to the transcendental knowledge. Upon descending from the meaning found in the transcendental nature (S. tathatā, 眞如), there is a realization of the path to enlightenment. Therefore, in referring to The One Who Has Descended Into This World, the sūtra is explaining the transcendental knowledge.
- b. **The ways & means** (J. hōben, 方便) refers to the provisional knowledge. Because of skillfulness in the ways & means of explaining the different causes & conditions (J. shuju innen, 種種因緣) found in the transmission of life's true purpose, there is a capacity for **delivering the knowledge and vision of enlightenment** (J. chicken haramitsu, 知見波羅蜜).

This deliverance of the knowledge and vision of enlightenment is really about *seamlessly integrating* provisional and transcendental knowledge and vision.

- \* Knowing the ultimate purpose for all things (S. sarvathā jñāna, 一切種智) is called *transcendental knowledge* (S. jñāna, J. chi, 知).
- \* The eye of enlightenment (S. buddha cakṣur, 佛眼)<sup>23</sup> is called *transcendental vision* (S. darśana, J. ken, 見).
- \* Knowledge of the different paths to enlightenment (S. mārgākāra jñāna, 道種智) is called *provisional knowledge*.
- \* The eye of purpose (S. dharma cakṣur, 法眼)<sup>23</sup> is called *provisional vision*.
- \* Spanning the bounds between the phenomena (J. ji, 事) of sentient existence and the transcendental meaning found in the dialectical principle (J. ri, 理) is called deliverance (S. pāramitā, J. haramitsu, 波羅蜜).

Being **perfectly endowed** (J. kai i gusoku, 皆已具足) here refers to having the knowledge that is ultimately both provisional and transcendental. If one does not make both explanations, how can one all of a sudden speak about it being perfectly endowed with both of them? In revealing both explanations, there is perfect endowment with them.

3. From “Śāriputra, the knowledge and vision of The One Who Has Descended Into This World is broad and great, deep and far-reaching ... ” (J. sharihotsu nyorai chicken kōdai jinnon, 舍利弗! 如來知見, 廣大深遠 ...) there is the conclusion on the dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

This is also in two parts:

- a. Concluding on the transcendental knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni
  - b. Concluding on the provisional knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni
- a. Concluding on the transcendental knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni:

舍	利	弗!	如	來	知	見,	廣	大	深	遠
sha	ri	hotsu!	nyo	rai	chi	ken	kō	dai	jin	on
(Śāriputra)			One That Has Come knowledge vision broad great deep far							

“Śāriputra, this knowledge and vision of The One Who Has Descended Into This World is broad and great, deep and far-reaching.

The knowledge and vision of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (J. nyorai chicken, 如來知見) is the conclusion about the transcendental knowledge



of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

\* **Broad and great** (J. kōdai, 廣大) concludes on its *horizontal breadth*

\* **Deep and far-reaching** (J. jinnon, 深遠) concludes in its *vertical depth*

The transcendental knowledge is like this. It is neither vertical nor horizontal but the sūtra summons words of praise on its vertical depth and horizontal breadth to clarify that which is ultimately beyond any such restrictions. With the box being great, so the cover is great.<sup>110</sup>

b. Concluding on the provisional knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni:

無 mu	量 ryō	無 mu	礙, ge	力、 riki	無 所 mu sho	畏、 i
without	limit	without	restriction	power	nowhere	fear
禪 zen	定、 jō	解 脫 ge datsu	三 昧, san mai	深 jin	入 nyū	無 際, mu sai
meditative	resolve	emancipation	samādhi	deeply	enter	without bounds
成 jō	就 ju	一 切 is sai	未 mi	曾 zō	有 u	法。 hō
realize	reach	all of the	not yet	before	existing	purposes

**“Endowed with infinite, unobstructed power and fearlessness, perfect penetration of meditative resolve and emancipation from attachments, it deeply enters into that which is boundless, realizing the true nature of all of life’s purposes that has never been known.”**

From ‘With infinite, unobstructed ...’ (J. muryō muge, 無量無礙 ...) there is the conclusion on the provisional knowledge of the Buddha Śākyamuni. The provisions of one’s own practice are the preliminary ways and means of the noble path and the gateways to the awakening of its purpose. Therefore we recognize that this is the conclusion about provisional knowledge. The transcendental knowledge is without such a variable number of things. At the Monastery ‘House of Light’ (C. Guāngzhái Sì, 光宅寺)<sup>2</sup> they were not aware of the transcendental knowledge. In the span of the generations not very many recognized that the unobstructed knowledge goes beyond such variable numbers.

\* **Infinite** (J. muryō, 無量) refers to grounding in *the four infinite states of mind* (S. catvāri apramāṇāni, 四無量心).<sup>25</sup>

\* **Unobstructed** (J. muge, 無礙) refers to grounding in *the four unobstructed kinds of interpretation* (S. catasraḥ pratisaṃvidāḥ, 四無礙解)<sup>26</sup> able to generate limitless and unceasing eloquence from a single word or a single meaning. Compared to this, the knowledge of the bodhisattvas in the general and distinguished doctrines<sup>12</sup> is only like sprouts just emerging from the ground.

\* **Power** (J. riki, 力) refers to *the ten spiritual powers* (S. daśa bala, 十力).<sup>27</sup>

\* **Fearlessness** (J. mu sho i, 無所畏) is a reference to *the four kinds of fearlessness* (S. catur vaiśāradya, 四無所畏).<sup>28</sup>

- \* **Meditative** (J. zen, 禪) is a reference to deep *meditation* (S. dhyāna, 禪) *on the transcendental meaning (of the dialectical principle) with stillness of mind.*
- \* **Resolve** (J. jō, 定) here is a reference to *the heroic resolve* (S. śūraṅgama samādhi, 首楞嚴定).<sup>29</sup>
- \* **Emancipation from attachments** (J. gedatsu, 解脫) refers to the ultimate source of *the eight kinds of emancipated understanding* (S. aṣṭa vimokṣa, 八解脫).<sup>30</sup>
- \* **Perfect penetration** (J. sanmai, 三昧) refers to *the supreme resolve* (S. uttara samādhi, 王三昧), the perfect penetration of resolve (S. samāpatti, 三摩鉢底).<sup>31</sup>
- \* The Sanskrit text on this also includes the (eighteen) unique qualities of the Buddha (S. aṣṭādaśa āveṇika buddha dharmāḥ, 十八不共佛法)<sup>32</sup>, the powers arising from the five spiritual capacities (S. pañca indriya bala, 五根力)<sup>33</sup> as well as the (thirty-seven) facets of spiritual awakening (S. saptatrimśat bodhipākṣika, 三十七道品),<sup>33</sup> which Kumārajīva<sup>1</sup> may have deemed redundant.
- \* **Deeply entering into that which is boundless** (J. jinnyū musai, 深入無際) concludes the part on realization of *that which is vertically deep.*
- \* **Realizing the true nature of all of life's purposes that has never been known** (J. jōju issai mizō u hō, 成就一切未曾有法) concludes the part on realization of *that which is horizontally broad.*

3. Beginning with ‘Śāriputra, The One Who Has Descended Into This World is able to make all kinds of distinctions ...’ (J. nyorai nō shuju funbetsu, 舍利弗如來能種種分別), there is **Going beyond any words about the dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge.**

This is in two parts:

- a. The reason the principle is beyond any words
- b. That which is beyond any words

a. *The reason it is beyond any words*

Long ago, this was understood to be part of the conclusion on the provisional and transcendental knowledge. Now we show that this was covered in the last passage. Starting here, the sūtra aspires to transcend words. To get beyond the praise of the dual (provisional and transcendental) knowledge, they are brought up once more.

The words on this are in two parts:

1. First, bringing up that the dual knowledge is beyond any words.
2. Then, revealing that the object of this knowledge is beyond any words.

舍	利	弗!	如	來	能	種	種	分	別,
sha	ri	hotsu	nyo	rai	nō	shu	ju	fun	betsu
(Śāriputra)			One That Has Com capable kinds kinds divided distinctions						

巧	說	諸	法,	言	辭	柔	軟,	悅	可	眾	心。
gyō	sets-	sho	hō	gon	ji	nyū	nan	et-	ka	shu	shin
skillful	teaching	all	purposes	speak	terms	softly	gently	pleasing	satisfying	all	minds

“Śāriputra, The One Who Has Descended Into This World is able to make all kinds of distinctions and is skillful in explaining all of these purposes, speaking in terms that are kind and gentle, and pleasing all minds.”

1. *First, bringing up the knowledge that is beyond any words*

Those who are earnest express their words with due diligence and enthusiasm.

a. **The One Who Has Descended Into This World is able to make all kinds of distinctions and is skillful in explaining all of these purposes** (J. nyorai nō shuju funbetsu gyō sets- sho hō, 如來能種種分別, 巧說諸法): This is a reference to the provisional knowledge.

b. **Speaking in terms that are kind and gentle, and pleasing all minds** (J. gonji nyūnan etka shushin, 言辭柔軟, 悅可眾心): This is on the transcendental knowledge.

*Question:* How does one acquire this transcendental knowledge?

*Answer:* In the Introductory Chapter of The Lotus Sūtra, upon seeing other lands of enlightenment in the eastern quarter<sup>16</sup> where the Buddhas taught, the Bodhisattva Maitreya said:

“Their voices emit a pure sound that is kind and gentle.”

Later, in the first section of verse in chapter three On the Parable of the Burning House, Śāriputra understood these teachings and said:

“I hear the kind and gentle sound of the Buddha’s voice. The words are deep, far-reaching and most sublime.”

Both of these are about the transcendental knowledge (of life’s purpose).”

*Question:* Before, in the part on the summoning words about the dual knowledge, the transcendental knowledge came first and the provisional knowledge came afterward. Now, in this part on getting beyond the words, why does the provisional knowledge come first and the transcendental knowledge come afterwards?

*Answer:* Before the sūtra desired to invoke words, and so it established the provisional knowledge from the transcendental knowledge. Now, in desiring to get beyond words, it is necessary to roll up the (tongue of) provisional knowledge and return to the transcendental knowledge (that is beyond any words).

2. *Next, revealing the object of this knowledge that is beyond any words:*

舍	利	弗!	取	要	言	之,	無	量	無	邊
sha	ri	hotsu!	shu	yō	gon	shi	mu	ryō	mu	hen
(Śāriputra)			take	essence	words	on this	without	measure	without	bounds

未	曾	有	法,	佛	悉	成	就。
mi	zō	u	hō	buts-	shitsu	jō	ju
not yet	before	existing	purpose	Buddha	completely	attain	reach

“Śāriputra, to grasp the essence of these words, the Buddha has perfectly realized all of the infinite, boundless purposes of life that have never been known.”

a. **To grasp the essence of these words** (J. shuyō gonshi, 取要言之) refers to revealing the object of transcendental knowledge. The essence must not exceed the transcendental nature of life’s purpose itself.

b. **The infinite, boundless purposes of life that have never been known** (J. muryō muhen mizō u hō, 無量無邊未曾有法) refers to revealing the object of provisional knowledge. To express the essence, there must be a point of reference from which to begin.

- \* The object of provisional knowledge is **infinite and boundless** (J. muryō muhen, 無量無邊).
- \* Within the object of transcendental knowledge there are **purposes of life that have never been known** (J. mizō u hō, 未曾有法).
- \* And the sūtra says that **the Buddha has perfectly realized** (J. buts-shitsu jōju, 佛悉成就) this object of dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge.

*Question:* How may this be taught in terms of cultivating the noble path and attaining its fruit?

*Answer:* If one only clarifies one of the two kinds of knowledge, one will not have spoken about it completely. Having already indicated both the provisional and the transcendental knowledge, the true nature of its purpose will be clarified.

b. *That which is beyond any words*; This is in three parts:

1. The termination of words
2. The dual knowledge is only realized by those who are most noble.
3. The very deep dialectical principle underlying the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes that is inexpressible

1. *The termination of words*

止, 舍 利 弗! 不 須 復 說。  
shi sha ri hotsu fu shu bu setsu  
Stop (Śāriputra) no need further teach

**"No more, Śāriputra, there is no use in explaining this any further."**

Beginning with '**No more, Śāriputra**' (J. shi sharihotsu, 止舍利弗) there is the termination of words about the dual knowledge, which is going beyond any words about it.

This is the first of three times in this chapter that the Buddha would decline to elaborate any further about this teaching in words.

On this, the Master Sēngyìn (僧印)<sup>2</sup> said:

"The Buddha aspired to cause there to be no more questions or doubts."

The Master Huìguān (慧觀)<sup>2</sup> said:

"The transcendental nature of life's purpose is difficult to comprehend, and so the Buddha began by calming and subduing any feelings about it that were disturbed (caused by words)."

Now it is explained that in the nature of this purpose there is a deep serenity that is beyond the way of all words and language. Its existential reality is inexpressible, and so there are no more words about it. Out of mercy and compassion the Buddha taught of it. However, when it would have injured the good spiritual capacities in those that listened but were unable to understand, the Buddha said 'no more'.

2. *The dual knowledge is only realized by those most worthy and noble.*

所 以 者 何? 佛 所 成 就 第 一 希 有  
sho i sha ga? buts- sho jō ju dai ichi ke u  
This because it what? Buddha here attain reach number one rare to have

難 解 之 法。 唯 佛 與 佛 乃 能 究 盡  
nan ge shi hō yui butsu yo butsu nai nō ku jin  
difficult understand 's purpose only Buddha with Buddha so able ultimately fathom

**“This is because the Buddha has realized the ultimate nature of life’s purpose that is most rare and difficult to understand and can only be fathomed between the Buddhas:”**

Beginning with ‘**This is because the Buddha has realized ...**’ (J. sho i sha ga? buts-sho jōju, 所以者何, 佛成就...), there is an explanation of the intent behind no longer summoning any words about this dual knowledge. This will be in two parts:

- \* First, here, it is about the inexpressibility of the enlightened being (the one with the most noble human capacity who has cultivated life’s very highest purpose).
- \* In the next section, it will be about the inexpressibility of the very deep and inconceivable sphere of life’s purpose (S. dharma dhātu, 法界).

On the inexpressibility of the Buddha, the one with the most noble human capacity who has cultivated life’s very highest purpose:

- a. **The Buddha has realized the ultimate nature of life’s purpose that is most rare and difficult to understand** (J. buts-sho jōju dai ichi ke u nange shihō, 佛所成就第一希有難解之法): This explains that horizontally the dual knowledge is inexpressibly broad.
  - b. **And can only be fathomed between the Buddhas** (J. yui butsu yo butsu nainō kujin, 唯佛與佛乃能究盡): This explains that vertically it is inexpressibly deep.
- a. **Realized** (J. jōju, 成就) or not, **Difficult to understand** (J. nange, 難解) or not, this explains that horizontally the cultivation and realization of the noble path becomes inexpressibly broad.
  - b. **And can only be fathomed between the Buddhas** (J. yui butsu yo butsu nainō kujin, 唯佛與佛乃能究盡): In the beginning, enlightenment was only partially attained and its source was not yet fathomed, like the moonlight that is not yet completely full during the first fourteen days of the lunar month. This source can only be ultimately fathomed between the Buddhas, like the light of the moon on the fifteenth day of the month, when it is not without perfect roundness of form and complete fullness of illumination. Like this, vertically the cultivation and realization of the noble path becomes inexpressibly deep.

3. *The deep, inexpressible principle of the dialectic that is the foundation for this dual knowledge, the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes*

a. Summarizing the transcendental meaning found in the sphere of life's purposes, the object of provisional and transcendental knowledge:

諸	法	實	相
sho	hō	jits-	sō
All	purposes	true	aspect

b. Elaborating on it by describing its mutually dependent aspects.

所	謂	諸	法
sho	i	sho	hō
Here	are	all	purposes

如	是	相,	如	是	性,	如	是	體,
nyo	ze	sō	nyo	ze	shō	nyo	ze	tai
as	it-is	appearance	as	it is	nature	as	it is	essence

如	是	力,	如	是	作,	如	是	因
nyo	ze	riki	nyo	ze	sa	nyo	ze	in
as	it is	power	as	it is	force	as	it is	cause

如	是	緣,	如	是	果,	如	是	報
nyo	ze	en	nyo	ze	ka	nyo	ze	hō
as	it is	condition	as	it is	effect	as	it is	reward

如	是	本	末	究	竟	等。
nyo	ze	hon	mats-	ku	kyō	tō
as	it is	beginning	end	ultimately	equal	

“The transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes - These are the mutually dependent aspects found in these purposes:

Just as-it-is, being an outer appearance,  
 Just as-it-is, being an inner nature,  
 Just as-it-is, being an existential reality,  
 Just as-it-is, being a spiritual power,  
 Just as-it-is, being a force with karmic influence,  
 Just as-it-is, being an immediate cause,  
 Just as-it-is, being a sustaining condition,  
 Just as-it-is, being an immediate effect,  
 Just as-it-is, being a final reward, and  
 Just as-it-is, being a perfect consistency from beginning to end.”

## **Part #3:**

**The conclusion to the first section of prose:  
On the transcendental meaning of  
the ten mutually dependent aspects  
found in all of life's purposes**

**From Volume 3 of  
The Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra  
(C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句)**



## Part #3: The conclusion to the first section of prose; On the meaning of the ten mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes

### Introduction

In Zhìyǐ's commentary On the Words and Passages of the Lotus Sūtra (C. Fahuá Wénjù, J. Hokke Mongu, 法華文句), the 'ten mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes' (S. *daśāṅgaḥ yathātatham*, 十如是) are explained in four parts:

1. First he explained various erroneous understandings of these ten mutually dependent aspects that were made by earlier interpreters.
2. He then explained how 'the nine mutually dependent aspects' described in Volume 32 of The Commentary on the Longer Version of the Sūtra About the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramita Upadeśa, 大智度論) attributed to Nāgārjuna<sup>2</sup> and the interpretation of them by Dharmatrāta<sup>36</sup> led Kumārajīva<sup>1</sup> to present 'the ten aspects' in his translation of The Lotus Sūtra, rather than the five found in the sūtra's earlier versions.
3. Next he offered a correct explanation of these ten mutually dependent aspects in terms of:
  - a. The ten spheres of life's purpose
  - b. The sphere of enlightenment
  - c. The separation and integration of these nine spheres and the sphere of enlightenment
  - d. One's own spiritual standing, or capacity
4. Finally he explained these ten mutually dependent aspects as an integral part of the inconceivable sphere of life's purpose (S. *dharma dhātu*, 法界), the ultimate object of meditation in his school. This explanation of the ten mutually dependent aspects in the inconceivable sphere of life's purpose reveals the principle of 'the mutual possession of the ten spheres of life's purpose' (S. *daśa dhātu anyonya aśritatva*, C. *shíjiè hùjù*, J. *jikkai gogu*, 十界互具). This hierarchy of ten spheres includes:
  - a. The six afflicted destinies of sentient existence (the sphere of desire) that span from the sufferings found in the depths of hell to the bliss found in the highest heavens.
    1. Hell - attachment to unpleasant feelings (hatred)
    2. Hunger - attachment to pleasant feelings (greed)
    3. Brutality - attachment to feelings of selfish disinterest (delusions)
    4. Competition - managing unpleasant feelings (pride and jealousy)
    5. Human, social interaction - managing feelings of selfish disinterest (reasoning and doubt)
    6. The contentment of heaven - managing pleasant feelings (belief in something greater)
  - b. The two lesser vehicles of spiritual awakening for those who seek freedom from affliction in their own lives
    7. Students of life's purpose seeking freedom from affliction through the words of others
    8. Those awakened to and freed from the afflicted nature of sentient existence in their own lives
  - c. The greater vehicle of the bodhisattva, awakening to a greater sense of life's purpose
    9. Those who make a transcendental vow to free all sentient beings from affliction
  - d. The one universal vehicle that pervades all the others; the grace of the Buddha's spiritual life:
    10. The knowledge and vision of the Buddha seamlessly integrates all of these spheres, creating a pure (unafflicted) land of enlightenment through the fulfillment of a transcendental vow and then entering into the ultimate spiritual freedom (*parinirvāṇa*, 般涅槃). Through the single moment (J. *ichinen*, 一念) of this timeless transcendental vow, all of the mutually dependent aspects that are found in these ten spheres of life's purpose (J. *sanzen*, 三千) interpenetrate one another and become inseparable in each and every thought.

After this explanation from Zhìyǐ's commentary On the Words and Passages of The Lotus Sūtra, nine appendixes will be provided with English translations of commentaries from other sources that shed further light on this chapter's first section of prose and the origin and deeper meaning of its teaching about these 'ten mutually dependent aspects' found in all ten spheres of life's purpose'.



## Part #3: The conclusion to the first section of prose; On the meaning of the ten mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes

### An outline of the commentary on 'the ten aspects' from volume 3 of Zhìyǐ's 'Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra'

1. *Various erroneous understandings about the ten mutually dependent aspects*
  - a. Separation of these ten aspects into provisional and transcendental aspects, as taught by Fǎyún, (法雲, 467-529) at the Monastery 'House of Light' (Guāngzhái Sì, 光宅寺)
  - b. These ten aspects understood only in terms of the three vehicles of spiritual awakening (the provisional knowledge), as taught by the Master Fǎyáo (法瑤)
  - c. These ten aspects understood only in terms of enlightenment (the transcendental knowledge), as taught by the Master Xuánchàng (玄暢)
2. *The ten mutually dependent aspects* from Volume 32 of The Commentary on the Longer Version of The Sūtra About the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramita Upadeśa, 大智度論) attributed to Nāgārjuna<sup>2</sup> and Dharmatrāta's<sup>25</sup> interpretation of them, which is said to serve as the source for Kumārajīva's translation of The Lotus Sūtra having ten aspects rather than five, as found in earlier versions of it
3. *A correct explanation of these ten mutually dependent aspects*
  - a. Briefly indicating the provisional and transcendental knowledge together
  - b. The ten aspects that elaborate on this knowledge that is both provisional and transcendental:
    1. An explanation of the ten mutually dependent aspects - *the outline*
      - a. In terms of all ten spheres of life's purpose
      - b. In terms of the sphere of enlightenment
      - c. In terms of their separation into many & integration into one
      - d. In terms of one's spiritual standing
    2. An explanation of the ten mutually dependent aspects - *the elaboration*
      - a. In terms of all ten spheres of life's purpose
      - b. In terms of the sphere of enlightenment
      - c. In terms of their separation into many & integration into one
      - d. In terms of one's spiritual standing
4. *The inconceivable sphere of life's purpose* (S. dharma dhātu, 法界) *as an object of meditation*

## Part #3: The conclusion to the first section of prose; On the meaning of the ten mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes

The text of Zhìyǐ's commentary on these ten aspects  
From volume 3 of Zhìyǐ's 'Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra'

Beginning with the words "**the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes ...**" (J. shohō jissō, 諸法實相), there is a reference to the very deep object of meditation called 'the transcendental sphere of life's purpose' (S. dharma dhātu, 法界). Because it is inconceivable, it is inexpressible.

### 1. *There were three erroneous understandings of these ten mutually dependent aspects:*

- a. The separation of these ten into provisional and transcendental aspects
- b. On the ten mutually dependent aspects only being about the three vehicles of spiritual awakening (the object of provisional knowledge)
- c. On these ten aspects only being in terms of enlightenment (the object of transcendental knowledge)

#### a. The separation of these ten into provisional and transcendental aspects

- \* In volume two of his Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra (法華經義記), Fǎyún at the Monastery 'House of Light' (C. Guāngzhái Sì, 光宅寺)<sup>2</sup> said the following about the meaning in **all of life's purposes** (S. sarva dharma, J. shohō, 諸法):

"The discussion of this in the sūtra begins with a single passage that expresses the object of this dual knowledge, with 'life's purposes' being a reference to the object of provisional knowledge."

Because there are three mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes and they are all three-fold<sup>20</sup> and not just one, the sūtra speaks here about 'all of life's purposes'. In these three different aspects, the teachings about awakening to the true nature of life's purposes are most clearly revealed. In adapting to the capacities of different audiences, there are doctrines for people with three different kinds of (higher, intermediate and lower) capacity for understanding this. Because of this, it is understood that 'the three aspects that are three-fold' is a reference to the provisional knowledge.

- \* His commentary refers to **the transcendental meaning of their mutually dependent aspects** (S. tattvasya lakṣaṇa, J. jissō, 實相) as the object of transcendental knowledge.

Because the universal dialectical principle is beyond any falsehood or illusion, there is said to be 'the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects'.

Everywhere in this universal principle there is a four-fold unification (四一).

According to Fǎyún and other earlier interpreters, these were:

1. The unification of the person (人一); the capacity
2. The unification of the doctrine (教一); the teaching
3. The unification of the cause (因一); the cultivation
4. The unification of the effect (果一); the realization

Because there is the one universal dialectical principle (一理) that is their source and foundation, there is said to be the transcendental knowledge. Within this principle, there are the nine passages in the sūtra that further describe its mutually dependent aspects and help explain (flesh out) its dual (provisional & transcendental) nature.

- a. According to the explanation from Fāyún<sup>2</sup> at the Monastery ‘House of Light’, the first five passages described *the object of provisional knowledge*:
  1. **Just as-it-is, being an outer appearance** (J. nyoze sō, 如是相) referred to the verbally expressed doctrines of the three vehicles of spiritual awakening. Each of them is seen and heard and so they are distinguished from the others.
  2. **Just as-it-is, being an inner nature** (J. nyoze shō, 如是性) referred to the moral natures of these three vehicles that were unalterably different.
  3. **Just as-it-is, being an existential reality** (J. nyoze tai, 如是體) referred to the doctrines of these three vehicles each having its own essential nature. For example, the essence of the bodhisattva doctrine is practice of the six kinds of spiritual deliverance.<sup>22</sup>
  4. **Just as-it-is, being a spiritual power** (J. nyoze riki, 如是力) referred to the doctrines of these three vehicles each employing powers that teach and guide sentient beings.
  5. **Just as-it-is, being a force with karmic influence** (J. nyoze sa, 如是作) referred to these doctrines of the three vehicles each have a spiritually transforming impact on the people who accept and follow them.
- b. Next there is an elaboration on *the object of transcendental knowledge*. Although transcendental knowledge is not divided up into parts, the object of this transcendental knowledge is endowed with a fourfold unity, just like the fourfold unity that is found in elaboration of the universal dialectical principle.
  6. **Just as-it-is, being an immediate cause** (J. nyoze in, 如因): With the object being an immediate cause for the producing of transcendental understanding, there is the sought-after effect of a myriad good works.
  7. **Just as-it-is, being a sustaining condition** (J. nyoze en, 如是緣): With it ever reinforcing the inspiration of the transcendental knowledge, there is its sustaining condition.
  8. **Just as-it-is, being an immediate effect** (J. nyoze ka, 如是果): In directly causing that hoped for, there is its immediate effect.
  9. **Just as-it-is, being a final reward** (J. nyoze hō, 如是報). With its effect arising as the retribution for all the causes that have been made, there is its final reward.

These are said to be interpreted here as the unity of the cause, doctrine, effect and person, respectively. See pages 274-291 for the elaboration of this teaching about the four kinds of unity.
- c. The last is *a conclusion about the object of knowledge that is both provisional and transcendental*
  - 10a. **From Beginning To End** (J. hon matsu, 本末) is a conclusion about *the object of provisional knowledge*:
 

**The Beginning** (J. hon, 本) is a conclusion about its *outer appearance* (J. sō, 相)

**The End** (matsu, 末) is a conclusion on its *application of karmic influence* (J. sa, 作)
  - 10b. **A perfect consistency** (J. kikyō tō, 究竟等) is a conclusion about *the object of transcendental knowledge*.
 

**Perfect** (J. kikyō, 究竟) is a conclusion about its *immediate cause* (J. in, 因)

**Consistency** (J. tō, 等) is a conclusion about its *final reward* (J. hō, 報).

- b. On the ten mutually dependent aspects being only about the three vehicles of spiritual awakening (the object of provisional knowledge):

On this, a master from one of the (seven) Northern Schools (北地師)<sup>2</sup> said:

“The three vehicles of spiritual awakening each have their outer appearance, their inner nature, ... their immediate effect, their final reward and their perfect consistency from beginning to end.”

The Master Fǎyáo (法瑤, later fifth century)<sup>2</sup> said:

“These ten mutually dependent aspects are the applications that reveal knowledge and discernment of the transcendental nature.”

1. **Their outer (objective) appearances** refer to the different manifestations of the three vehicles.
2. **Their inner (subjective) natures** refer to the direct realization of these three.
3. **Their existential realities** refer to their inspiration of the mind.
4. **Their spiritual powers** refer to the stamina & endurance they build in the mind.
5. With these spiritual powers there are the applications of **their forces that have karmic influence**.
6. With there being these applications of its karmic influence, there are **their immediate causes (here and now)**.
7. With there being the interaction between their mutually dependent causes, there are **their sustaining conditions**.
8. The centrifugal power from these conditions produce results, which are **their immediate effects (here and now)**.
9. The retribution for all the causes made are **their final rewards**.
10. Their outer appearances are **the beginning** while their final rewards are **the end**.
  - \* With them all being identical, in the end there is **their perfect consistency**.
  - \* With them all **being just as-they-are**, their phenomena are inseparable.”

- c. On these ten aspects only being in terms of enlightenment (the object of transcendental knowledge): The Master Xuánchàng (玄暢)<sup>2</sup> interpreted these ten mutually dependent aspects only in terms of the sphere of enlightenment.

1. **Its outer (objective) appearance:** The ten spiritual powers<sup>27</sup> of transcendental knowledge each have their own distinct appearances, or signs.
2. **Its inner (subjective) nature:** Each of the roots of spiritual capacity (S. indriya, 根)<sup>32</sup> have their own continuity, and this unchanging continuity is its nature. This is a reference to the power of spiritual capacity in the sphere of enlightenment.
3. **Its existential reality:** The capacities in the subjective natures of sentient beings are not the same and their aspirations (S. chanda, 欲) are different as well. The needs and the attachments of the mind are said to be its existential reality. This is the power of aspiration in the sphere of enlightenment.
4. **Its spiritual power:** This is a different name for resolve. There is neither penetration nor spiritual transformation without it. The vigilant mind stills all disorder, and without resolve there is no serenity. This is a reference to the power of resolve in the sphere of enlightenment.
5. **Its force with karmic influence:** This is a reference to the impacts that have consequences, the power of consequence-producing action (S. karma, 業) in the sphere of enlightenment.

6. **Its immediate cause:** On the noble path there are causes that enables one to attain spiritual freedom (S. nirvāṇa, 涅槃). This is the power by which one is able to abide on the noble path and reach the sphere of enlightenment.
  7. **Its sustaining condition:** This is a reference to the power of past lives in the sphere of enlightenment.
  8. **Its immediate effect:** In making a cause now one will summon a certain effect in the future. This is a reference to the power of the divine eye (foreseeing the effects of causes made) in the sphere of enlightenment.
  9. **Its final reward:** The current reward is based upon all of the causes that have been aspired to and made from long ago. Because the final reward in the sphere of enlightenment is freedom from all affliction, it is said to have the power to eliminate any afflictions that may arise.
  10. **Its beginning** is based on its outer appearance while **its end** is based on its final reward. Upon looking at all the previous aspects, there is the power over right and wrong in all situations in the sphere of enlightenment.
- d. On the fallacies found in these three explanations:  
 The above explanations are not without their similarities. However, none of them perfectly penetrate the principle and their words don't have the full resonance of truth.
1. *The words don't have the resonance of truth:* When the sūtra speaks of **all of life's purposes** (J. shohō, 諸法), what is not included in this? Why limit it to the three vehicles of spiritual awakening, for example?
  2. *The principle is not perfectly penetrated:* When the sūtra speaks of **the transcendental meaning of their mutually dependent aspects** (J. jissō, 實相), what is not included in this? And yet there was an explanation that (for example) only the cause was transcendental. When the immediate effect and the final reward were explained as being transcendental, they were said to only be so in the sphere of enlightenment, not in the other nine spheres of life's purpose.
- In these explanations, enlightenment was without any provisional knowledge and provisional knowledge was only found in the three vehicles of spiritual awakening. These three vehicles, it followed, were without any transcendental knowledge.
- \* If *the three vehicles* were only found in the first five aspects, it would follow that provisional knowledge was incomplete and lacking in transcendental knowledge.
  - \* If *enlightenment* was only found in the last four aspects, it would be entirely lacking provisional knowledge. The transcendental knowledge would also be incomplete and its meaning would not be concerned with the lives of ordinary people.
- It follows that these words explaining **all of life's purposes** are not useful and the explanation of **the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects** is not all encompassing. According to these explanations something could be distinguished that was outside of the transcendental meaning. With there being errors in these explanations such as this, they are really of no value at all.



2. Volume Thirty-Two of The Commentary on The Longer Version of The Sūtra About the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Upadeśa, 大智度論) attributed to Nāgārjuna<sup>2</sup> says that all of life's purposes are endowed with nine mutually dependent aspects (see Appendix E for a translation):

- \* Each is endowed with *its existential reality* (體).
- \* Each has *a functional purpose* (法), like the eye or the ear. Although they are similarly created by the four elements, the eye has the function of seeing but the ear does not. As another example, fire has the function of heating yet is unable to moisten.
- \* Each has *a power* (力). For example, fire has the power to burn while water has the power to moisten.
- \* Each has *an immediate cause* (因).
- \* Each has *a sustaining condition* (緣).
- \* Each has *an immediate effect* (果).
- \* Each has *an inner (subjective) nature* (性).
- \* Each has *an outer circumference or defined limitation* (限礙).
- \* Each has *skillful means for opening up & penetrating the transcendental nature* (開通方便).

In using Dharmatrāta's (達磨多羅)<sup>36</sup> description of these nine aspects, a few of these ten aspects 'just as they are, being' were then re-translated by Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什) for this chapter of The Lotus Sūtra as follows:<sup>1</sup>

- \* With each of life's purposes having *a function* they are **just as-they are, being forces with karmic influence** (J. nyoze sa, 如是作).
- \* With each having *a defined (outer) limitation*, they are **just as-they are, being outer (objective) appearances** (J. nyoze sō, 如是相).
- \* With each having *an immediate effect* they are **just as-they are, being immediate effects** (nyoze ka, 如是果) & **final rewards** (J. nyoze hō, 如是報).
- \* With each having *skillful ways & means for opening up & penetrating the transcendental nature*, they are **just as-they are, being perfectly consistent from beginning to end** (J. nyoze honmats- kikyō tō, 本末究竟等).

Kumārajīva retained the names for the others and so they may be easily understood.

Here, Zhìyǐ<sup>2</sup> suggests that Kumārajīva's<sup>1</sup> translation of the 'five aspects' as 'ten aspects' finds its inspiration from this excerpt on the 'the nine mutually dependent aspects' in volume thirty-two of The Commentary About the Long Sūtra on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Upadeśa, 大智度論) attributed to Nāgārjuna,<sup>2</sup> and as further clarified by the spiritual science (abhidharma, 阿毘曇) master Dharmatrāta, from The School on the Real Existence of All Purposes (Sarvāstivāda, 一切有部).<sup>36</sup>

See Appendix D for an explanation of the original 'five aspects' that is attributed to Vasubandhu.<sup>2</sup>

See Appendix E for translation of a fuller treatment of this excerpt from the commentary attributed to Nāgārjuna<sup>2</sup> to show how it clarifies 'the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes' (S. sarva dharma tattvasya lakṣaṇam, C. zhūfǎ shíxiāng, J. shohō jissō, 諸法實相). This provides insight into how and why it became the source for 'the ten mutually dependent aspects' as found in Kumārajīva's translation of the second chapter of The Lotus Sūtra.

- \* The Chinese translation of the commentary attributed to Nāgārjuna was said to have been made by Kumārajīva from c. 402 to 406 while his translation of The Lotus Sūtra was made in c. 406.
- \* Dharmatrāta's treatment of these mutually dependent aspects as used by Kumārajīva appears to come from 'Chapter One, On the Spheres of the Mind' (心論界品第一) in volume one of his 'Heart of the Spiritual Science' (Saṃyukta Abhidharma Hṛdaya Śāstra, 雜阿毘曇心論, Taishō 1552). This discourse was translated unto Chinese by Saṅghavarman and others in eleven volumes between 365 to 435.
- \* Here in volume three of his Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra, Zhìyǐ cites the listing of the nine mutually dependent aspects as being in volume 31 of The Commentary on the Longer Version of the Sūtra About the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment, but in the extant version of the latter work (as found in Taishō 25, Opus 1509, Page 298, Lines C06 to C13), it is found in Volume 32.

### 3. The Correct Interpretation of these Ten Aspects:

Now we will clarify this object of knowledge in two parts:

- a. *First there is one passage that briefly indicates the object of provisional and transcendental knowledge together.* As the words of the sūtra say:

諸	法	實	相
sho	hō	jits-	sō
All	purposes	true	aspect

“The transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life’s purposes.”

- b. Then there are the ten passages that elaborate on the mutually dependent aspects being both provisional and transcendental:

所	謂	諸	法
sho	i	sho	hō
Here	are	all	purposes

如	是	相,	如	是	性,	如	是	體,
nyo	ze	sō	nyo	ze	shō	nyo	ze	tai
as	it-is	appearance	as	it is	nature	as	it is	essence

如	是	力,	如	是	作,	如	是	因
nyo	ze	riki	nyo	ze	sa	nyo	ze	in
as	it is	power	as	it is	force	as	it is	cause

如	是	緣,	如	是	果,	如	是	報
nyo	ze	en	nyo	ze	ka	nyo	ze	hō
as	it is	condition	as	it is	effect	as	it is	reward

如	是	本	末	究	竟	等。
nyo	ze	hon	mats-	ku	kyō	tō
as	it is	beginning	end	ultimately	equal	

“These are the mutually dependent aspects found in these purposes:

Just as-it-is, being an outer appearance,  
 Just as-it-is, being an inner nature,  
 Just as-it-is, being an existential reality,  
 Just as-it-is, being a spiritual power,  
 Just as-it-is, being a force with karmic influence,  
 Just as-it-is, being an immediate cause,  
 Just as-it-is, being a sustaining condition,  
 Just as-it-is, being an immediate effect,  
 Just as-it-is, being a final reward, and  
 Just as-it-is, being a perfect consistency from beginning to end.”

We will now make four explanations of these ten mutually dependent aspects:

- a. In terms of the ten spheres of life's purpose
- b. In terms of the sphere of enlightenment
- c. In terms of their separation and integration
- d. In terms of one's own spiritual standing

First, we will briefly outline this and then we will elaborate on it.

1. **In outlining this explanation of the transcendental nature in these ten mutually dependent aspects:**

- a. This second chapter of the sūtra speaks of **all of life's purposes** (J. shohō, 諸法), and so we use *the ten spheres of life's purpose* to explain it.
- b. It also says **the Buddha has realized the ultimate nature of life's purpose that is most rare and difficult to understand** (J. buts-sho jōju dai ichi ke u nange shi hō, 佛所成就第一希有難解之法). And so we use *the sphere of enlightenment* to explain it.
- c. Later in the verse of lines 34a-b of this chapter it says:

“No more, no more! There is no use in explaining this further.

The purpose that I have realized is sublime and unfathomable.”

Therefore, we use *the separation and integration* of enlightenment and the other spheres of life's purpose to explain it.

1. Although *ordinary people on the six paths in the sphere of desire* are endowed with all these spheres and aspects, the confusion of their feelings separate them from the transcendental nature of life's purpose.
2. Although *those on the two lesser vehicles* are endowed with them, they only seek the emancipation found in the transcendental nature through detachment from life's purpose.
3. Although *the bodhisattvas* are endowed with them, their illumination of this transcendental nature is not full and so it is said to be incomplete.
- d. The chapter also speaks of that which **can only be fathomed between the Buddhas** (J. yui butsu yo butsu nainō kujin, 唯佛與佛乃能究盡) and so we use *one's own spiritual standing* to explain the transcendental nature of life's purpose and its ten mutually dependent aspects.

2. **In elaborating on this explanation:**

- a. ***These ten mutually dependent aspects in terms of the ten spheres of life's purpose:***  
The ten spheres of life's purpose are the six paths of ordinary people and the four of those who are noble. Although the sphere of life's purpose is measureless, the count of its realms does not really go beyond these ten. Although there are many branches found within each of these different spheres of its purpose, they really do not go beyond these ten mutually dependent aspects. For example, the site of hell is endowed with an outer (objective) appearance, an inner (subjective) nature and a consistency from beginning to end. It is further endowed with brutality and its outer appearance and inner nature from beginning to end. It is also endowed with enlightenment and its outer appearance and inner nature from beginning to end. There are no exceptions. Because of this, volume seven of Kātyāyanīputra's Commentary on the Spiritual Science (Abhidharma Mahā Vibhāṣa Śāstra, 阿毘曇毘婆沙論) says that the path of hell influences those who are in heaven. This is just a single example.



The nine other spheres of life's purpose are also like this. One must know that each and every one of these spheres is endowed with the nine others and their ten mutually dependent aspects.

- \* When one illuminates one's own standing in the ten spheres of life's purpose and their ten mutually dependent aspects, it is called *provisional knowledge*.
- \* When one illuminates one's own standing in the sphere of enlightenment with its ten mutually dependent aspects, it is called *transcendental knowledge*.
- \* Within the one universal sphere of life's purpose there are limitless mutually dependent aspects and within the limitless aspects there is one transcendental meaning. Because of this it is said to be *inconceivable*.

*Question:* In his Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra (法華經義記), Fāyún at the Monastery 'House of Light'<sup>2</sup> explained the six lower paths, the three vehicles of spiritual awakening and the first five of the ten mutually dependent aspects as the object of provisional knowledge, and the sphere of enlightenment and the last four mutually dependent aspects as the object of transcendental knowledge. It was necessary for him to divide up and distinguish all these different spheres and aspects like this in order to explain them. But then why does the sūtra say 'No more, no more, it is beyond words'?

*Answer:* It is because the one (unity) comes from the limitless (diversity).

- \* Although *ordinary people on the six paths* are endowed with the transcendental principle, they are separated from it because of their confused feelings.
- \* Although *those of the two lesser vehicles* are endowed with it, they are detached from it because they seek emancipation from it.
- \* Although *bodhisattvas* are endowed with it, their illumination is incomplete and not said to be comprehensive.

Only the penetrating discernment of The One Who Has Descended Into This World is completely perfect horizontally and vertically (in breadth and depth). If one only sees it completely for oneself without getting anyone else to see it, it will be impossible to express it and so it will be said "no more, no more, it is beyond words." This was explained in 'The Profound Meaning of The Lotus Sūtra' (法華玄義) and so we will not narrate on it further here.

b. *The ten mutually dependent aspects in terms of the sphere of enlightenment:*

1. The sphere of enlightenment is not an outer (objective) appearance yet it is not without one. Because of this, here the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being an outer appearance** (S. yal-lakṣaṇa, J. nyoze sō, 如是相). This is a reference to all the countless virtues that constitute the *conditional cause of enlightenment* (S. pratyaya hetu, 緣因佛性).<sup>64</sup> In illustrating this, the third chapter of this sūtra On the Parable of the Burning House says 'the cart is adorned with many treasures.'
2. The sphere of enlightenment is not an inner (subjective) nature yet it is not without one. Because of this, the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being an inner nature** (S. yā dṛśa, J. nyoze shō, 如是性). This is a reference to all the knowledge and discernment that constitutes the *revealing cause of enlightenment* (S. jñāpaka hetu, 了因佛性).<sup>64</sup> This is illustrated in the third chapter when it says 'there is a great white ox pulling the cart.'
3. The sphere of enlightenment is not an existential reality yet it is not without one. Because of this, the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being an existential reality**

- (S. yat svabhāva, J. nyoze tai, 如是體).<sup>64</sup> This is the transcendental meaning of the dialectical principle found in the mutually dependent aspects of life's purpose that is the *primary cause of enlightenment* (S. samyak hetu, 正因佛性). On this, the third chapter says 'its cart is lofty in height and broad in width.'
4. The sphere of enlightenment is not a power yet it is not without one. Because of this, the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being a spiritual power** (S. bala, J. nyoze riki, 如是力). This refers the power of mercy and loving kindness (maitrī, 慈) found in the virtuous capacities of the spiritually awakened mind (S. bodhicitta, 菩提心). In this, the third chapter says 'and above it is spread a great canopy.'
  5. The sphere of enlightenment is not a force with karmic influence yet it is not without a force with karmic influence. Because of this, the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being a force with karmic influence** (S. kriyā, J. nyoze sa, 如是作). This is a reference to spiritual merit and the spontaneous use of its transformative influence. On this, the third chapter says 'it is quick like the wind.'
  6. The sphere of enlightenment is not a cause yet it is not without a cause. Because of this, the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being an immediate cause** (S. hetu, J. nyoze in, 如是因) (here and now). This refers to the forty-one stages on the bodhisattva path.<sup>22</sup> On this, the third chapter says 'the bejeweled cart is a great vehicle that travels in all four directions (of the horizon).'
  7. The sphere of enlightenment is not a condition yet it is not without a condition. Because of this, the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being a sustaining condition** (S. ālambana) pratyaya, J. nyoze en, 如是緣).<sup>37</sup> This refers to the many different practices that support and reinforce enlightenment. On this, the third chapter says 'and there are many who serve and protect it.'
  8. The sphere of enlightenment is not an effect yet it is not without an effect. Because of this, it says it is **just as-it is, being an immediate effect** (S. phala, J. nyoze ka, 如是果) (here and now). This refers to the sublime awakening (S. anuttara samyak sambodhi, 妙覺) that is summoned from the perfect cause. And so the third chapter says 'it reaches straight to the place where there is the realization of perfect enlightenment (S. bodhi maṇḍa, 道場).'
  9. The sphere of enlightenment is not a reward and yet it is not without a reward. Because of this, the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being a final reward** (S. vipāka, nyoze hō, 如是報). This refers to the greatness of spiritual freedom (S. mahā parinirvāṇa, 大般涅槃). The third chapter illustrates it as 'attaining the reward of grace that is infinite and pure of any affliction.'
  10. The fruit of enlightenment is not a beginning or an end and yet it is said to have a beginning and an end. And so the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being from beginning to end** (S. pūrvāparānta, nyoze hon matsu, 如是本末). At the beginning there is the outer appearance of enlightenment while at the end there is the reward of its grace. This is *the provisional knowledge of one's own practice*. This fruit of enlightenment is not a consistency yet not without a consistency, and so the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being a perfect consistency** (S. niṣṭhā samatva, J. nyoze ... kikyō tō, 如是 ... 究竟等). This refers to the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes (S. sarva dharma tattvasya lakṣaṇa, C. zhūfǎ shíxiāng, J. shohō jissō, 諸法實相). Because of this, this passage is said to be about this meaning, which is *the transcendental knowledge of one's own practice*.

With regards to this transcendental knowledge in terms of one's own practice:

- \* Because it is transcendental yet provisional, the sūtra speaks of it having a beginning and an end.
- \* Because it is provisional yet transcendental, the sūtra speaks of it ever having a perfect consistency.

The practice of The One Who Has Descended Into This World is both provisional and transcendental and the loftiest of all. From its supreme outer appearance to its supreme effect and final reward of grace, there is nothing more horizontally broad or vertically deep. In speaking about **the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes** (shohō jissō, 諸法實相), the sūtra speaks of the transcendental meaning of its outer (objective) appearance, or aspect (S. lakṣaṇa, J. sō, 相), but it also refers to the transcendental meaning of its inner (subjective) nature, its existential reality, its spiritual power, etc. up to its perfect consistency from beginning to end. In summarizing it, the sūtra refers to its appearance (aspect), yet it really refers here to all ten aspects. The One Who Has Descended Into This World illuminates them all horizontally and vertically, just as one clearly observes a fruit that is in the palm of one's hand.

- \* The eyes of *ordinary people on the six paths* are blind and do not see it at all.
- \* The eyes of *those on the two lesser vehicles* are tiny and barely make it out.
- \* *Bodhisattvas* see it in the darkness and the haze, but it is like the darkness before the dawn.

It is really impossible to fully express this. This is what is meant when the Buddha says in this chapter 'no more, no more, it is beyond words'.

c. *In terms of separation and integration of enlightenment with the other nine spheres of life's purpose:*

- \* When there is observation of these ten spheres of life's purpose and their ten mutually dependent aspects in the enlightened mind, everywhere there is its supreme outer appearance, and everywhere there is its supreme fruit and final reward of grace, yet there is only one sphere of enlightenment. It is like an ocean that everywhere contains the waters from many different rivers, and a single track that is shared by thousands of different kinds of carts. This describes the dual (provisional and transcendental) knowledge in terms of *one's own practice* in the sphere of enlightenment.
- \* When following the thoughts of others, there are the nine spheres of life's purpose with all their different outer (objective) appearances, inner (subjective) natures and other mutually dependent aspects. This describes the dual (provisional and transcendental) knowledge in terms of *the influence of others*.
- \* Although the influence of others is transcendental, its mutually dependent aspects are bundled together as that which is provisional. Although one's own practice is provisional, its aspects are bundled together as that which is transcendental. This describes the dual knowledge found in combining one's own practice and the influence of others.
- \* Following the words & thoughts of others is based on separating enlightenment from the other nine spheres while following one's own words & thoughts is based on their integration.
- \* Through illuminating their horizontal breadth and their vertical depth, there is mastery of this separation and integration.

- \* They are separated into countless aspects. Although these aspects are countless, they are one.
- \* They are integrated into one aspect. Although they are one, they are countless.
- \* Although they are countless and they are one, they are neither countless nor one.
- \* Although they are neither one nor countless, they are one and they are countless.

**This can only be fathomed between the Buddhas** (J. yui butsu yo butsu nainō kujin, 唯佛與佛乃能究盡).

- \* *Ordinary people on the six lower paths* malign and ridicule this teaching without faith.
- \* *Those on the two lesser vehicles* do not accept it because they are confused and tormented.
- \* *Bodhisattvas* have not yet clarified it completely because of their flaws and limitations.

Because of this the sūtra says 'no more, no more, it is beyond words'.

d. *In terms of one's spiritual standing* (S. avasthā, 位):

1. In saying it is **just as-it is, being an outer appearance** (J. nyoze sō, 如是相), all sentient beings share in the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes. This meaning is the very source and foundation for their existence (in this world) and, because of this, they all express the different (objective) forms and appearances found in the embryonic nature of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (S. tathāgata garbha, 如來藏).<sup>87</sup>
2. In saying it is **just as-it is, being an inner nature** (J. nyoze shō, 如是性), there is all the (subjective) merit, virtue, knowledge and discernment that constitutes the ultimate meaning of transcendence and the nature of emptiness found in self-centered existence.
3. In saying it is **just as-it is, being an existential reality** (J. nyoze tai, 如是體), there is the dialectical principle of the middle way found in the transcendental nature of life's purpose.

These are the three qualities (S. tri guṇa, 三德) of the sphere of enlightenment that everywhere pervade the various ranks of spiritual standing found in the ten spheres of life's purpose.

4. & 5. When one polishes these three qualities, one enters into the ten facets of faith.<sup>39</sup> This is called **just as-it is, being a spiritual power** (J. nyoze riki, 如是力) and **just as-it is, being a force with karmic influence** (J. nyoze sa, 如是作).
6. & 7. Upon entering into the forty-one stages on the bodhisattva path,<sup>23</sup> it is **just as-it is, being an immediate cause** (J. nyoze in, 如因) and **just as-it is, being a sustaining condition** (J. nyoze en, 如緣).
8. & 9. Upon becoming fully grounded<sup>23D</sup> in enlightenment to the transcendental nature of life's purpose, it is **just as-it is, being an immediate effect** (J. nyoze ka, 如是果) and **just as-it is, being a final reward** (J. nyoze hō, 如是報).
10. The first three are **its beginning** (J. hon, 本) while the last three are **its end** (J. matsu, 末). From beginning to end they are similarly endowed with the three qualities of enlightenment. And so the sūtra says it is **just as-it is, being a perfect consistency** (J. nyoze ... kikyō yō, 如是 ... 究竟等).

From the very first rank these three qualities pervade:

- \* The good & the evil
- \* The worthy & the noble
- \* The small & the great
- \* The first attainment of enlightenment & its everlasting nature
- \* Although one is evil, one does succumb to it.
- \* Although one is good, one does not count one's virtues.
- \* Although one is worthy, one is not conceited.
- \* Although one is noble, one is not condescending.
- \* Although one is small, one is not narrow.
- \* Although one is great, one is not overbearing.
- \* Although there is the first attainment of enlightenment, it is not new.
- \* Although it is eternal, it is not old.

And so it is inconceivable and inexpressible. 'No more, no more, it is beyond words.'

And through there being these three qualities in the sphere of enlightenment, there is its '**perfect consistency**' (J. kikyō tō, 究竟等). The provisional and transcendental knowledge of the mutually dependent aspects and natures found in the ten spheres of life's purpose are everywhere separated apart and integrated together. When they are all divided up and distinguished, one observes their transcendental nature with a greatness of discernment that is endowed with equanimity and impartiality, and so everywhere it is said that there is this 'perfect consistency'.

- a. When there is affliction (S. sa āsava, 有漏) in this sphere, there are the mutually dependent aspects and natures found in *the six lower, ordinary spheres* (confined to the sphere of desire). This is called *the truth of this world* (S. laukika satya, 世諦).
- b. When one is emancipated from the afflictions in this sphere, there are the mutually dependent aspects and natures found on *the two lesser vehicles*. This is called *the absolute truth* (S. paramārtha satya, 真諦) beyond this world.
- c. In reaching beyond all affliction and all emancipations from affliction, there are the aspects and natures of the *bodhisattvas & Buddhas*. This is *the truth of the dialectical principle of the middle way* (S. madhyāma pratipad, 中道) *and its ultimate transcendental meaning* (S. paramārtha satya, 第一義諦).
  - \* With this transcendental discernment being consistent with 'conventional' or relative truth (S. saṃvṛti satya, 俗諦), there is no affliction in this relative truth.
  - \* With it being consistent with the absolute truth (S. paramārtha satya, 真諦), it is beyond all kinds of affliction and emancipation from affliction.
  - \* In being beyond all affliction and emancipation from affliction, one is not without these afflictions and emancipations but there is equanimity of mind about them.

When one illuminates both the provisional and the transcendental knowledge:

- \* With there being that which is provisional, so there is that which is transcendental.
- \* With there being that which is transcendental, so there is that which is provisional.

Although they are two, they are inseparable. This is also their 'perfect consistency'.

- \* And through provisional and transcendental knowledge of the seven ways & means<sup>21</sup> (found on the lesser vehicle of spiritual awakening) one is unable to attain the non-dual knowledge that is consistent with the object of non-duality.



- \* Only through the non-dual knowledge of the Buddhas is there consistency with the object that is beyond any duality and said to have ‘perfect consistency’ (J. kikyō tō, 究竟等).

And now, in stirring up and arousing the spiritual capacities found in the greater vehicle doctrine, we do not further emphasize all the differences found between the mutually dependent aspects & natures in the nine other spheres of life’s purpose. We simply teach that all of these mutually dependent aspects and natures everywhere enter into the sphere of enlightenment. Long ago this doctrine was not taught, and people reasoned that events which happened long ago were not consistent with that which was happening now. Now this doctrine is taught and we recognize that events happening now *are* consistent with that which happened long ago. Because of this, there is said to be this ‘perfect consistency’.

- \* First there is consistency in terms of afflictions and emancipations from them.

- \* Next there is consistency in terms of one’s own personal capacity, and

- \* Finally, there is consistency in terms of the (perfect unity of the) doctrine.

We have taught about this very broadly, as we cannot deal with it completely here.

#### 4. *The Inconceivable Sphere:*

When discussing that which is inconceivable and beyond any words, volume seventy-nine of The Commentary on the Longer Sūtra About Delivering Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Upadeśa, 大智度論) says:

“That which is inconceivable is also said to be undeterminable, beyond all the machinations of the discursive mind and all the ways of words and language. Because one cannot really cultivate it or attain it this way, it is said to be ‘inconceivable’ (S. acintya, 不可思議).

To illustrate that which is inconceivable, volume fourteen of this Commentary says:

“One does not cultivate equanimity by just transcending the objects of form. Only when one observes the different objects of form with perfect impartiality is there the ability to grasp the nature of equanimity found in the teachings about the greater vehicle.”

It is like what happens to objects shining in the darkness when they are subjected to light. When one no longer sees them, one reasons that they are different from what they were in the darkness. This is illustrated by what happens to the light of the moon when the sun rises. One no longer sees it or any of the stars and planets shining in the darkness. They may be invisible but they are still there and they have not gone anywhere. Objects seen in the darkness are like this when subjected to light. Like this, the phenomena of life & death (S. saṃsāra 生死) are integrated with the noble path. There is really no noble path that is without this existential reality of life & death. They are inseparable. With enlightenment, transcendence is already transcended and deliverance is already delivered. Everywhere this is inconceivable. There are many examples of this idea in the sūtras and discourses.

Things such as these were like ‘the four inconceivable natures’ described in the sūtras of the traditional teachings (S. Āgamas, 阿含). In these sūtras, questions were posed to the Buddha about the inconceivable natures of sentient beings, the world, the forces of nature (dragons and the like) & the Buddha. Because these questions could not really be answered, when asked about them the Buddha just remained silent. These questions included:

- \* Where do sentient beings come from and to what place do they go?
- \* Are they born from and do they return back to the bowels of the earth?
- \* Is the world with or without bounds (in space) and will it end (in time) or will it not?
- \* Who is it that created the gods, the dragons, human beings and demonic forces?

In The Long Chapter (Mahā Varga, 大品) in volume sixteen of the Connected Teachings (Samyukta Āgama, 雜阿含) there is a scripture ('On Reflections About This World', 世間思惟) that says:

"In the past there was a gentleman at the Royal City (S. Rājagṛha, 王舍城) in meditation beside a lotus pond near the Squirrel Sanctuary (S. Karandaka, 拘絺羅池), deliberating on whether the world was with or without bounds. While pondering this, he saw four divisions of soldiers entered into the fibers of the lotus roots in the pond. Surprised upon seeing this, he asked himself 'am I going mad? The world does not have such madness as this.' Upon asking the Buddha about it, the Buddha told him:

'You are not going mad. What you saw really occurred. How can this be? There was a time when the gods (S. devas, 天) & titans (S. asuras, 阿修羅) were arrayed against each other in a great battle.<sup>40</sup> With the gods prevailing, the titans retreated with their four divisions of elephants, horses, chariots and foot soldiers into the roots of lotus plants to hide from the gods. And so, when deliberating on the nature of this world, thinking about whether or not the world has any bounds or whether or not there is any life after entering into spiritual freedom (S. nirvāṇa, 涅槃) is without any beneficial meaning or purpose if it does not lead to the attainment of a holy life (S. brahmācarya, 梵行).'"

*Question:* Does a dragon's rain come from its mouth, its ears, its eyes, its nose or its tongue?

*Answer:* Treasures do not really come from a dragon like this. They only arise from its purpose. Upon reflecting on the nature of good and evil, everywhere the Buddha was able to summon the (compassionate) rain of life's purpose. Through the original vows of his practice, he attained great spiritual powers. From the belly of Mount Sumeru,<sup>47</sup> he summoned the gods with all of their great elemental powers and was able to produce this rain. The sūtra is able to elevate all those on the five lower paths,<sup>40</sup> with each of them realizing that which is inconceivable.

- \* The continuity of *hell* is interrupted.
- \* *Animals* (bound to this world) are able to fly away (and so attain freedom from it).
- \* *The demons of hunger* are able to transform little into much (and so be content).
- \* *People* are able to make fires that burn away the wood (of affliction).
- \* *Gods* are able to spontaneously produce countless fruits and rewards.

These fruits and rewards are among the inconceivable works of the Buddha's spiritual life (S. dharma kāya, 法身). But this only explains that which is inconceivable in terms of the mutually dependent causes and conditions (hetu pratyaya, 因緣) found in the phenomena of sentient existence, and does not even begin to reach into the profound dialectical principle found in the transcendental sphere of life's purpose (S. dharma dhātu, 法界) that is the foundation for its ten mutually dependent aspects (S. daśa yathātatham, 十如是). How can one not believe that it is inconceivable?