

Footnotes

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The Footnotes:

1. Translations of The Lotus Sūtra into Chinese, the order of the chapters in them & the translators: *Three full (and a few partial) translations survive in Chinese:*

Dharmarakṣa's version called The Sūtra on the Blossom of Life's True Purpose (Zhèng Fāhuá Jīng, 正法華經, Taishō 263), is the oldest extant translation, first published in 286 CE. This version most closely follows extant Sanskrit versions, consists of twenty-seven chapters, and in chapter two only describes *five mutually dependent aspects* found in the transcendental meaning of all of life's purposes. Kumārajīva's version, On the Lotus Blossom of Sublime Purpose (Miàofǎ Liánhuá Jīng, 妙法蓮華經, Taishō 262), published in 406, is the one that has stood the test of time as the definitive rendering and one of the great works of world literature. It is noteworthy for its description in chapter two of *ten mutually dependent aspects* that are found in the transcendental meaning of all of life's purposes, but several other differences suggest that otherwise Dharmarakṣa's Sanskrit source text may have been a slightly later version, as it included narratives about prophecies of enlightenment for Devadatta (an evil monk) and the daughter of a Dragon King in chapter eleven On the Vision of the Treasure Tower, three additional metaphors about the transcendental nature in chapter five On Medicinal Plants and a couple of other minor additions not found in Kumārajīva's version. The Kumārajīva text was later amended to make up for some of these differences:

- Instead of adding the story about Devadatta and the daughter of the Dragon King to the latter part of chapter eleven as found in other versions, Dharmamati (達磨摩提), also called Fǎyì (法意), included these stories in a twelfth chapter 'On Devadatta' around 490 CE. This was said to be based on a text brought back from India by Fǎxiǎn (法顯, 337-422) earlier in the fifth century. This caused the 'Kumārajīva text' to have twenty-eight chapters rather than the twenty-seven found in all other versions.
- A verse section was added to The Chapter 'On the Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva Beholding the Cries of This World' (觀世音菩薩普門品) by Jñānagupta in the latter part of the sixth century, by now considered chapter twenty-five of the 'Kumārajīva text'.
- Minor additions at the beginning of chapters eight and ten were added to the 'Kumārajīva text' but not the three additional metaphors about the transcendental nature found in chapter five of the other versions.

The Kumārajīva version also changed the order of the chapters in several ways, most notably placing The Chapter On Entrustment with the Mission (囑累品) directly after chapter 21 'On the Spiritual Power of The One Who Has Descended Into This World' (如來神力品), which concludes the 'Assembly in the Sky' (which began in chapter 11). All other versions of The Lotus Sūtra place this chapter On Entrustment with the Mission at the very end of the sūtra.

Jñānagupta & Dharmagupta published An Annotated Version of The Lotus Sūtra (Tiānpǐn Miàofǎ Liánhuá Jīng, 添品妙法蓮華經, Taishō 264) in 601 CE that:

- Generally used the Kumārajīva translation of the text, including 'the ten mutually dependent aspects' found in chapter two.
- Kept the Devadatta/Dragon Daughter narrative at the end of chapter eleven On the Vision of the Treasure Tower, and so has twenty-seven chapters in all.
- Included Jñānagupta's stanzas of verse in The Chapter 'On the Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva Beholding the Cries of This World' (chapter twenty-four in this version).
- Kept the three additional illustrations of the transcendental nature found in chapter five (not found in Kumārajīva's translation).
- Kept the Chapter 'On Entrustment with the Mission' at the very end of the sūtra.

Small parts of a fourth version also survive from an unknown translator under the transliterated title 'Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra' (薩曇分陀利經, Taishō 265).

Bodhiruci & Ratnamati's translations of a commentary on The Lotus Sūtra attributed to Vasubandhu include portions of additional translations of the sūtra that follow the earlier Sanskrit versions, including *the five mutually dependent aspects* found in chapter two (Taishō 1519 & 1520).

The different order of chapters found in the extant versions:

Sanskrit Versions

- #1 On the Reason for the Teaching (Nidāna Parivartaḥ)
- #2 On Skillfulness in Means (Upāya Kauśalya Parivartaḥ)
- #3 On the Parable (Aupamyā Parivartaḥ) (of the Burning House)
- #4 On Understanding With Determination (Eliminating Doubt & Confusion) (Adhimukti Parivartaḥ)
- #5 On the (Parable About) Medicinal Plants (Oṣadhī Parivartaḥ)
- #6 On Bestowing Prophecies of Enlightenment (Vyākaraṇa Parivartaḥ)
- #7 On Connections From Long Ago (Pūrva Yoga Parivartaḥ)
- #8 On Bestowing Prophecies of Enlightenment for Five Hundred Disciples (Pañca Śata Bhikṣu Vyākaraṇa Parivartaḥ)
- #9 On Bestowing Prophecies of Enlightenment for Ānanda and Others (Ānanda Ādi Vyākaraṇa Parivartaḥ)
- #10 On the Teacher of Life's Purpose (Dharma Bhāṇaka Parivartaḥ)
- #11 On the Perfect Vision of the Treasure Tower (Stūpa Saṃdarśana Parivartaḥ) (includes narratives about the prophecies of enlightenment for Devadatta and the Daughter of the Dragon King)
- #12 On Encouragement to Persevere (Utsāha Parivartaḥ)
- #13 On Bliss in Practice (Sukha Vihāra Parivartaḥ)
- #14 On the Bodhisattvas Rising Up From the Earth (Bodhisattva Pṛthivī Vira Samudgama Parivartaḥ)
- #15 On Measuring the Lifespan of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (Tathāgata Āyus Pramāṇa Parivartaḥ)
- #16 On Distinguishing the Blessings of Merit & Virtue (Puṇya Paryāya Parivartaḥ)
- #17 On the Merits & Virtues of Joyful Acceptance (Anumodanā Puṇya Nirdeśa Parivartaḥ)
- #18 On the Benefits From the Teacher of Life's Purpose (Dharma Bhāṇaka Anuśaṃsā Parivartaḥ)
- #19 On the Bodhisattva 'Always Without Disrespect' (Sadāparibhūta Parivartaḥ)
- #20 On Maintaining the Motivational Power of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (Tathāgata dhāry Abhisamkāra Parivartaḥ)
- #21 On the Prayers That Are Retained (Dhāraṇī Parivartaḥ)
- #22 On the History of the Bodhisattva 'Master of Healing' (Bhaiṣajya Rāja Pūrva Yoga Parivartaḥ)
- #23 On the Bodhisattva 'With the Wondrous Voice' (Gadgada Svāra Parivartaḥ)
- #24 On the Universal Gateway (Samanta Mukha Parivartaḥ)
- #25 On the History of the King 'Beautifully Adorned' (Śubha Vyūha Rāja Pūrva Yoga Parivartaḥ)
- #26 On Encouraging the Inspiration of the Bodhisattva 'Wholly Worthy' (Samantabhadra Utsāhana Parivartaḥ)
- #27 On Entrustment with the Mission (Anuparīdanā Parivartaḥ)

Dharmarakṣa's version 286 CE (正法華經) Taishō 263

- #1 On the Illumination of the Omens (光瑞品第一)
- #2 On Skillfulness in Provisional Knowledge (善權品第二)
- #3 On Responding to the Time (應時品第三)
- #4 On the Bliss of Faith (信樂品第四)
- #5 On the Medicinal Plants (藥草品第五)
- #6 On Bestowing Prophecies for Students of Life's Purpose (授聲聞決品第六)
- #7 On Connections From Long Ago (往古品第七)
- #8 On Bestowing Prophecies for Five Hundred Disciples (授五百弟子決品第八)
- #9 On Bestowing Prophecies for Ānanda and Others (授阿難羅云決品第九)
- #10 On the Master of Medicine Who Has Descended Into This World (藥王如來品第十)
- #11 On the Tower of the Seven Treasures (七寶塔品第十一) (includes the Devadatta narrative)
- #12 On the Encouragement to Persevere (勸說品第十二)
- #13 On the Practice Secured in Bliss (安行品第十三)
- #14 On the Bodhisattvas Rising Up From the Earth (菩薩從地踊出品第十四)
- #15 On Revealing the Lifespan of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (如來現壽品第十五)
- #16 On the Sacred Blessings (御福事品第十六)

- #17 On Encouragement and Support (勸助品第十七)
- #18 On Praising the Teacher of Life's Purpose (歎法師品第十八)
- #19 On the Bodhisattva 'Always Without Disrespect' (常被輕慢品第十九)
- #20 On the Spiritual Powers of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (如來神足行品第二十)
- #21 On the Bodhisattva 'Master of Healing' (藥王菩薩品第二十一)
- #22 On the Bodhisattva 'With the Sublime Roar' (妙吼菩薩品第二十二)
- #23 On the Universal Gateway 'Illuminating the Cries of This World' (光世音普門品第二十三);
This lacks the verse portion of the text
- #24 On the Retention of Prayers (Dhāraṇā) (總持品第二十四)
- #25 On the King 'Most Pure' (淨復淨王品第二十五)
- #26 On the Bliss of the Bodhisattva 'Wholly Worthy' (樂普賢品第二十六)
- #27 On Entrustment with the Mission (囑累品第二十七)
- Kumārajīva's translation 406 CE (妙法蓮華經) Taishō 262
- #1 The Introduction (序品第一)
- #2 On Skillfulness in Ways & Means (方便品第二)
- #3 On the Parable (譬喻品第三) (of the Burning House)
- #4 On Understanding With Faith (信解品第四)
- #5 On the Parable of the Medicinal Plants (藥草喻品第五); without the three additional illustrations of the transcendental nature found in other versions
- #6 On Bestowing Prophecies of Enlightenment (授記品第六)
- #7 On the Parable of the Magic Fortress (化城喻品第七)
- #8 On Bestowing Prophecies of Enlightenment on Five Hundred Disciples (五百弟子受記品第八); additional parts added later to the beginning of the chapter as part of the 'Kumārajīva' text
- #9 On Bestowing Prophecies of Enlightenment on Trainees and Adepts (授學無學人記品第九)
- #10 On the Teacher of Life's Purpose (法師品第十); additional parts added later
- #11 On the Vision of the Treasure Tower (見寶塔品第十一)
- #12 On Devadatta (提婆達多品第十二); inserted as a separate chapter to the 'Kumārajīva' text by Dharmamati (達磨摩提) in c. 490 CE; Dharmamati was also known as Fāyì (法意).
- #13 On Encouraging Perseverance (勸持品第十三)
- #14 On Conduct Secured in Bliss (安樂行品第十四)
- #15 On the Bodhisattvas Rising Up from the Earth (從地踊出品第十五)
- #16 On Measuring the Lifespan of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (如來壽量品第十六)
- #17 On Distinguishing the Merits & Virtues (分別功德品第十七)
- #18 On the Merits & Virtues of Joyful Acceptance (隨喜功德品第十八)
- #19 On the Merits & Virtues of the Teacher of Life's Purpose (法師功德品第十九)
- #20 On the Bodhisattva 'Always Without Disrespect' (常不輕菩薩品第二十)
- #21 On the Spiritual Power of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (如來神力品第二十一)
- #22 On Entrustment with the Mission (囑累品第二十二) (the last chapter in other versions)
- #23 On the History of the Bodhisattva 'Master of Healing' (藥王菩薩本事品第二十三)
- #24 On the Bodhisattva 'With a Wondrous Voice' (妙音菩薩品第二十四)
- #25 On the Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva 'Beholding the Cries of This World' (觀世音菩薩普門品第二十五); verse portions were added later, probably by Jñānagupta, and incorporated as part of the 'Kumārajīva' text
- #26 On Prayers That Are Retained (Dhāraṇīs) (陀羅尼品第二十六)
- #27 On the History of the King 'Beautifully Adorned' (妙莊嚴王本事品第二十七)
- #28 On the Inspiration of the Bodhisattva 'Wholly Worthy' (普賢菩薩勸發品第二十八)
- Dharmagupta and Jñānagupta's Annotated Translation of 601 CE (添品妙法蓮華經), Taishō 264
- #1 Introduction (序品第一)
- #2 On Skillfulness in Ways & Means (方便品第二)

- #3 On the Parable (of the Burning House) (譬喻品第三)
- #4 On Understanding With Faith (信解品第四)
- #5 On the Parable of the Medicinal Plants (藥草喻品第五)
- #6 On Bestowing Prophecies of Enlightenment (授記品第六)
- #7 On the Parable of the Magic Fortress (化城喻品第七)
- #8 On Bestowing Prophecies of Enlightenment on Five Hundred Disciples (五百弟子受記品第八)
- #9 On Bestowing Prophecies of Enlightenment on Trainees and Adepts (授學無學人記品第九)
- #10 On the Teacher of Life's Purpose (法師品第十)
- #11 On the Vision of the Treasure Tower (見寶塔品第十一) (includes the narratives about Devadatta and the Daughter of the Dragon King)
- #12 On Encouraging Perseverance (勸持品第十二)
- #13 On Conduct Secured in Bliss (安樂行品第十三)
- #14 On the Bodhisattvas Rising Up from the Earth (從地踊出品第十四)
- #15 On Measuring the Lifespan of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (如來壽量品第十五)
- #16 On Distinguishing the Merits & Virtues (分別功德品第十六)
- #17 On the Merits & Virtues of Joyful Acceptance (隨喜功德品第十七)
- #18 On the Merits & Virtues of the Teacher of Life's Purpose (法師功德品第十八)
- #19 On the Bodhisattva Never Disparaging (常不輕菩薩品第十九)
- #20 On the Spiritual Power of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (如來神力品第二十)
- #21 On Prayers That Are Retained (陀羅尼品第二十一)
- #22 On the History of the Bodhisattva 'Master of Healing' (藥王菩薩本事品第二十二)
- #23 On the Bodhisattva 'With a Wondrous Voice' (妙音菩薩品第二十三)
- #24 On the Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva 'Beholding the Cries of This World' (觀世音菩薩普門品第二十四)
- #25 On the History of the King 'Beautifully Adorned' (妙莊嚴王本事品第二十五)
- #26 On the Inspiration of the Bodhisattva 'Wholly Worthy' (普賢菩薩勸發品第二十六)
- #27 On Entrustment with the Mission (囑累品第二十七)

On the translators:

- a. Dharmarakṣa (法護, c. 233-311) was born in Dùnhuáng (燉煌) but later settled in Cháng'ān (長安) and Luòyáng (洛陽) during the Western Jin Dynasty (西晉), where he became one of the first prolific translators of Buddhist scriptures in China, translating over 100 extant works, including early versions of The Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra, 正法華經), The Sūtra on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra, 光讚經) and The Sūtra on the Ten Levels of Grounding (Dasa Bhūmika Sūtra, 漸備一切智德經).
- b. Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什, 344-413) was born to a royal family in the small kingdom of Kucha. He developed widespread renown as the most eloquent and knowledgeable of all the Buddhist monks in Central Asia. Sought by the Chinese court he was captured by the Chinese warlord Lǚguāng (呂光) in 383 at the request of the emperor Fujian (苻堅) of the Early Qín Dynasty (苻秦). However, the emperor was overthrown before he could be delivered, so Lǚguāng held him as war booty in the Dùnhuáng (敦煌) area for eighteen years. He was finally captured in 401 by the army of Emperor Yáoxīng (姚興) of the (by then) Later Qín Dynasty (後秦), and brought to the capital at Cháng'ān in 402. His long time as a prisoner enabled him to attain a fluency in Chinese. Once in Cháng'ān, he spent the rest of his life doing translation work at the request of the emperor with an illustrious team of monks, including Dàoshēng (道生), Sēngzhào (僧肇), Dàoróng (道融) and Sēngruì (僧睿). In addition to being one of the most prolific translators of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, Kumārajīva is generally heralded as the most eloquent. In cases where there is more than one version of a scripture, his are almost invariably the ones preferred for reading, recitation and study. His translations may have done more to draw people to Buddhism in China than the work of any other person. Before Kumārajīva, Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures were

fraught with errors of meaning because early translators utilized a precedent-employing system for ‘categorizing meanings’ (C. gé yì, 格義), in which they used Chinese (Confucian and Taoists) concepts to explain the meaning of Indian (Buddhist) ideas. Kumārajīva did not depend on trying to just offer literal word-for-word translations of the Indian source texts or resort to the Indian tendency towards redundancy, the laborious repeating the same phrasing over and over. Rather, he exhibited a remarkable ability to penetrate the true meaning with an economy of words that made them much more readable and understandable for the Chinese. Among his over fifty extant translations are:

- * The Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra, 妙法蓮華經)
- * The Diamond Sūtra (Vajracchedikā Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra, 金剛般若波羅蜜經)
- * The Shorter Amitābha Sūtra (Sukhāvati Vyūha Sūtra, 佛說阿彌陀經)
- * The Sūtra on the Teachings of the Layman ‘Of Spotless Reputation’ (Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra, 維摩詰所說經)
- * Three versions of the Sūtra on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment:
 - * In 8,000 lines (Aṣṭa Sāhasrikā Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra, 小品般若波羅蜜經)
 - * In 25,000 lines (Pañca Viṃśati Sāhasrikā Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra, 摩訶般若波羅蜜多經)
 - * A summary, as The Heart Sūtra (Prajñā Pāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra, 般若波羅蜜多心經)
- * The discourses that established the Dialectical School (Madhyamaka) in India:
 - * The Commentary About the Longer Version of the Sūtra on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Upadeśa, 大智度論).
 - * The Discourse on the Dialectical Principle of the Middle Way (Mūla Madhyamaka Kārikā, 中論)
 - * The Discourse on the Twelve Gateways (Dvādaśa Dvāra Śāstra, 十二門論)
 - * The Discourse in One Hundred Stanzas (Śataka Śāstra, 百論)

In China, the Dialectical School was called ‘The Three Discourses’ School (Sānlùn Zōng, 三論宗) based on the last three discourses cited above, the first two attributed to Nāgārjuna and the last to his disciple Āryadeva. Kumārajīva is usually recognized as the founder of this school in China.

- c. Bodhiruci & Ratnamati (see footnotes 2h.-i.) translated portions of The Lotus Sūtra in their translations of the commentary on it attributed to Vasubandhu. These followed the older Sanskrit (and Dharmarakṣa) versions.
- d. Dharmamati (達磨摩提), also called Fǎyì (法意) was an Indian monk who discovered a text on the narrative about Devadatta brought from India earlier in the fifth century by Fǎxiǎn (法顯, 337-422). He brought this text to Jiànkāng (near modern Nánjīng) where in c. 490 CE he had it inserted it into The Lotus Sūtra as a twelfth chapter of the Kumārajīva text.
- e. Jiānagupta (闍那崛多, c. 523 - 601) traveled from Gandhāra to Cháng’ān where he translated many sūtras, supported by the Suí Dynasty Emperor Wén (隋文帝). He added a section of verse to the prose in the chapter On the Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva Beholding the Cries of This World and assisted Dharmagupta in an annotated translation of the sūtra, completed in 601.
- f. Dharmagupta (達摩笈多, died 619) was from Lāra in north India. He came to Cháng’ān in 590 and, with Jiānagupta, compiled a new version of The Lotus Sūtra c. 601 that sought to reconcile differences between the Kumārajīva & Dharmarakṣa versions. For the most part, this version follows Kumārajīva’s textual translation and Dharmarakṣa’s numbering and ordering of chapters.

2. Interpreters of The Lotus Sūtra in India and China cited in this work:

Indian interpreters:

- a. Nāgārjuna (龍樹, second century CE) is generally regarded as the founder of Buddhism of the ‘Greater Vehicle’ (Mahāyāna) and the Dialectical (Madhyamaka) School based on the Sūtras About the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtras, 般若波羅蜜多經). Works attributed to him include some of the earliest references to and citations from The Lotus Sūtra, particularly as found in The Commentary on Longer Sūtra About the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Upadeśa, 大智度論).

- b. Vasubandhu (婆藪槃豆, 天親 or 世親, late third to early fourth century CE) and his older half-brother Asaṅga (無著) were from Puruṣapura (modern Peshawar in Pakistan). These brothers converted to the Buddhism of the 'Greater Vehicle' (Mahāyāna) and founded the Indian School on Engaged Meditation (Yogācāra). A work attributed to Vasubandhu constitutes what is said to be the oldest extant commentary on The Lotus Sūtra. It was translated into Chinese by Bodhiruci and Ratnamati but no Indian text remains extant. Although some modern scholars doubt that Vasubandhu composed this, it appears to be consistent with his teachings.

Early Chinese interpreters during the disunited ('sixteen kingdoms') period (c. 304-439 CE):

- a. Sēngruì (僧叡, c. 352-436) was born in the Wèi Commandery (魏郡), now part of Hénán Province (河南). Studying under Sēngxíán (僧賢), he was a prominent priest and scholar. A contributor to Kumārajīva's translation team, he was known for the prefaces he wrote for Buddhist scriptures.
- b. Sēngzhào (僧肇, 384-414) was born to a poor family near Cháng'ān. Originally attracted to Daoism, he became a Buddhist on encountering the Vimalakīrti Sūtra. A major contributor to Kumārajīva's team, he wrote a renowned epilogue to The Lotus Sūtra as well as several treatises that became influential in the early Madhyamaka School.
- c. Huìguān (慧觀, died 424) became a disciple of Huìyuǎn on Mount Lú (廬山慧遠). He wrote 'An Introduction to the Essentials of The Lotus Sūtra' (法華宗要序) and became a member of the translation team. Later he moved to Jiànkāng (建康) (near modern Nánjīng) where he resided at the Dàocháng Monastery (道場寺) and assisted in early translations of the Garland (Avataṃsaka) and Nirvāṇa Sūtras. He composed an influential theory about five periods in the evolution of the Buddha's teachings and was an advocate of 'the gradual nature of enlightenment' (in distinction to the 'sudden enlightenment' espoused by Dàoshēng).
- d. Dàoshēng (道生, 360-434) was born in Péngchéng (彭城, modern Xúzhōu, 徐州). He first studied under Zhú Fǎtài (竺法汰) in Jiànkāng (Nánjīng) and Huìyuǎn (慧遠) at Mount Lú (Lúshān, 廬山). Later he came to Cháng'ān (around 405) to work with Kumārajīva, where he assisted in the translation of The Lotus Sūtra and other works. He also wrote a 'Commentary on the Lotus Sūtra' (妙法蓮華經疏) which is at least partially extant. He was criticized for his theories about sudden enlightenment and the idea that all sentient beings were endowed with the embryonic nature of enlightenment, even those without any apparent faith or sense of morality (icchantika, 一闍提迦). He was later vindicated when a translation of The Nirvāṇa Sūtra by Dharmakṣema appeared in c. 430, concurring with this view. Later he settled at the Monastery of the Dragon's Light (Lóngguāng Sì, 龍光寺) in Jiànkāng.

Interpreters when China was essentially divided in two, as the Northern & Southern Dynasties:

(c. 420-589): In 418 the capital Cháng'ān was sacked and the disciples of Kumārajīva dispersed. Zhìyǐ analyzed the Chinese Buddhism of this period as consisting of three southern and seven northern schools (南三北七). Generally speaking:

- * ***The courts of the Northern Dynasties*** (Northern, Western & Eastern Wèi, Zhōu & Northern Qí) were mainly centered in Cháng'ān & Luòyáng to the west. Buddhism here stressed devotional practice and meditation (as seen in Ch'an, Pure Land & the Yogācāra lineage of Bodhiruci).
- * ***The courts of the Southern Dynasties*** (Liú Sòng, Southern Qí, Liáng & Chén) were mainly to the east, centered in Jīnlíng (金陵), also called Jiànkāng (建康), near modern Nánjīng. Buddhism here tended to be more scholastically oriented, and included the Chinese Madhyamaka School as well as the Yogācāra lineages of Ratnamati and (later) Paramārtha.

Prominent interpreters of The Lotus Sūtra during this period included:

- e. Dàolǎng (道朗) also called Sēnglǎng (僧朗, c. 476-512) was born in Liáodōng peninsula (遼東半島), then part of the Koguryō (高句麗, Korean) Kingdom. He later traveled south to Mount Qīxiá (棲霞山, also called Shè Shān, 攝山) northeast of modern Nánjīng, where he promoted the doctrines of the Madhyamaka or 'Three Discourses' School (三論宗), carrying on Kumārajīva's legacy. Some of his writings survive in the works of Zhìzàng (智藏, 458-522).

- h. **Bodhiruci** (菩提留支 or 菩提流支, died c. 527) arrived in Luòyáng c. 508 from Northern India with Ratnamati. Although they translated many scriptures together, including the only extant Indian commentaries on The Lotus Sūtra and The Sūtra on the Buddha of Infinite Life (both attributed to Vasubandhu), it was their translation of Vasubandhu's Commentary About The Sūtra on the Ten Levels of Grounding in the Transcendental Nature of Purpose (Daśa Bhūmika Sūtra, 十地經論) that led to development of the first Yogācāra School in China, called 'The Northern School on the Commentary About the Levels of Grounding' (Dì Lùn Zōng, 地論宗). He should not be confused with another prolific translator named Bodhiruci who lived two hundred years later.
- i. **Ratnamati** (勒那摩提 or 寶意, died c. 513) arrived with Bodhiruci and collaborated on his translations but later split with him over his interpretation of Yogācāra teachings regarding the relationship between the subconscious store of memory (ālaya vijñāna, 阿賴耶識) and the embryonic nature of enlightenment (tathāgata garbha, 如來藏). Ratnamati's followers founded the 'Southern Yogācāra School', later absorbed by the Garland School (Huáyán Zōng, 華嚴宗), while Bodhiruci's followers formed the 'Northern School', later absorbed by the Yogācāra or 'Consciousness Only' School (Wéi Shí Zōng, 唯識宗) of Xuánzàng.
- m. **Huìsī** (慧思, 515-577): Born in what is now central Hénán Province, Huìsī studied The Lotus Sūtra, The Discourse on the Dialectical Principle of the Mean (Mūla Madhyamaka Kārikā, 中論) and The Commentary About the Longer Sūtra on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramita Upadeśa, 大智度論) under Huìwén (慧文) in Guāngzhōu (光州, in what is now Huángchūān County of southern Húběi province). He trained in Huìwén's 'three-fold knowledge of the single mind' (一心三智) and a confessional meditation based on the 14th and 28th chapters of The Lotus Sūtra (法華三昧懺儀). He later moved to 'The Monastery of the Pure Abode' (Jìngjū Sì, 淨居寺) on Mount Dàsū (大蘇山) in southern Húběi Province, where he met and taught his most illustrious disciple Zhìyǐ, who studied with him from 560-567. Due to political instability and resultant persecutions he endured, Huìsī then moved further south to Nányuè Mountain (南嶽山) in what is now Ānhuī Province, having Zhìyǐ take many of his disciples to Jīnlíng (金陵, modern Nánjīng). Huìsī established the Monastery For the Adornment of Blessings (Fúyán Sì, 福嚴寺) on Nányuè Mountain and spent the rest of his days here. He later became known as The Great Master from Nányuè (南嶽大師).

Chinese interpreters during the re-unified China of the Suí (581-618) and Táng (618-907) Dynasties:

- * **The Suí Dynasty** first unified the divided north (by overthrowing the Northern Qi in 577 and the Northern Zhou in 581). It then also took over the divided south (by overthrowing the Western Liang in 587 and the Chen in 589). This created the first unified China since the Han Dynasty collapsed in 220. The Suí maintained capitals at both Cháng'ān (581-605) & Luòyáng (605-618)
- * The Suí Dynasty still battled a number of rebellions during its relatively short reign (581-618) and it was finally overthrown by what became **The Táng Dynasty** in 618. The Táng Dynasty lasted for almost three hundred years (618 to 907), ushering in a golden age for a unified Chinese culture. Again, the capital alternated at different periods between Cháng'ān and Luòyáng.
- n. **Zhìyǐ** (智顗, 538-597) was born at Huáróng in Jīngzhōu (荊州華容) (now in Húběi province), where his father was an official in the Liáng dynasty. On its collapse, his parents were exiled and then killed in 555. Having lost his parents, he became a monk at the nearby 'Monastery for the Fruits of the Transcendental Vow' (Guǒyuàn Sì, 果願寺) where he first studied The Lotus Sūtra. In 560 he came to Mount Dàsū for study under Huìsī. Here he attained a spiritual awakening through his understanding of the twenty-third chapter of The Lotus Sūtra 'On the Master of Healing'. When Huìsī moved to Nányuè in 567, he dispatched Zhìyǐ to The Monastery of the Tiled Casket (Wǎguān Sì, 瓦棺寺) in Jīnlíng where he lectured for eight years on The Lotus Sūtra, The Commentary on the Longer Sūtra About the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment and others scriptures. Here, his renown spread and he attracted many followers. Due to the unstable political situation, in 575 he moved south to Mount Tiāntái (天台山, literally 'The Pedestal of Heaven') in Zhèjiāng Province (浙江), a refuge where he remained in intensive study and practice

with a core of disciples. Here he met Guàndǐng (灌頂) who would remain with him for the rest of his life, write his biography and commit his teachings to writing for posterity. After many invitations, he finally returned to the capital Jīnlíng in 585, where he lectured at the court and various monasteries. In 587, he gave his lectures on The Lotus Sūtra at The Monastery ‘House of Light’ (Guāngzhái Sì, 光宅寺) that were later compiled by Guàndǐng as ‘The Words & Passages of The Lotus Sūtra’ (Fǎhuá Wénjù, 法華文句). During the final collapse of the Ch’én Dynasty and full establishment of the Suí Dynasty in 589, Zhìyǐ went on a retreat to Mount Lú (Lúshān, 廬山) and also spent time at the residence of the Crown Prince Yáng Guǎng (楊廣, 569–618), a devotee and sponsor of Zhìyǐ who would later serve as the second (and longest serving) emperor of the Suí Dynasty (Yángdì, 煬帝, 604–618). In 592, Zhìyǐ moved to his native Jīngzhōu, where he gave lectures at ‘The Monastery of the Jade Fountain’ (Yùquán Sì, 玉泉寺) that were later compiled by Guàndǐng as ‘The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra’ (Fǎhuá Xuányì, 法華玄義) in 593 and ‘The Greatness of Meditation With Introspection & Stillness of Mind’ (Móhē Zhǐguān, 摩訶止觀) in 594 (Zhìyǐ wrote very little himself). Sensing the approach of his death, in 595 Zhìyǐ returned to Mount Tiāntái, where he remained for the rest of his life, passing away in 597. He later became known as ‘The Great Teacher from Tiāntái’ (天台大師) after the mountain sanctuary he loved.

- o. Jícáng (吉藏, 549–623) was a master of the Dialectical (Madhyamaka) or ‘Three Discourses’ School (Sānlùn Zōng, 三論宗). His parents were from Parthia (now northeastern Iran) but he was born in Jīnlíng. Studying the teachings of Dàolǎng (道朗, also called Sēnglǎng, 僧朗, c. 476–512), he was renowned for knowledge of the Sūtras on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtras) and his three commentaries on The Lotus Sūtra. It is said he was also personally responsible for making 2,000 copies of The Lotus Sūtra for use in propagating its teachings.
- p. Guàndǐng (灌頂, 561–632) was born in Zhāng’ān (章安), a small village in Zhèjiāng Province near modern Tāizhōu (台州). He met Zhìyǐ at nearby Mount Tiāntái and followed him to Jīnlíng, becoming one of his leading disciples at the Monastery ‘House of Light’ (Guāngzhái Sì, 光宅寺). He attended Zhìyǐ’s lectures on The Lotus Sūtra in 587, compiling notes that eventually became ‘The Words & Passages of the Lotus Sūtra’ in 629. His final work was also apparently influenced by the commentaries of Jícáng as well as Jñānagupta and Dharmagupta’s version of the sūtra (which was not completed until c. 601, after Zhìyǐ’s death in 597). Guàndǐng also completed ‘The Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra’ and ‘The Greatness of Meditation With Introspection & Stillness of Mind’ during this period. In 597, he helped establish ‘The Monastery for the Cleansing of the Nation’ (Guóqīng Sì, 國清寺) on Mount Tiāntái, where he devoted himself to committing Zhìyǐ’s teachings to writing. In fact, Zhìyǐ himself wrote very little, and almost all of his teachings were actually penned by Guàndǐng. Guàndǐng also composed Zhìyǐ’s biography as ‘The Hundred Letters From the Monastery For the Cleansing of the Nation’ (Guóqīng Bǎilù, 國清百錄), consisting largely of letters written by Zhìyǐ and letters written to him. Posthumously, Guàndǐng became known as The Great Teacher from Zhāng’ān (章安大師), after his native village.
- q. Kuījī (窺基, 632–682) was a disciple of Xuánzàng and founder of his Yogācāra school in China. As abbot of The Monastery for the Greatness of Mercy (Dà Cīēn Sì, 大慈恩寺) he wrote commentaries on many sūtras from a Yogācāra perspective, including one on The Lotus Sūtra (妙法蓮華經玄贊).
- r. Zhànrán (湛然, 711–782) was born in Jīngxī (荊溪), modern Chángzhōu (常州) of Jiāngsū Province, southeast of Nánjīng. First studying at The Monastery of Sublime Bliss (Miàolè Sì, 妙樂寺) under Xuánlǎng (玄朗), he would eventually revive the Tiāntái School, become its leader and attract many followers. The school had lost its prominence to rival schools such as The Yogācāra School (Wéishí Zōng, 唯識宗), The Garland Sūtra School (Huáyán Zōng, 華嚴宗), The Meditation School (Chàn Zōng, 禪宗), The Esoteric School (Mìjiào Zōng, 密教宗) and The Pure Land School (Jìngtǔ Zōng, 淨土宗). Zhànrán wrote definitive commentaries on Zhìyǐ’s three major works, and his disciples Dàosui (道邃) & Xíngmǎn (行滿) would transmit the school’s teachings to Saichō (最澄) in 804, who in turn founded the Tendai school in Japan. Zhànrán posthumously became known as ‘The Great Teacher from Miàolè’ (妙樂大師) after the monastery he attended.

Japanese interpreters cited:

- s. Saichō (最澄, 767-822): Born in Ōmi (近江), in present Shiga Prefecture (滋賀県) in Japan, Saichō became a novice monk at 14 and was fully ordained at Tōdai Ji (東大寺) in Nara by age 20. Shortly thereafter, he left for a retreat of intensive study and practice on Mount Hiei (比叡山) near Kyōto, attracting a group of followers at what would later become the head temple of his school (Enryaku Ji, 延暦寺). After impressing the court with the lectures he gave, in 803 he was invited to participate in a mission to China to study the teachings of the Tiāntái School. He could read Chinese but was unable to speak it, and so was allowed to bring along a Chinese-speaking disciple named Gishin (義真). After training in Tiāntái doctrine and esoteric rituals, Saichō returned to Japan in 805. By 806 he was allowed to set up a Tiāntái School (J. Tendai Shū, 天台宗) on Mount Hiei with two curricula, one based on The Lotus Sūtra and Zhìyǐ's Greatness of Meditation With Introspection and Stillness of Mind (C. Mólē Zhǐguān, J. Maka Shikan, 摩訶止観) and one based on the esoteric ritual practices of The Sūtra on the Great Illuminator (Mahā Vairocana Sūtra, 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經 or 大日經). He was given the posthumous title 'Great Master Who Transmitted the Teaching' (Dengyō Daishi, 伝教大師).
- t. Nichiren (日蓮, 1222-1282) was born to humble circumstances as Zennichimaro (善日麿) in the seaside village of Kominato (小湊, now called Kamogawa, 鴨川市 in Chiba Prefecture (千葉県), on a peninsula east of present-day Tokyo and Yokohama. At age twelve he first resided at a Tendai monastery (Seichō Ji or Kiyosumi Dera, 清澄寺) in his hometown under the name Renchō (蓮長), which means 'Growing Lotus'. In 1239 he began traveling to monasteries throughout Japan, studying all of its different schools of Buddhism. He returned to Seichō Ji in 1253 and, on April 28, atop nearby Mount Kiyosumi (清澄山), he declared his conclusion that The Lotus Sūtra was the supreme teaching of Buddhism and expression of devotion to its title ('Nam- Myōhō Renge Kyō') was its essential practice. Changing his name to Nichiren (meaning 'Lotus of the Sun'), he embarked on a relentless campaign to convert all of Japan to his new faith. He would face fierce opposition and persecution all his life, just as is predicted in The Lotus Sūtra itself (in chapter thirteen and elsewhere), but somehow, despite all the hardships he endured, he managed to survive, persevere and acquire many followers. He saw himself as being an incarnation of the Bodhisattva 'With The Most Distinguished Conduct' (S. Viśiṣṭa Cāritra, J. Jōgyō, 上行), representing the virtue of identity (S. ātma guṇa, 我德) with life's most sublime purpose, that is, propagating The Lotus Sūtra in the corrupt age after the demise of the Buddha Śākyamuni's dispensation (S. saddharma vipralopa, C. mò fǎ, J. mappō, 末法). A prolific writer, Nichiren wrote the first of his great missives, 'On Establishing the Truth for the Security of the Nation' (立正安国論) in 1260, warning that the nation would face disasters if it did not embrace The Lotus Sūtra and its practice over other forms of Buddhism. He addressed it to Hōjō Tokiyori, the de facto leader of the Kamakura shogunate, with copies to other prominent government leaders. At first he was ignored, but as he persisted in his remonstrations and gained believers, he faced ever greater opposition and persecution. He was exiled twice:
- * First, he was exiled to Izu Peninsula from 1261 to 1263 as result of his first great missive and the resultant pressure put on governmental officials by priests from rival Buddhist sects. Upon being pardoned in 1263, he again began propagating his teachings and criticizing the shortcomings of other Buddhist schools. In 1268-9, Mongol emissaries arrived in Japan, demanding tribute and threatening invasion. Nichiren again sent missives to the those in the government, this time predicting that the Mongols would invade Japan if the nation did not immediately repent and embrace The Lotus Sūtra. One of those warned, the deputy chief of military affairs, Hei no Saemon (平左衛門), had Nichiren arrested and unsuccessfully tried to have him executed at Tatsunokuchi (竜の口) in 1271.
 - * After this attempt failed, he was put on house arrest at the residence of Homma Rokurō Saemon Shigetsura (本間六郎左衛門) at Echi in Sagami Province and then exiled for a second time on the remote Sado Island (佐渡) from 1271 to 1274. While at Sado, Nichiren wrote many letters and essays, including two of his major works, 'On Opening Up the Eyes (Kaimoku

Shō, 開目抄) and 'About Meditation on the True Object of Worship (Kanjin Honzon Shō, 観心本尊抄). Here he also devised a maṇḍala (gohonzon, 御本尊) in 1273 based on The Lotus Sūtra for the faithful that became an integral part of the practice he propagated. After again being pardoned, Nichiren returned one more time to remonstrate with Hei no Saemon-no-jō. When this third appeal failed to move the government, he relocated to Mount Minobu (身延山) in what is now Yamanashi Prefecture. The area around this mountain was then under the jurisdiction of Hakiri Sanenaga (波木井実長), a prominent lay follower of Nichiren. It was here that Nichiren spent most of the rest of his life (1274-1282) and established 'The Temple of Eternity' (Kuon Ji, 久遠寺) as the headquarters for his school. It was also here that he penned most of his extensive writings (Gosho, 御書), including 'On Selection of the Time (Senji Shō, 撰時抄, in 1275) and 'On Repaying Debts of Gratitude' (Hō-on Shō, 報恩抄, in 1276). He was also said to have given lectures to his closest disciples on The Lotus Sūtra here (c. 1278) that were later compiled as 'The Oral Transmission of the Meaning' (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳) and 'The Recorded Lectures' (Onkō Kikigaki, 御講聞書). With his health deteriorating in 1282, he left Mount Minobu for the residence of a lay follower (Ikegami Munenaka, 池上宗仲) in Musashi Province (in present-day Tokyo). Here he chose six senior priests to propagate his teachings in their respective areas and died shortly thereafter.

- u. Nikkō (日興, 1246–1333) was one of Nichiren's six senior disciples. Born at Kajikazawa in the Koma District of Kai Province, he entered Shijūku-in, a temple of the Tendai school, in Suruga Province. Nikkō first met Nichiren in 1257 at the Jissō Ji (實相寺, then a Tendai monastery closely affiliated with the Shijuku-in) while the latter was studying in preparation for his first major missive 'On Establishing the True Teaching for the Security of the Nation' (Risshō Ankoku Ron, 立正安国論), which would be submitted in 1260. Still very young at the time, Nikkō aspired to become one of his disciples. He continued to serve Nichiren during his travels and remained with him during his exiles, first on Izu Peninsula (1261-1263) and later on Sado Island (1271-1274). In the process, he became one of Nichiren's closest disciples. In 1274, after the exile at Sado, Nikkō helped arrange quarters for Nichiren at Mount Minobu (身延山). It was here that Nichiren spent most of the rest of his life and he established 'The Temple of Eternity' (Kuon Ji, 久遠寺) as the headquarters for his school. At Minobu, Nikkō was said to have recorded Nichiren's lectures on the Lotus Sūtra that he gave to his disciples and compiled them as The Oral Transmission of the Meaning (Ongi Kuden, 御義口傳) in c. 1278). After Nichiren passed away during a short stay at the residence of Ikegami Munenaka in Musashi Province (present-day Tokyo) in 1282, Nikkō became the chief priest at Kuon Ji. Afterwards, Nikkō is also credited with preserving many of Nichiren's voluminous writings, including many of his letters written in simple characters (kana, 仮名) for followers who were not (Chinese character-reading) scholars. Due to differences with other disciples, Nikkō felt compelled to leave the temple complex at Mount Minobu in 1289 and settle at the base of Mount Fuji on land donated by Nanjo Shichijō-jirō Tokimitsu. Here he brought various relics belonging to Nichiren, including the great maṇḍala (Dai Gohonzon, 大御本尊) he was said to have created in 1279. The structure first built here in 1290 was called The Great Lodge (Daibō, 大坊) but later became known as The Monastery of the Great Rock (Taisei Ji, 大石寺). It is now the head temple of the Nichiren Shōshū (日蓮正宗) school while the Kuon Ji complex at Mount Minobu remains the head temple of the Nichiren Shū (日蓮宗) school. In 1298, Nikkō retired a few miles away to Omosu in Suruga Province where he founded the Omosu Seminary (重須談所), and for more than thirty years concentrated on training disciples until his death in 1333 at the age of 87, leaving his disciple Nichimoku (1260–1333) effectively in charge of Taisei Ji and ultimately naming him as his successor.
- v. Nikō (日向, 1253–1314) was another one of the six senior priests designated by Nichiren; He first became a disciple of Nichiren in 1265. Between 1278 and 1280, when Nichiren delivered a series of lectures on the Lotus Sūtra, Nikō took notes and compiled them in a work called The Recorded Lectures (Onkō Kikigaki, 御講聞書). In 1285, three years after Nichiren's death, he returned to Minobu, and was appointed the chief instructor of priests by Nikkō. After Nikkō left

Minobu for Taiseikiji due to doctrinal differences, Nikō remained at Minobu, eventually becoming the chief priest of Kuon-ji temple at Minobu. In 1313 he ceded his position as chief priest to his disciple Nisshin and retired to Mobarā, where he died a year later.

- w. Nichikan (日寛, 1665–1726) was the twenty-sixth chief priest of the Nikkō's Taiseki-ji lineage (also called the Fuji school and now Nichiren Shōshū). He entered the priesthood in 1683 and studied under Nichiei, the twenty-fourth chief priest. He entered Hosokusa Seminary in Kazusa Province in 1689 and became the head of the seminary in 1708 (when he took the name Nichikan). In 1711 he was appointed the chief instructor of Taiseki-ji by Nichi-ei in 1711 and the chief priest in 1718. Nichikan was considered a reformer who clarified the Nichiren's teachings according to Nikkō's lineage. He wrote influential interpretations on Nichiren's five main writings (Goshos, 御書) in accord with this lineage, which included The Writings in Six-Volumes (Rokkan Shō, 六卷抄).

3. **The seamless realization of the dialectical principle** is also called 'the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in all of life's purposes' (S. sarva dharma tattvasya lakṣaṇa, C. zhūfā shíxiāng, J. shohō jissō, 諸法實相). This realization is explained at progressively deeper levels in The Longer Version of the Sūtra on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtra, 摩訶般若波羅蜜多經) and the second chapter of The Lotus Sūtra (Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra, 妙法蓮華經). It was called 'the three-fold knowledge of the single mind' (一心三智) in the early Tiantai School and 'the three thousand mutually dependent aspects found in a single moment of thought' (一念三千) in that school's full development as found in Zhìyǐ's 'Greatness of Meditation with Introspection and Stillness of Mind' (C. Móhē Zhǐguān, J. Maka Shikan, 摩訶止觀). See 'On Skillfulness in Ways & Means' by the author of this work for an elaboration of this principle.
4. **The three-fold nature of the Buddha's spiritual life** (tri kāya, 三身)⁴ that transcends death is another name for 'the enlightened being who has descended into this world' (tathāgata, 如來)⁶ but has also gone beyond the limitations of life and death in transmitting the Buddha's true purpose (Dharma, 法) to the community sentient beings with faith (Saṃgha, 僧). The three inseparable aspects include:
 - a. The existential reality of this spiritual life (dharma kāya, 法身 or svabhāvika kāya, 自性身) is found in the Buddha's original transcendental vow (pūrva praṇidhāna, 本願) that is timeless.
 - b. The grace of this spiritual life (saṃbhoga kāya, 報身) refers to the benefits (the blessings of merit and virtue and the light of knowledge and vision) that descend into this world as a result of the transcendental vows of mercy and compassion made and fulfilled by Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Sentient beings are able to accept and employ (pratya upabhoga, 受用) this vow in their own lives through faith and a practice in which they dedicate and turn their lives over to this fulfillment.
 - c. The apparent manifestations of this spiritual life (nirmāṇa kāya, 應身) are the Buddha's thoughts, words and deeds with a transformative influence on the minds of sentient beings in this world, responding to their needs. This including the use of mnemonic devices (prayers, images, etc.) through which they accept, embrace & keep this grace of the Buddha's spiritual life in mind.

In the sixteenth chapter of The Lotus Sūtra 'On Measuring the Life of The One Who Has Descended Into This World', there is the teaching about the timeless nature of this three-fold spiritual life of enlightenment that is **innately spontaneous and beyond any need for a self-consciously driven motivation** (anabhisamkāra, 無作), descending as a grace from the Buddha's transcendental vow.
5. **The ten titles of the Buddha** (十號)

The One Who Has Descended Into This World (Tathāgata, 如來); See footnote 4 for more on this title.

One Worthy of Offerings (Arhat, 應供):

The Truly Enlightened (Samyak Sambuddha, 正徧知):

Fully Illuminated in Actual Practice (Vidyā Caraṇa Saṃpanna, 明行足):

The Well Departed (Sugata, 善逝):

The One Understanding This World (Lokavid, 世間解)

The Supreme (Anuttara, 無上士):

Tamer of Humanity (Puruṣa Dāmya Sārathi, 調御丈夫):

Teacher of Gods & Humans (Śāstā Deva Maṇuṣyāṇām, 天人師):

The World Honored One, or The Blessed One (Buddha Lokanātha, or Bhagavān, 佛世尊).

6. **The One Who Has Descended Into This World** (Tathāgata, 如來): This special title for the Buddha is a general reference to the timeless, eternal nature of the Buddha but more specifically it refers to its three-fold spiritual life (see footnote 4). In breaking down the name:

- * **Tatha** (如) here literally refers to the Buddha's highest realization of the transcendental nature (tathatā, 如如 or bhūta tathatā, 眞如), the dialectical principle described in chapter two of The Lotus Sūtra as '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).
- * **Agata** (來) literally means 'coming' or 'arriving', and refers to descending into (and adapting to) the conditions at hand, the ever-changing world of life & death we live all in and must endure together as sentient beings. Through a vow of compassion, the Buddha enters into this world to deliver sentient beings from the existential suffering caused by their afflicted nature. While the transcendental nature implies the ultimate unity of all things, coming and going implies the nature of duality found in the mutually dependent aspects of existence & non-existence, life & death, the future & the past, descending into this world & ascending from it. This dual nature is expressed through the two complementary aspects of the Buddha's spiritual life:
 1. **Going forth into the Pure Land** (gata pariṇāmanam, 往相迴向) is the dedication of one's life to leaving home (renouncing attachments to life in this world) and being reborn in the transcendental sphere of life's purpose. This entails a vow to attain complete freedom from affliction while delivering all sentient beings into this freedom to the very limit of one's human capacity. To accomplish this, there is the turning over of one's very life and all the spiritual treasure of merit one has earned in this world for this greater purpose. It is only fully realized by 'one who has gone, or ascended from this world' (tathagata, 如去).⁶ This is also found in another one of the ten titles of the Buddha, 'The One Who Has Departed (This Life) Well' (Sugata, 善逝), a manifestation of the spiritual life that has had a transformative influence and so emancipated sentient beings in this world (nirmāṇa kāya, 應身 or 化身) and then entered into the ultimate freedom (parinirvāṇa, 般涅槃).
 2. **Returning from the Pure Land** (pratyāgata pariṇāmanam, 還相迴向) refers to attaining spiritual rebirth (parāvṛtti, 往生), a restoration of the Buddha's spiritual life in this world through acceptance (faith) and employment (practice) of its timeless vow. This entails a dedication to return back to the existential realm of life and death, endowed with the power of grace from this original vow. It is transcending death to return and deliver all other sentient beings to the other shore of spiritual freedom, the dedication of 'one who has come, or descended into this world' (tathāgata, 如來)⁶ through the grace of the Buddha's spiritual life (saṃbhoga kāya, 報身 or 受用身).

The 'transcendental nature' (tatha, 如) is a reference to the timeless distance or total impartiality of the Buddha that is sometimes illustrated by the nature of empty space while 'descending into this world' (agata, 來) is a reference to the immediacy or intimacy of the Buddha here and now that knows and reaches into our innermost hearts and its afflictions, even down into its sufferings in the depths of hell. The translator here has chosen to render this term 'tathāgata' as 'The One Who Has *Descended* Into This World' rather than 'The One ('Thus') *Come* Into This World' because it more richly expresses the nature of the Buddha's relationship with sentient beings in this corrupt world we must all endure together (saḥā loka, 娑婆世界). The sūtras are replete with different references to the Buddha's 'descent' into this world, using such metaphors as the descent of grace from the heaven of redemption (tuṣita devaloka, 兜率天), the great illumination of knowledge descending into this world from the sun (Vairocana, 毘盧遮那), the great rain (varṣa, 雨) of compassion descending from the life-giving cloud of life's higher purpose (dharma megha, 法雲), etc.

7. Bodhisattvas cited in this work:

The Bodhisattva 'Bestowing Sublimity of Perception' (*Mañjuśrī*, 文殊師利 or 妙吉祥) represents the deliverance of transcendental discernment of life's purpose (*prajñā pāramitā*, 般若波羅蜜多)

The Bodhisattva 'Bestowing Unconditional Love' (*Maitreya*, 慈氏 or 彌勒), also known as 'The Unbeatable' (S. Ajita, 阿逸多), represents the deliverance of unconditional loving kindness (*maitrī*, 慈) through the practice of engagement (*yogācāra*, 瑜伽行)

The Bodhisattva 'Always Without Disrespect' (*Sadāparibhūta*, 常不輕菩薩) represents the faith in humanity that sees the potential for enlightenment in all sentient beings

The Bodhisattva 'Master of Healing' (*Bhaiṣajya Rāja*, 藥王菩薩) represents the healing of sickness by enduring all hardship through the deliverance of introspective meditation with stillness of mind.

The Bodhisattva 'With a Wondrous Voice' (*Gadgada Svāra*, 妙音菩薩) represents the mouth endowed with compassion and the resolve of meditation

The Bodhisattva 'Beholding the Cries of This World' (*Avalokita Svāra*, 觀世音菩薩) represents the eyes and ears endowed with compassion and the resolve of meditation

The Bodhisattva 'Wholly Worthy' (*Samanta Bhadra*, 普賢菩薩) represents construction of the garland of life's purpose (tying together its many blossoms) through fulfilling the Buddha's vow.

The 4 bodhisattvas rising up from the earth in chapter 15 of The Lotus Sūtra (who may be relied on):

#1 *The Bodhisattva 'With The Most Distinguished Conduct'* (*Viśiṣṭa Cāritra*, 上行) represents the identity found in life's most sublime purpose (S. ātma guṇa, 我德)

#2 *The Bodhisattva 'With Boundless Conduct'* (*Ananta Cāritra*, 無邊行) represents the permanence found in life's most sublime purpose (S. nitya guṇa, 常德)

#3 *The Bodhisattva 'With Purified Conduct'* (*Viśuddha Cāritra*, 淨行) represents the purity found in life's most sublime purpose (S. śuci guṇa, 淨德)

#4 *The Bodhisattva 'With Securely Established Conduct'* (*Supraṭiṣṭhita Cāritra*, 安立行) represents the contentment found in life's most sublime purpose (S. sukha guṇa, 樂德)

8. Buddhas cited in this work:

* *Śākyamuni*: The historical Buddha and teacher of The Lotus Sūtra in this world that we must all endure together (S. sahā loka, 娑婆世界). In the sixteenth chapter of this sūtra, he speaks as the timeless and eternal Buddha.

* *The Buddha Of Abundant Treasures* (S. *Prabhūta Ratna*, J. *Tahō*, 多寶): Ancient Buddha first brought up in the eleventh chapter of The Lotus Sūtra, On the Vision of the Treasure Tower (*stūpa saṃdarśana*, 見寶塔品); Within this bejeweled 'tower' or monument (*ratna stūpa*, 寶塔) there was found the whole, intact (still living) spiritual life (*ātmabhāva stīṣṭhati eka ghaṇaḥ*, 全身) of an enlightened being who had descended into this world (*tathāgata*, 如來) countless ages ago. When this Buddha was practicing the bodhisattva path, he made a vow that, if he attained enlightenment, after he passed from this world a monument containing his whole, intact spiritual life would emerge from the ground any time The Lotus Sūtra was being taught by another in any of the lands of the ten directions so that he could hear it, praise it and attest to its truth.

* *The Buddha 'Steadily Shining Beacon'* (S. *Dīpaṃkara*, J. *Nendō Butsu*, 然燈佛): Buddha of long ago who was said to have first predicted the future enlightenment of Śākyamuni. The story of this Buddha is one the oldest about the past lives of the Buddha. It is found in the *Buddhavaṃsa* and the *Jātakas*, has been a frequent subject of Buddhist art, and is referenced a number of times in The Lotus Sūtra. In the story, an ascetic seeker named Sumedha, said to be a previous life of Śākyamuni, encounters the Buddha 'Steadily Shining Beacon' and offers up his own body for the Buddha to walk over to prevent him from being soiled by the mud on the ground below. While serving as such a mat, he holds up five lotus blossoms as a gesture of reverence (and representing the five projections of his purpose that were pure of affliction).⁶² Upon seeing this expression of faith, the Buddha Dīpaṃkara bestows a prophecy of enlightenment on Sumedha.

* *The Buddha 'Of Virtuous Intent'* (*Kuśala Guṇa*, 善德) from the eastern land of 'No Sorrow or Regret'; one of the Buddhas of the ten directions meditating on the aspects of life's true purpose.

* *The Seven Most Recent Buddhas* of the past (in time) were said to include Vipaśyin (毘婆尸), Śikhin (尸棄), Viśvabhū (毘舍婆), Krakucchanda (拘樓孫), Kanakamuni (俱那含牟尼 or 拘那含), Kāśyapa (迦葉), and Śākyamuni 釋迦. The last of these, the Buddha Śākyamuni (c. 563-480 BCE) is the historical Buddha and main protagonist of The Lotus Sūtra.

* *The Buddha Maitreya* ('Of Unconditional Love') is said to be the next Buddha, after Śākyamuni. In the Garland (Avataṃsaka) Sūtra (華嚴經):

* *The Buddha Mahā Vairocana* (摩訶毘盧遮那佛, 'The Greatness of Illumination'), later called 'The Greatness of the Sun' (大日), a name for the existential nature of the Buddha's spiritual life (dharma kāya, 法身), as found in the Garland Sūtra and the later 'esoteric' cycle of sūtras.

* *The Buddha Rocana* (盧舍那) is a name for the grace of blessings that descend into this world (saṃbhoga kāya, 報身) from this great illumination, as found in the Garland Sūtra.

In distinguishing between these two, Zhiyi said that Vairocana represents the existential nature of the Buddha's spiritual life (dharma kāya, 法身) that is 'everywhere in all places' while Rocana represents the grace descending from it (saṃbhoga kāya, 報身) realized by those who are 'fully pure' (in faith). In this interpretation, the Buddha Śākyamuni is said to be a manifestation of the Buddha's spiritual life responding to the needs of afflicted sentient beings in this world (nirmāṇa kāya, 應身).

9. **An age, or a lifetime** (kalpa, 劫) is defined as a life-cycle being endowed with four characteristics (catur lakṣaṇaḥ, 四相):

#1 Birth (jāti, 生): Arising, coming into existence from non-existence

#2 Stability (sthititā, 住): Duration, remaining continuously the same

#3 Instability (anyathātva, 異): Changing, transformation and maturity

#4 Extinction (niruddha, 滅): Perishing, going into non-existence from existence

Although ages are generally viewed as enduring for long periods of time, in contrast to 'moments' (kṣaṇa, 刹那 or 一念) that are of the shortest duration, the lengths of ages can vary. More often than not, an 'age' is deemed to last for an aeon, an inconceivably great period of time, often cast in terms of the formation and disintegration of a world or a universe.

In the illustration of a countless number (S. asaṃkhyeya, J. asogi, 阿僧祇) of ages in this sūtra as 'five hundred, a thousand, a million, a billion, a countless number of ages (J. gohyaku jintengō, 五百塵點劫), **traveling east is a metaphor for going back in time.** The east is commonly used in the Buddhist sūtras as a metaphor for the past while the west is used as one for the future (with the north and south representing the spheres of form and formlessness, respectively).

10. **Lands** (ksetra, 土 or loka dhātu, 世界) represent the environments created by the Buddhas (parakarma phala, 依報) while the Buddhas' (three-fold) spiritual lives that create these lands are the direct consequences of their own actions (svakarma phala, 正報):

This world we must all endure together (sahā loka dhātu, 娑婆世界) is the place where all beings in the sphere of life's purpose that are afflicted with the five kinds of corruption, the environment where the Buddha Śākyamuni taught sentient beings.

The wilderness, the jungle of this world (S. Jambudvīpa, 一閻浮提) refers to one of the four continents of this world we must all endure together as human beings. In the pre-Buddhist (Brahmanic) religion, these four continents and their guardians were said to be inhabited as follows:

a. *The Western Land of Sacrificial Rites* (Apara Godāniya, 西牛貨) contained the professing class (brahmins 婆羅門), scholars and ministers of the word (clerics), life's intellectual and moral leaders. They were protected by *The Lord of the All-Seeing Eye* (Virūpakṣa, 廣目天王), providing them with intelligence and moral guidance.

b. *The Eastern Land of Conquerors* (Pūrva Videha, 東毘提訶) contained the ruling class (kṣatriyas 刹帝利), the military and political leaders, makers, enforcers and judges of worldly law. This class was protected by *The Lord Guarding the Nation* (Dhṛtarāṣṭra, 持国天王), providing them with power and influence.

- c. *The Northern Land of Plenty* (Uttara Kuru, 北俱盧) contained the business class (vaiśyas 吠舍), the owners and managers of the means of production, leaders of industry and agriculture. This class was protected by *The Lord of Fame* (Vaiśravaṇa, 毘沙門天王 or 多聞天王) or *Lord of Riches* (Kubera, 俱吠羅), providing them with wealth and renown.
- d. *The Southern Jungle, or 'Wilderness'* (Jambū Dvīpa, 南閻浮提): The jambū tree (eugenia jambolana), also known as the rose apple or black plum, is a common tree in southern Asia which, at the time of the Buddha, covered large swaths of the land in jungle, areas inhabited by primitive peoples, the 'common people'. Here it served as a metaphor for the land containing the uneducated servant class, those deemed suitable as slaves, manual labor and menial help (śūdras 首陀羅). This class was said to be protected by *The Lord of Growth* or *Sprouter of Grain* (Virūdhaka, 增長天王), providing them with longevity and fertility.

The lands of the ten directions (daśa dig loka dhātu 十方世界) refers to the ten spheres of life's purpose as they are found in empty space (above, below and the eight directions of the horizon), that is, the ten spheres of life's purpose as objects of meditation, pure of any affliction.

The four lands of spiritual transformation, according to Zhìyǐ:

- a. *The land where all sentient beings equally dwell*, whether they are ordinary or noble (凡聖居同土)
- b. *The land of skillful ways & means* (方便土), where afflictions are eliminated through the three vehicles of spiritual awakening.
- c. *The land in which there is the transcendental reward of grace* (實報土), where bodhisattvas accept and employ the spiritual life of the Buddha with faith, letting it work through their own lives.
- d. *The everlasting land of serene illumination* (常寂光土), the pure land where only the Buddhas dwell

11. The pervading power (C. shéntōng J. jinzū riki, 神通力) of the Buddha's three-fold spiritual life:

This term appears often in Kumārajīva's translation of the sūtra for different Sanskrit terms. They all share connotations of a power transcending the shallow & explicit while revealing the profound & sublime, but various terms are used in the Sanskrit text with different nuances of meaning, including:

Abhijñā (神通) means 'penetrating knowledge'. It is used primarily in the first half of the sūtra when referring to the powers of the Buddha transcendental knowledge. This term is found in the name of the Buddha of Great Penetrating Knowledge (Mahā Abhijñā Jñāna Abhibhū, 大通智勝) in chapter seven of this sūtra On the Magic Fortress). Six kinds of penetrating knowledge are cited:

1. The divine eye (divya cakṣus, 天眼通) of meditation that penetrates the subtleties of cause and effect (karma and retribution) perceived in the visible sphere of form
2. The divine ear (divya śrotra, 天耳通) that penetrates subtle sounds, expressions of purpose or intent heard in the voiced sphere of form
3. The knowledge that penetrates the thoughts and intentions of others (paracitta jñāna, 他心通)
4. The knowledge that penetrates the past lives of others (pūrva nivāsānu smṛti jñāna, 宿命通)
5. Magic feet that can go anywhere in the spiritual realm instantly (ṛddhi sāksāt kriyā, 神足通)
6. The knowledge that destroys all afflictions (āsrava kṣaya jñāna, 漏盡通)

Adhiṣṭhāna (translated as 神通 by Kumārajīva and later as 加持 by the later translators of 'esoteric' scriptures such as the Mahā Vairocana Sūtra, 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經 or 大日經): This refers to the power of grace¹² descending from the Buddha's timeless spiritual life (the source) that bestows countless blessings on sentient beings (the manifestations) in the temporal world. Here:

- * *Adhi* means 'that above', referring to a divine aid conferred (adhiṣṭhā, 加被) on those below.
- * *Ṣṭhāna* means 'staying in place' and refers to abiding (in that above) or keeping it in mind (dhārayati, 任持) through a resolute act of faith (prayer, recitation or other ritual means).

This empowerment comes from accepting and taking on the transcendental resolve descending from the Buddha's spiritual life. Its powers include:

- * *Vṛṣabhītam* (自在神通), the power to shower down countless different kinds of blessings.
- * *Vikrīḍita* (奮迅), the power of a confident stride able to travel freely and perform miracles at ease anywhere in the sphere of life's purpose, compared to the resolute stride of an lion.

- * *Vijrmbhitaṃ parakrāma* (威猛大勢), the power to project strength and majesty
- * *Vikurvaṇa* (變化), the power to assume different shapes and form, with *rūpam nimittam* (色相) referring to the different shapes and forms that are assumed.

Rddhibala (神通力) is a reference to magical powers, particularly the use of the powers of illusion. In chapter twenty-seven of The Lotus Sūtra, two sons demonstrated their ability to perform eighteen different kinds of miraculous transformations in an effort to persuade their father, the King ‘Beautifully Adorned’ (Śubha Vyūha Rāja, 妙莊嚴王) to open his mind to the Buddha’s teachings:

- * Walking, standing, sitting and lying down in the empty space of the sky. (4)
- * Making waters arise above the body while fires descend from below it. (2)
- * Making waters descend below the body while fires ascend above it. (2)
- * Making waters gush from the right side of the body while fires arise from its left side. (2)
- * Making fires arise from the right side of the body while waters gush from its left side. (2)
- * Manifesting a great body that fills all of space and then shrinks back down to the size of a minute particle of dust (2)
- * Walking on water as if it were the ground and entering the ground as if it were water. (2)
- * Disappearing into in the sky and then reappearing from the ground (1)
- * Disappearing into the ground and then reappearing from the sky. (1)

Prātihārya (神通變現) literally refers to jugglery, but more broadly here it is a reference to the performing of countless different kinds of miraculous powers at the same time.

12. The reward of grace (saṃbhoga, 報) that is accepted and employed (upabhoga, 受用): This refers to the blessings of merit and knowledge descending from the Buddha’s spiritual life that work in the lives of sentient beings through their own practice (ritual observance in thought, word & deed).

- a. This grace is a ‘reward’ (報), a gift that is spontaneously manifested in the lives of sentient beings in the form of benefits such as joy, contentment, gentleness, kindness, compassion, wisdom, eloquence and perfect equanimity of mind. It is not merely something that is earned through their own efforts and it goes beyond anything that they intentionally seek out or wish for. It is like the ‘great cart’ given to the children after escaping the burning house in chapter three of The Lotus Sūtra that far exceeded anything they were promised and the great wealth the prodigal son unexpectedly inherited from his father after learning his business in chapter four.
- b. With regards to its acceptance and employment (受用): This grace is not really something that is attained or possessed by or for oneself. We are only its custodians and we can only give it back to others out of gratitude (pratīkṛtika, 報恩). It is only through the joyful acceptance (受) of faith in the Buddha’s spiritual life (and its transcendental purpose) and the employment (用) of its livelihood (the bodhisattva’s practice that fulfills it) that the grace of these blessings will be opened up and revealed through the lives of sentient beings.

13. The thirty-two auspicious signs (dvātriṃśan lakṣaṇāni, 三十二相) and eighty excellent refinements (S. aśīty anuvyañjanāni, 八十種好) are found in the greatness of humanity (mahā puruṣa, 大人), including perfectly enlightened beings. The thirty-two signs include:

1. The sign of the thousand-spoked wheel on the soles of the feet (cakrāṅkita hasta pāda tala, 足下二輪相)
2. Perfectly level soles (supraṭiṣṭhita pāda, 足下安平立相)
3. Long, slender fingers (dīrghāṅguli, 長指相)
4. Broad, evenly projecting heels (āyata pāda pārṣṇi, 足跟廣平相)
5. Slightly webbed feet and hands (jālā vanaddha hasta pāda, 手足指縷網相)
6. Pliant, supple and flexible limbs (mṛdu taruṇa hasta pāda tala, 手足柔軟相)
7. Raised ankles (ucchaṅkha pāda, 足趺高滿相)
8. Slender legs with taut muscles like those of a deer (aiṇeya jaṅgha, 伊泥延膊相)
9. Hands that can touch the knees even when one stands (sthitānavanata pralambha bāhutā, 正立手摩膝相)
10. The genitals are retracted and concealed (kośapagata vasti guhya, 陰藏相)
11. A body height that is consistent with the arms’ span (nyagrodha parimaṇḍala, 身廣長等相)
12. Body hair that gently curls clockwise and upward (ūrdhvaṃ ga roma, 毛上向相)

13. Only one hair grows from each pore (ekaika roma pradakṣiṇāvarta, 一一孔一毛生相)
14. The body tone is of a deep burnished gold (suvarṇa varṇa, 金色相)
15. A ten-foot aura of light emanates from the body (puruṣa tejo maṇḍala, 丈光相)
16. A delicately golden skin (sūkṣma suvarṇacchavi, 細薄皮相)
17. Well-developed muscles of the hands, feet, shoulders and the nape of the neck (saptotsada, 七處隆滿相)
18. Well-developed muscles below the armpits (citāntarāṃsa, 兩腋下隆滿相)
19. A dignified upper torso like that of a lion (siṃha pūrvārdha kāya, 上身如獅子相)
20. A body that stands tall and erect (ṛjutātratā, 大直身相)
21. Full and round shoulders (susaṃvṛta skandha, 肩圓好相)
22. Forty teeth (catvāriṃśad danta, 四十齒相)
23. Evenly arranged teeth (sama danta, 齒齊相)
24. Four white canine teeth (suśukla danta, 牙白相)
25. A full jaw like that of a lion (siṃha hanu, 獅子頰相)
26. An unexcelled sense of taste (rasa rasāgratā, 味中得上味相)
27. A long, broad tongue (prabhūta tanu jihva, 大舌相)
28. Endowment with the voice of God, the creator (brahma svara, 梵聲相)
29. Eyes that are true blue (abhinīla netra, 真青眼相)
30. Long eyelashes like those of an ox (go pakṣmā, 牛眼睫相)
31. A tuft of delicate white hair that curls clockwise between the eyebrows (ūrṇa keśa, 白毛相)
32. A knot of flesh on the head like a topknot (uṣṇisa śiraskatā, 頂髻相)

The eighty excellent refinements include:

1. The fingers and toes are long, slender, clean and a bit moist.
2. The fingers and toes are perfectly tubular, soft and pliant.
3. The fingers and toes are equally flawless and in proportion.
4. The hands and feet are light, clean and show a rosy tint.
5. The sinews and bones are not sticking out.
6. The ankles are not sticking out.
7. The gait is straight and dignified like a king of elephants.
8. The gait and bearing are majestic like a king of lions.
9. The gait is steady, even and calm like a king of oxen.
10. One stops and goes with the elegance of a swan.
11. One turns about with sureness like a king of elephants.
12. The limbs and joints are all uniform and perfectly formed.
13. The locked limbs and joints are still and like a coiled dragon.
14. The kneecaps are round and filled out.
15. The concealed areas of the body are pleasant and clean.
16. The limbs are moist, smooth and clean.
17. One's bearing is polished, refined and fearless.
18. The joints are robust and healthy.
19. The skeleton is steady, balanced and at ease.
20. One is surrounded by a pure aura like the lord among the sages.
21. The body's aura is ever illuminating all around it.
22. The belly is firm and toned.
23. The navel is deep and revolves clockwise.
24. The area around the navel is neither concave or convex.
25. The skin is without any itching or disease.
26. The palms are soft and pliant while the soles are steady and even.
27. The lines of the palms are long and straight.
28. The lips are moist, crimson and radiant.
29. The forehead is serious and calm, and not too large or small.
30. The tongue is pliable, thin, broad and long.
31. The sound of the voice is majestic, deep, pure and clear.
32. The sound of the voice has a sublime harmony like a canyon's echo.
33. The nose is prominent and straight but the nostrils don't stick out.
34. The teeth are fresh, white, straight and in regular order.
35. The nails are round, clear, clean and sharp.
36. The eyes are pure blue and their whites are clear.

37. The eyes see far and wide.
38. The lashes are orderly and close together
39. The brows are long but delicate, pliant and supple.
40. The brows reveal a tint of violet porcelain.
41. The brow is prominent and shaped like an early (crescent) moon.
42. The ears are broad and long with rounded holes.
43. The ears are symmetrical and without a flaw.
44. The bearing and deportment of the body inspires adoration and reverence.
45. The forehead is broad, level and even.
46. The carriage of the body bears perfect majesty and gravity.
47. The hair is thick, long, indigo blue and does not gray.
48. The hair is fragrant, clean and delicately moist.
49. The hair is well groomed without any tangling.
50. The hair is not falling out or balding.
51. The hair shines beautifully and dust does not cling to it.
52. The bones are solid, strong, full and substantial.
53. The bones are long and straight and the skeleton is erect.
54. The body cavities are clean and pleasant.
55. The body's power is hearty and strong without equal.
56. Others wish to observe the signs of one's bodily form.
57. The face is like a full autumn moon.
58. The facial expression is open, honest and exalted.
59. The complexion is clear, moist and without wrinkles.
60. The skin is clean, unblemished and never smells bad.
61. The pores always emit a sublime fragrance.
62. The forehead always emits the finest fragrance.
63. The thirty-two signs are surrounded by these sublime refinements
64. The hair of the body is indigo blue, bright and clean.
65. Many follow the purposeful sound of one's voice without mistake.
66. The appearance of one's crown is invisible to others.
67. The webbing of the fingers and toes is partially revealed.
68. When walking one's feet leave the ground.
69. One is self-reliant, not needing the protection of others.
70. One's majestic virtue attracts all those around one.
71. One's voice is not humble or proud, according to others.
72. One teaches of the life's purpose but adapts it to the feelings of the audience.
73. One proclaims life's purpose with a single voice, but makes all understand in accord with their feelings.
74. One teaches gradually in accordance with conditions.
75. One praises virtue and condemns evil with impartiality.
76. One observes first and then acts, with perfect timing.
77. These signs and refinements are too subtle to be observed by those with attachments to feelings
78. The dome of the skull is strong and perfectly round.
79. The countenance and bearing is ever youthful and never ages
80. The hands, feet and chest bear the sign of the cross (svastika, 卐字) that turns the wheel of life's purpose

14. Monuments (S. stūpas, 塔) containing relics (śarīra, 舍利): From time immemorial, mounds, towers and monuments have been erected to house the sacred relics and honor the memory of ancestors, great teachers and leaders of humanity. When the Buddha passed from this world, it was decided to split his remains into eight parts and for monuments to be erected at these auspicious places - where he was born, where he died, where he attained enlightenment and where he lived and taught about life's true purpose. About two hundred years later, the emperor Aśoka would further subdivide these eight figuratively into 84,000 such sites. These became places for the faithful to worship, remember and preserve the teachings of the Buddha for posterity. Here the spiritual life of the Buddha was said to transcend death. Some early schools of Buddhism were based on this worship of sacred relics (śarīra kāya, 舍利身). Many stūpas were depicted as the four-sided pyramid of Mount Sumeru, the divine sphere of the gods that rises up from the sphere of desire (kāma dhātu, 欲界). In chapter eleven of The Lotus Sūtra 'On the Vision of the Treasure Tower' (Stūpa Saṃdarśana, 見寶塔品), a great monument rose up from the ground into the empty space of the sky, housing a Buddha from

the ancient past named ‘Abundance of Treasures’ (Prabhūta Ratna, 多寶) who praised and attested to the Buddha Śākyamuni’s teaching of this sūtra. Śākyamuni then entered into this monument and sat beside this ancient Buddha to be worshipped by all those who witnessed this miracle. It is then revealed that the sūtra itself is the spiritual life of the Buddha, a monument containing the words of the Buddha that transcends death and continues to spiritually transform sentient beings in this world. Through the worship and remembrance of these words with faith, this spiritual life is reborn in them over and over, like a lotus blossom of life’s most sublime purpose.

15. The seven treasures (sapta ratnāni, 七寶), the treasures of kings, serve as metaphors for the merits & virtues on the noble path. There are variations on these seven but the following are often cited:

- a. Gold (suvarṇa, 金)
- b. Silver (rūpya, 銀);
- c. Beryl, or lapis lazuli (vaiḍūrya, 鑄璃)
- d. Crystal (sphatika, 玻璃)
- e. Coral, or mother of pearl (musāragalva, 碑磬 or 車璩)
- f. Carnelian (aśmagarbha, 瑪瑙)
- g. Red pearls, or rubies (lohita muktikā, 赤珠)

These are said to represent the seven kinds of spiritual wealth (sapta dhana, 七財):

- #1 Faith in a transcendental nature of life’s purpose (śraddhā, 信)
- #2 Learning (śruta, 聽聞), the knowledge (of scripture) earned through hearing with a faithful mind
- #3 A conscience, introspection with a sense of shame (hrī, 慚) and humility (apatrāpya, 愧)
- #4 Generosity (dāna, 施)
- #5 Moral commitment (śīla, 戒) to this greater purpose
- #6 Diligence (vīrya, 精進) in maintaining this enduring observation (kṣānti, 忍) through a meditation (dhyāna, 禪) that is endowed with introspection and stillness of mind
- #7 Transcendental discernment (prajñā, 般若) of life’s purpose

16. The emanations (manifestations) in the ten directions that are divisions and multiplications of the Buddha’s spiritual life (S. kāya vibhakti or ātma bhāva vighraha, 分身):

In proliferating in this world, the three-fold spiritual life (tri kāya, 三身) of the enlightened beings who have descended into this world (tathāgatas, 如來) is said to divide and multiply itself (with its division and its multiplication essentially being the same thing). Proper meditation on this spiritual life involves ‘opening up its manifestations and revealing their source’.

- a. The source here is the original ground (本地), where the Buddha’s vow was made long ago in the Pure Land of Serene Illumination (常寂光土).¹⁰ Here there is the original enlightenment (本覺), the timeless source of the Buddha’s spiritual life (dharma kāya, 法身). Its whole, intact existential reality (ātma bhāva stīṭhātī ekaghaṇaḥ, 全身) is found in the sacred relics (śarīra kāya, 舍利身) from the ancient past that are worshipped by sentient beings of faith in great monuments (stūpas, 寶塔). The divisions and multiplications of this one universal spiritual life are especially described in the eleventh and the fifteenth chapters of The Lotus Sūtra.
- b. The manifestations refer to all the countless different revelations of this enlightenment that have arisen and then perished over time, appearing in this world to influence and spiritually transform sentient beings in accordance with their needs (nirmāṇa kāya, 變化身) in the here & now. The spiritual life of the Buddha accomplishes this through the power of dividing and multiplying itself (kāya vibhakti, 分身) and so simultaneously assuming countless difference shapes (ṛddhi vikurvaṇa pratihārya, 神足變化). This is explained in various parts of the sūtra, notably in the twenty-fifth chapter, On the Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva Beholding the Cries of This World (Avalokiteśvara Samanta Mukha Parivartaḥ, 觀世音菩薩普門品), in which the bodhisattva assumes thirty-three different forms to teach about the true nature of life’s purpose to sentient beings in response to their different needs.

17. **The four-part assembly constituting the community of faith** (Saṅgha, 僧): Monks (bhikṣus, 比丘), nuns (bhikṣuṇīs, 比丘尼), laymen (upāsikās, 優婆夷) and laywomen (upāsikās, 優婆夷)
18. **Upāli's eighty recitations of the monastic code** (S. aśīti bhāṇavāra vinaya, 八十誦律): After the Buddha died, his disciples convened a council in Rājagṛha (now Rajgir) to determine how to maintain the community of faith and compile his teachings for posterity. At this council, his cousin and personal aide Ānanda demonstrated a remarkable ability to faithfully remember his master's exact words. Upon gathering these teachings together in an organized and coherent way, they were revealed to be the essence of the doctrine. From Ānanda's recitations, the canon of Buddhist scripture was established. Similarly, the disciple Upāli remembered and recited the canon of rules that became the monastic code (vinaya, 毘尼 or 律) for the ordained community. At this council the tradition of reciting these canons together became a core practice of Buddhism, the remembrance of the Buddha's words that brings them back to life in the here and now.
19. **Places cited in this chapter:**
- The Seat of Enlightenment* (bodhi maṇḍa, 道場.): The place in Bodhgaya where Buddha first attained perfect enlightenment, a timeless transcendental vision of the noble path (darśana mārḡa, 見道), seated under the tree of spiritual awakening (through its cultivation over time).
 - The Tree of Spiritual Awakening* (S. bodhi vṛkṣa, 菩提樹): see footnote 34.
 - The Royal Fortress* (Rājagṛha, 王舍城): The capital city in Magadha, the kingdom the Buddha lived in much of the time, representing the temporal world we must all endure together.
 - Vulture's Peak* (Gṛdhra Kūṭa, 耆闍崛山 or 靈鷲山), a retreat for the Buddha and his disciples near The Royal Fortress. It is said he made many of his important teachings here, such as those on the deliverance of transcendental discernment (Prajñā Pāramitā) and The Lotus Sūtra. Although the peak of the mountain was said to resemble a vulture's head, it is likely the mountain also had a charnel ground that attracted vultures. In the sūtras, The Royal Fortress below represented the temporal world while Vulture's Peak represented the timeless transcendental realm.⁸⁴
20. **Anavatapta Lake** (阿耨達池), literally The Lake Without Heat (無熱池): This legendary lake was said to be the source of the waters from the peak of heaven (Mount Sumeru, 須彌山), flowing into the four cardinal points of the horizon via four great rivers. The lake was said to be the source of the waters of heaven that are able to cool the scorching fires from the demons in the lower realms. Today Anavatapta Lake is often identified with Lake Mānasaśarovara, in Tibet just north of the western border of Nepal, while Mount Sumeru is often identified with Mount Kailāśa (岡仁波齊峰), which looms over the lake. Some postulate the prior existence of a great glacial lake that was the origin of these four rivers, with Lake Manasaśarovara being a remnant of this earlier lake.
- The Four Rivers** (catur nadī, 四河) were the lifelines of the Indian people, with its people settling in the valleys carved into the earth by them:
- The Sindhu* (信度河) or *Indus*, 印度河): Running south from the Punjab ('The Five Sources' of the Indus, the longest being the Sutlej River) through what is now Pakistan to the Indian Ocean. With the parallel Sarasvatī River (now silted up), it was a lifeline of the Indus Valley Civilization with cities such as Harappa & Mohenjodaro, the oldest culture of the Indian subcontinent.
 - The Gaṅgā or Ganges* (恒伽河): Running east, the Ganges and (the parallel) Yamuna Rivers run south and then east through what is now northern India. This was a lifeline of the Āryan migration into what was known as Videha (after its first great king) and became the homeland of the Buddha in what was then eastern India. This river empties into the Indian Ocean in Bengal.
 - The Vakṣu or Oxus* (婆叉河): Running west and now called the Amu Darya, this river runs through what is now Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and finally (until recent years) emptying into the Aral Sea. It has undergone much damming, silting and rerouting over the ages. It is a likely route by which the Āryans first entered the Indian subcontinent in the early second millennia BCE from Central Asia, perhaps via Transoxiana, the region between the Rivers Oxus (Amu Dharya) and Jaxartes (Syr Dharya).

4. *The Śītā* (私多): Running north, there is disagreement about which ancient river this represents.
 - * Some say this refers to the Syr Darya (Jaxartes) that ran north and fed into the Aral Sea.
 - * Some say this refers to the Yarkand and Tarim rivers which may have fed into China.
 - * Others say it is the Śītalakṣya, feeding into the Brahmaputra River that runs north of the Himalayas and then west, emptying in the Indian Ocean via what is now Bangla Desh.

21. The seven skillful ways & means (sapta upāya, 七方便) or ‘seven steps’ (S. sapta krama, 七步) are understood in different ways:

In the Tiāntái School this was understood as the seven capacities for awakening to the transcendental nature of life’s purpose and the seven teachings (vehicles) that opened the door to this awakening:

1. Human beings (manuṣya, 人), those capable of wholesome social interaction
2. Those in the heavens of meditation (devas, 天), temporarily free from sensory desire
3. Students (śrāvakas, 聲聞) of the noble path, those training to eliminate their inner afflictions
4. Those awakened to and freed from the conditions of affliction in their own lives (pratyeka buddhas, 辟支佛)
- 5-7. Those awakening to life’s greater purpose (bodhisattvas, 菩薩) through the three progressively deeper provisional teachings of the greater vehicle doctrine (the three baskets doctrine, the general doctrine and the distinguished doctrine - see footnote 42).

The traditional understanding of the seven skillful ways & means in early Buddhism included ‘the three worthy (merit-producing) practices (traya bhadrā carya, 三賢) and the four-fold cultivation of skillful spiritual capacities (catuṣ kuśala mūla, 四善根)’ that prepared one for the lesser vehicle of attaining freedom from affliction on the individual level:

a. *First there were practices that helped still the mind* (śamatha, 止):

1. Meditation on five objects that help still the mind (pañca upaśanu smṛti, 五停心觀)
 - a. ‘Counting each breath’ (ānāpāna, 數息觀), eliminating thoughts and feelings that scatter and distract the mind (vikṣepa, 散亂心). This is customarily the starting point.
 - b. Meditations on (nine kinds of) ugliness found in impurity (aśubha, 不淨觀), eliminating the greed (rāga, 貪) found in appetites and attachments to pleasant feelings; Monks would cultivate nine deep reflections (nava saṃjñā, 九想) about the corpses found at charnel grounds in order to comprehend the uncleanness of sentient existence and so curb attachments to it; These included meditations on corpses that were:
 1. Blue and mottled (vinīlaka saṃjñā, 青瘀想)
 2. Putrified and decayed (vipūyaka saṃjñā, 膿爛想)
 3. Worm eaten (vipadumaka saṃjñā, 蟲噉想)
 4. Swollen (vyādhmātaka saṃjñā, 膨脹想)
 5. Red-stained with blood (vilohitaka saṃjñā, 血塗想)
 6. Devoured by animals (vikhāditaka saṃjñā, 壞爛想)
 7. Dismembered (viksiptaka saṃjñā, 敗壞想)
 8. Burnt (vidagdhaka saṃjñā, 燒想)
 9. Reduced to bones (asthi saṃjñā, 骨想)
 - c. Meditations on the loving kindness (maitri, 慈觀) that brings happiness to sentient beings and meditations on the compassion (karuṇā, 悲觀) that relieves their sufferings. These meditations eliminate the hatred (dveṣa, 瞋) found in attachments to unpleasant feelings.
 - d. Meditations on the (twelve) conditions causing affliction (pratītya samutpāda, 因緣觀), eliminating the ignorance found in attachment to feelings of selfish disinterest (moha, 癡)
 - e. Meditations that distinguish the different projections, alignments and spheres of consciousness (dhātu prabheda, 界分別觀). These meditations involve viewing them objectively, in a detached manner:
 1. The five projections of purpose (pañca skandha, 五陰)⁶² are those of physical form, emotional feelings, mental associations, motivations & consciousness.

2. The eighteen-fold sphere of consciousness (aṣṭadaśa dhātunāni, 十八界) is based on the twelve-fold alignment between subject & object (dvādaśa āyatanāni, 十二處), that is, between the six faculties of sensory / mental perception (ṣaḍ indriya, 六根) and their six objects (ṣaḍ viśaya, 六根境):
 - a. #1 Vision (cakṣuḥ vijñāna, 眼識) is based on alignment of #2 the eyes (cakṣuḥ indriya, 眼根) with #3 visible form (rūpa, 色).
 - b. #4 Hearing (śrotra vijñāna, 耳識) is based on alignment of #5 the ears (śrotra indriya, 耳根) with #6 audible sounds (śabda, 音).
 - c. #7 Taste (jihvā vijñāna, 舌識) is based on the alignment of #8 the tongue (jihvā indriya, 舌根) with #9 flavors (rasa, 味).
 - d. #10 Smell (ghrāṇa vijñāna, 鼻識) is based on the alignment of #11 the nose (ghrāṇa indriya, 鼻根) with #12 scents (gandha, 香).
 - e. #13 Touch (kāya vijñāna, 身識) is based on alignment of #14 the peripheral nervous system of the body (kāya indriya, 身根) with #15 physical contacts (spraṣṭavya, 觸).
 - f. #16 Thought (mano vijñāna, 意識) is based on the alignment of #17 the thinking mind (manas, 意) with #18 purposes, mental objects or objectives (dharma, 法).

These meditations eliminate attachments to false beliefs about the nature of self-centered existence (ātma drṣṭi, 我見) and, in doing so, also help to eliminate false pride (mana, 慢).
- b. *Next there was observation of the mind with introspection* (vipaśyanā, 觀心) and mindfulness of its four subjective realms (catvāri śmṛty upasthānāni, 四念處). These four subjective spheres were examined in two different ways:
 - a. First there was mindfulness of the general state of the four subjective spheres (aviśeṣa lakṣaṇa śmṛty upasthāna, 總相念處) in which each of them is endowed with one of the dual natures:
 - #1 *Mindfulness of the physical body* (kāya, 身) and the dual nature of its purity and impurity (the inevitable nature of its impurity and false beliefs about finding real purity in it)
 - #2 *Mindfulness of emotional feelings* (vedanā, 受) and the dual nature of their suffering and contentment (the inevitable nature of their suffering, and false beliefs about finding real contentment in them)
 - #3 *Mindfulness of the thoughts* (citta, 心) *found in the making of distinctions* (vikalpa, 分別) & *mental associations* (saṃjñā, 想) and the dual nature of their impermanence and permanence (the inevitable nature of their impermanence and false beliefs about finding real permanence in them)
 - #4 *Mindfulness of purposes* (dharma, 法) *or motivations* (saṃskāra, 行) and the dual nature of their selfishness and selflessness (the inevitable nature of their selflessness and false beliefs about finding the identity of a real self-centered existence in them)
 - b. Then there was mindfulness of all four of these dual natures really being found in each of the four subjective spheres (viśeṣa lakṣaṇa śmṛty upasthāna, 別相念處), making there be sixteen observations in all.
- c. *Next there was four-fold cultivation of virtuous spiritual capacities* (catuḥ kuśala mūla, 四善根): This is the cultivation of the five virtuous capacities (indriya, 根) of faith, remembrance, diligence of effort, mental resolve and transcendental discernment of purpose through an intensification of motivation (abhisamṣkāra, 加行) that arouses an awakening to one's true purpose in this world:
 4. Heating up (uṣmagata, 煖): Seeking knowledge of life's purposes through invoking (firing up) the cognitive power of thoughts & words about them (the motivational power of prayer, i.e., the words of the Buddha).
 5. Peak experiences (mūrdhāna, 頂): Realizations about their true meaning through a dialectical process of discovery that go beyond thoughts and words
 6. Enduring observation (kṣānti, 忍): An ever deeper knowledge of life's purposes (dharma jñāna, 法智) through meditation with introspection over time, leading to an ever-greater knowledge of their context (anvaya jñāna, 類) in the grand scheme of things as a whole.

7. Momentary realizations of the very highest purpose for one's life in this world (laukika agra dharma, 世第一法), a fully rounded knowledge (parijñā, 遍知) that is endowed with a transcendental vision of the noble path (darśana mārga, 見道)
22. **The three virtues** (S. tri guṇa, 三德) found in the Buddha's timeless spiritual life:
 #1 The ever abiding resolve, the transcendental vow that is the existential nature of the Buddha's spiritual life, or life of purpose (dharma kāya, 法身)
 #2 The transcendental discernment (knowledge and vision) of life's purpose (prajñā, 般若) &
 #3 Emancipation from attachments (vimokṣa, 解脫).
23. **The original (timeless & eternal) ground** of this three-fold spiritual life of enlightenment (本地三佛) is the place where The One Who Has Descended Into This World (Tathāgata, 如來) is found, the Everlasting Land of Serene Illumination (常寂光土).¹⁰ From here, the timeless source of the Buddha's spiritual life (dharma kāya, 法身) or 'original enlightenment' (本覺) takes on all of the countless different manifestations of enlightenment that arise (and then perish) over time (始覺).
24. **Harivarman** (訶梨跋摩, c. 250-350 CE): Monk who studied under Kumāralāta (鳩摩邏多 or 童受), a founder of The School Based on the Authority of the Scriptures (Sautrāntika, 經量部). Harivarman is known for his Discourse on Realization of the Transcendental Nature (Tattva Siddhi Śāstra, 成實論), a work on the spiritual science (abhidharma, 阿毗達磨) that largely reflected that school's views. Kumārajīva's translation of this discourse is the only extant version of it.
25. **The Buddha's knowledge & vision** (tathāgata jñāna darśana, 佛知見): This is a reference to three kinds of transcendental knowledge and five kinds of eyes:
 a. *The three kinds of transcendental knowledge* (tri jñāna, 三智)
 #1 Knowledge of the unity of all of life's purposes as a whole (sarvajña jñāna, 一切智).
 #2 Knowledge of the different paths to enlightenment (mārgākāra jñāna, 道種智)
 #3 Knowledge of the ultimate purpose for all things (sarvathā jñāna, 一切種智)
 b. *The five kinds of eyes* (pañca cakṣuṣim, 五眼):
 #1 Eyes of flesh (māṃsa cakṣus, 肉眼): Those of sentient beings in the sphere of desire⁶⁰
 #2 Eyes of heaven (divya cakṣus, 天眼): The eyes of meditative resolve (samādhi, 定) that can transcend space and time and see the heavens in the higher spheres of sentient existence, the pure objective reality of its form and its existential principles that are beyond form.⁶⁰
 #3 Eyes of transcendental discernment (prajñā cakṣus, 慧眼): Those with freedom from affliction who can see the empty nature of all purposes and so are free from all attachments to them.
 #4 Eyes of transcendental purpose (dharma cakṣus, 法眼): The eyes of bodhisattvas, those who have the skillful ways & means of compassion that deliver sentient beings from affliction and endow them with a greater sense of life's purpose.
 #5 Eyes of enlightenment (buddha cakṣus, 佛眼): The eyes endowed with the previous four, simultaneously seeing the ultimate purpose for all things with both intimate closeness (through kindness and compassion) and greatness of distance (through impartiality).
 Although they are ultimately inseparable, when distinguishing between knowledge and vision:
 a. Knowledge (jñāna, 智 or 知) is that learned and possessed in the memory.
 b. Vision (darśana, 見) has a more immediate quality, being a perception here & now.
 While the Sanskrit versions of The Lotus Sūtra and other sūtras more often pair the term 'knowledge' (jñāna, 智) with the term 'vision' (darśana, 見), Kumārajīva and later Chinese translators often paired 'knowledge' with 'discernment' or 'insight' (prajñā, 慧), with the Sanskrit prefix 'pra-' meaning 'before' or 'that which comes first', involving a perception (-jñā) of the conditions before one here & now (mano vijñāna, 意識) that precedes a full penetration of their nature as 'knowledge', which also involves the subconscious store of memory (ālaya vijñāna, 阿賴耶識).

- 26. The Commentary on the Longer Version of the Sūtra About the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment** (Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā Upadeśa, 大智度論): A treatise in 100 volumes attributed to Nāgārjuna and rendered into Chinese by Kumārajīva in 405 CE that was highly influential in the early Dialectical (Madhyamaka) School in China. No Sanskrit or Tibetan version is extant.
- 27. The fusion of knowledge with its object** (境智冥合): Here the object of worship (meditation) is the three-fold spiritual life of the Buddha (the purpose, grace and response of the sūtra) that is forever descending into the world, while there is knowledge of it through faithful acceptance. Through the perfect fusion of this knowledge with its object, their duality is transcended and the knowledge & vision of this spiritual life works through the lives of sentient beings.
- 28. When the box is great, the cover is also great;** The Buddha wished to correct the fallacies found in knowledge of lesser purposes & reveal knowledge of life's greater purpose. This is also called 'discarding the conventional understanding & opening up the cover of the box' and 'opening up the cover & discarding the box of provisional knowledge while revealing the transcendental knowledge'. This was explained in twenty ways in volume nine of Zhìyǐ's 'Profound Meaning of The Lotus Sūtra'. Each of these are described there and then associated with the ten natures of the sublime (十妙).
- a. Ten are in the gateway to penetrating the manifestation of enlightenment (S. shakumon, 迹門):
 1. Opening up the three & revealing the one (開三顯一) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the object (境妙).
 2. Breaking up (attachments to) the three & revealing the one (破三顯一) is associated with employing the sublime nature of transcendental knowledge (智妙).
 3. Understanding the three & revealing the one (會三顯一) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the practice (行妙).
 4. Concealing the three & revealing the one (覆三顯一) is associated with employing the sublime nature of spiritual standing (位妙).
 5. Abiding in the one & revealing the one (住一顯一) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the (three-tracks of the one) vehicle (乘妙).
 6. Abiding in the three & revealing the one (住三顯一) is associated with employing the sublime nature of sympathy and response (感應妙).
 7. Abiding in neither the three nor the one, and revealing the one (住非三非一顯一) is associated with employing the sublime nature of grace (神通妙).
 8. Discarding the three & revealing the one (廢三顯一) is associated with employing the sublime nature of teaching about life's purpose (說法妙).
 9. Abiding in the three & employing the one (住三用一) is associated with employing the sublime nature of followers (眷屬妙).
 10. Abiding in the one & employing the three (住一用三) is associated with employing the sublime nature of benefits (利益妙).
 - b. Ten are in the gateway to penetrating the source of enlightenment (J. honmon, 本門):
 1. Breaking up the manifestation & revealing the source (破迹顯本) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original cause (本因妙).
 2. Discarding the manifestation & revealing the source (廢迹顯本) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original teaching about life's purpose (本說法妙).
 3. Opening up the manifestation & revealing the source (開迹顯本) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original effect (本果妙).
 4. Understanding the manifestation & revealing the source (會迹顯本), like breaking up the manifestation & revealing the source, this is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original cause (本因妙).
 5. Abiding in the source & revealing the source (住本顯本) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original nation and land (本國土妙).

6. Abiding in the manifestation & revealing the source (住迹顯本) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original lifespan (本壽命妙) and the original followers (本眷屬妙).
7. Abiding in neither the manifestation nor the source while at the same time revealing the source (住非迹非本顯本) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original sympathy and response (本感應妙).
8. Concealing the manifestation & revealing the source (覆迹顯本) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original grace (本神通妙).
9. Abiding in the manifestation & employing the source (住迹用本), like abiding in the manifestation & revealing the source, is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original lifespan (本壽命妙) and the original followers (本眷屬妙).
10. Abiding in the source & employing the manifestation (住本用迹) is associated with employing the sublime nature of the original spiritual freedom (本涅槃妙) and the original benefit (本利益妙).

The 'box' can also be interpreted to be a reference to the four parts of the tetralemma, the limits of discursive thought that are penetrated and transcended through meditation.

29. **The tetralemma** (catus koṭika, 四句) is a logical device in four parts used as a gateway of meditation to reveal all four points of view found in the dualities (dilemmas) found in speculative or discursive thought (vikalpa, 分別) about the juncture between the mutually dependent aspects of life's purpose (the relative reality) and its transcendental nature (the ultimate reality). This device was employed before Buddhism by the skeptic philosopher Saṅjaya Vairāṭiputra, the first teacher of the Buddha's disciples Śāriputra and Mahā Maudgalyāyana. It was later employed frequently in the Dialectical School of Nāgārjuna and his followers. For example, in the argument about the real existence or non-existence of an identity (e.g., a soul) or a purpose, it can be said that:

- #1 They have a real existence
- #2 They do not have a real existence
- #3 They both exist & don't exist
- #4 They are neither with nor without an existence.

A case can be made for or against any and all these propositions, but only through understanding the transcendental nature of identity (ātma, 我) & purpose (dharma, 法) can one get beyond the limitations imposed by attachment to the false beliefs found in discursive thought. Zhìyǐ called the tetralemma 'the four kinds of skillful means that lead to the sublime secret'. He would also at times analyze the different mutual aspects of life's purpose by finding tetralemmas within tetralemmas (expanding them into sixteen aspects, thirty-two aspects, sixty-four aspects, etc.) to demonstrate the endless (and ultimately futile) nature of the discursive mind to reach out towards the infinite.

30. **The embryonic nature of The One Who Has Descended Into This World** (tathāgata garbha, 如來藏) **and the inner (subconscious) store of memory** (ālaya vijñāna, 阿賴耶識): Prior to development of the Yogācāra School, another prevailing current of greater vehicle thought addressed nihilistic misunderstandings about the teachings of the Dialectical School (Madhyamaka) regarding the empty nature of identity and purpose and the absence of any real, existential reality in them. In response to this, some early greater vehicle scriptures posited the idea of 'an embryonic nature of the Buddha', a potentiality or 'seed nature' of enlightenment found in every sentient being that becomes veiled due to afflictions that intrude on it. This 'Buddha-nature' is unfathomable to the unawakened and only fully recognized by enlightened beings. It needs no cultivation, only unveiling, as it is already present and perfect within every sentient being. Just as the processor of a computer may work properly but give flawed results as a result of improper programming or false data input, so the subconscious store of memory (ālaya vijñāna, 藏識) that serves as a womb for this embryonic nature may be obscured if there are false attachments that are inconsistent with the dialectical principle of its transcendental nature. The Sūtra on the Descent into Śrī Laṅka (Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra, 楞伽經) describes this embryonic nature as a pure illumination, a state of grace that endows (virtual) consciousness with the nature of emptiness. This primordial consciousness is said to be originally pure but wear the garments of five

projections of purpose,⁶² a twelve-fold alignment of subject & object (dvādaśa āyatanāni, 十二處) and an eighteen-fold sphere of consciousness (aṣṭadaśa dhātunāni, 十八界)^{21a1e} with all of its evolving manifestations (pravṛtti vijñāna, 轉識) - vision, hearing, taste, smell, touch and the distinction of objects with the calculations of self-interest. These evolving manifestations are likened to garments that are subject to being sullied by the greed, hatred, delusion, pride, doubt and false beliefs found in clinging to the afflicted calculations of self-interest (kliṣṭa manas, 染心). The embryonic nature of enlightenment is also likened to still water while the evolving manifestations of consciousness are likened to waves that can obscure the perfect mirror-like reflection that is revealed in stillness.

31. The four virtues (catvāraḥ guṇa 四德) & eight irreconcilable beliefs (aṣṭa vidha viparyāsa, 八顛倒):

The four virtues (catvāraḥ guṇa 四德) of the Buddha's spiritual life are said to be its contentment of purpose, purity of purpose, permanence of purpose and identity of purpose. This is contrasted to the four marks of suffering, impurity, impermanence and selflessness found in aspiring to attain freedom from the nature of afflicted sentient existence.

In the lesser vehicle teachings about attaining freedom from afflictions, these four are first found in the four subjective spheres of mindfulness (catvāri smṛty upasthānāni, 四念處):^{21b}

- The physical body (kāya, 身). the inevitable nature of its impurity and false beliefs about finding purity in it.
- Emotional feelings (vedanā, 受), the inevitable nature of their suffering, and false beliefs about finding contentment in them.
- Thoughts (citta, 心); mental distinctions (vikalpa, 分別) and associations (saṃjñā, 想), the inevitable nature of their impermanence and false beliefs about finding permanence in them.
- Purposes (dharma, 法); motivations (saṃskāra, 行), the inevitable nature of their selflessness and false beliefs about finding the identity of a self-centered existence in them.

These four subjective spheres were examined before in two different ways:

- First there is mindfulness of the general states of the four subjective spheres (aviśeṣa lakṣaṇa smṛty upasthāna, 總相念處) in which each of them is endowed with one of the dual natures:
 - #1 Mindfulness of the body and its dual nature of purity and impurity
 - #2 Mindfulness of emotional feelings and their dual nature of suffering and contentment
 - #3 Mindfulness of thoughts and their dual nature of impermanence and permanence
 - #4 Mindfulness of purposes and their dual nature of selfishness and selflessness
- Then there is mindfulness that distinguishes all four of these dual natures in each of these four subjective spheres (viśeṣa lakṣaṇa smṛty upasthāna, 別相念處), making sixteen observations in all.

In the greater vehicle teachings, there is meditation with contentment and the purity, permanence and identity of purpose arising from the Buddha's three-fold spiritual life (tri kāya, 三身), also called 'The One Who Has Descended into this World' (Tathāgata, 如來) and works through one's own life. In explaining this, here we translate an excerpt from chapter eleven of The Sūtra on the Ultimately Great Spiritual Freedom (Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra, 大般涅槃經), On the Four Perversions (Caturvidha Viparyāsa Parivarta, 四倒品) (Taishō Book 12, Pages 0647 line c22 to 0648 line a28):

"The Buddha then spoke to the Bodhisattva Kāśyapa (迦葉), saying:

'Good son, there are four kinds of perversions (caturvidha viparyāsa, 四顛倒) in misunderstandings about the nature of spiritual freedom (nirvāṇa, 涅槃):

#1 The belief that suffering arises from contentment, that which is without suffering:

The idea of suffering arising from contentment is said to be a perversion. That which is without any suffering (the three-fold spiritual life) is called 'The One Who Has Descended Into This World' (Tathāgata, 如來). Ideas about suffering arising from The One Who Has Descended Into This World are based on it being changing and impermanent. If one teaches of this One Who Has Descended Into This World being impermanent, there is a great error about the nature of (enlightenment and) suffering. If one says that 'The One Who Has Descended Into This World only enters into spiritual freedom (nirvāṇa, 涅槃) through relinquishing their life of suffering, just as a fire only goes out once the wood has been extinguished', there the idea that the transcendence of suffering is only

associated with the arising of suffering. This is also said to be a perversion (about the nature of enlightenment and suffering). If one says ‘the eternal nature of The One Who Has Descended Into This World is a false belief about the reality of a self-centered existence (ātma dṛṣṭi, 我見) that leads to countless misunderstandings and one should find contentment in the impermanent nature of The One Who Has Descended Into This World’, there is the idea of suffering arising from contentment. With this arising of suffering, how can there be contentment? And so in these ideas about suffering arising from contentment, there is said to be perversions.

Conversely, there is perversion in the belief that contentment arises from suffering, that which is without contentment: With there being the bliss of contentment, so there is The One Who Has Descended Into This World but, through suffering, The One Who Has Descended Into This World would be impermanent. If one says that The One Who Has Descended Into This World is impermanent, there is the idea of suffering arising from contentment. Now, with The One Who Has Descended Into This World eternally abiding, there is said to just be the bliss of contentment. If one says that The One Who Has Descended Into This World is eternal, how can there again be any further need for ‘entry’ into spiritual freedom? If one says The One Who Has Descended Into This World is without any suffering, how can there be any further attainment of transcendence through the relinquishing of life in this world?’ And so with there being the ideas of suffering arising from contentment (and contentment arising from suffering), there is said to be the first kind of perversion.

#2 The belief that impermanence arises from eternity & that eternity arises from impermanence: Ideas about impermanence arising from eternity and eternity arising from the impermanent are also said to be perversions. With there being that which is impermanent, there is said to not be cultivation of the nature of emptiness. With there not being cultivation of the nature of emptiness, there is the shortening of a lifespan (into that which is impermanent). And so if one says ‘without cultivating the nature of emptiness and serenity there will the attainment of an eternal lifespan’ there is said to be this second kind of perversion.

#3 The belief that selflessness arises from the identity of a self & the self arises from selflessness: Ideas about selflessness arising from the identity of a self and a self arising from selflessness are also said to be perversions. People of this world speak of the existence of a self. In the purpose of the Buddha there is also said to be the existence of a self, an identity of purpose. Although people of this world speak about this existence of a self, it is not identical with the purpose of a Buddha. This is based on their belief that the identity arising in a Buddha is selfless. This idea is now said to be a perversion. With the purpose of the Buddha having a self or identity, there is said to be the nature of enlightenment (buddhatā, 佛性). The people of this world also speak of the purpose of the Buddha being selfless. This is based on their belief that selflessness arises from having an identity, or self. And so if one says that ‘the purpose of the Buddha is certainly selfless and, because of this, The One Who Has Descended Into This World taught that disciples must cultivate and learn this selflessness’, there is also said to be this third kind of perversion.

#4 The belief that purity arises from impurity & that impurity arises from purity: Ideas about purity (non-affliction) arising from impurity (affliction) and impurity arising from purity are also said to be perversions. With there being purity, so there is the eternal abiding of The One Who Has Descended Into This World, with a life that is not sustained by different kinds of lust (āmiṣa kāya, 雜食身), emotional disturbances (kleśa kāya, 煩惱身) and a body of flesh (māṃsa kāya, 肉身) made of fetters (saṃyojana, 繫縛), sinew & bone (asthi bandhana, 筋骨). If one says that The One Who Has Descended Into This World is impermanent, with a body made of different kinds of lust, sinew and bone, or that the Buddha’s purpose and the community of emancipated believers (saṅgha, 僧) will die out, there are said to be perverted beliefs about purity arising from impurity. Thoughts about impurity arising from purity are also said to be perversions. If one says that ‘In this life I am without a single purpose that is not pure and, because I am not impure, I will certainly attain entry into the place that is pure of any affliction, and here I will cultivate the meditations on impurity that are taught by The One Who Has Descended Into This World’. Such words will be falsehoods and they will be called the fourth kind of perversion.’

The Bodhisattva Kāśyapa then spoke to the Buddha, saying: ‘Blessed One! I have now for the first time attained a proper vision of this as, until now, we have all had mistaken beliefs about it.’”

32. Truths as objects of meditation:

The four truths (catvāri satyāni, 四諦) were said to be the Buddha's first teaching about the nature of life's purpose, bestowed on his first five disciples at Deer Park in Sarnath and since then realized by students on the noble path (śrāvakas, 聲聞), those learning about the nature of life's purpose through the words of others. This meditation on the four truths can be seen as being in two categories:

1. *An examination of experience*, revealing the afflicted nature of the inner mind as the ultimate cause of its outer suffering. This is the reality of #1 suffering & #2 its origination.
2. *A distinction of what is conducive to freedom from this affliction and awakening to a higher sense of life's purpose*. This is the reality of #3 transcendence & #4 the noble path.

The first two explain the cause and effect of endowment with affliction (sa āsrava, 有漏):

- a. *The truth of suffering* (duḥkha satya, 苦諦) is the existential reality of sentient existence and its dual nature of life & death. This is the symptom, *the effect of affliction*. We must all endure the pains of birth, old age, sickness & death, separation from the things we love, not acquiring what we seek, hating that which we have acquired and the fierceness arising from the projections of afflicted purposes (one's own & those of others). There are said to be three kinds:
 1. The intensity of unpleasant feelings (duḥkha duḥkhatā, 苦苦).
 2. The sense of grief and loss that is due to impermanence (vipariṇāma duḥkhatā, 壞苦).
 3. The arising of motive forces that are beyond one's control (saṃskāra duḥkhatā, 行苦).
- b. *The truth of its origination* (samudaya satya, 集諦): This is the diagnosis, *the cause of affliction*. Due to ignorance (avidyā, 無明) of the transcendental nature of life's purpose, there are the mutually dependent conditions that directly cause and sustain affliction, as already described in the three-fold & twelve-fold cycles described before. Upon truly awakening to this cycle of suffering and its origination, the turning of its wheel ceases and is transcended.

The last two explain the cause and effect of freedom from affliction (anāsrava, 無漏):

- c. *The truth of its transcendence* (nirodha satya, 滅諦) is recovery, *the effect of becoming free from affliction*. It is described as a stillness and serenity of mind (śānta, 靜), a refinement (pranīta, 妙) of that which is coarse and an emancipation (niḥsaraṇa, 離) from attachments. The ultimate transcendence is complete spiritual freedom (nirvāṇa, 涅槃) from affliction.
- d. *The truth of the noble path* (ārya mārga satya, 聖道諦) is the medicine, *the cause of freedom from affliction*. The essential nature of this path is moral commitment (śīla, 戒), mental resolve (samādhi, 定) & transcendental discernment of purpose (prajñā, 慧). It involves putting these three qualities into practice towards realizing the deliverance of spiritual freedom and the dialectical principle of awakening to an ever-greater sense of life's ultimate purpose.

The two truths (satya dvaya, 二諦) distinguish the nature of duality inherent in the very nature of sentient existence, discursive thought and the making of distinctions (vikalpa, 分別). These two refer to a distinction between the mutually dependent aspects of relative truth (samvṛti satya, 俗諦) and the unity of absolute truth (paramārtha satya, 真諦). There are countless levels in the understanding of this dilemma, which is penetrated through an enduring meditation that employs the tetralemma.²⁹ Zhìyǐ summarized these two truths in volume three of this work (and elsewhere) by saying:

"These discernments of duality have three (progressively deeper) turns:

- a. First, (sentient) existence is the relative truth (samvṛti satya, 俗諦) while the nature of emptiness is the absolute truth (paramārtha satya, 真諦).
- b. Next, the duality between emptiness and existence is the relative truth while that beyond the duality of emptiness and existence is the absolute truth.
- c. With emptiness & existence being a duality and that beyond them being without duality, duality & non-duality are both relative truths while the dialectical principle is neither with nor without any duality in the absolute truth."

The three truths (satya traya, 三諦) are the components of meditation resolving the dualities between sentient existence and non-existence (nihilism) and so penetrating the dialectical principle.

- a. The nature of emptiness (śūnyatā, 空); This is the transcendence that goes beyond attachments to the illusions of (sentient) existence

- b. The nature of temporary mental constructs (prajñapti, 假); This is the virtual nature of identities and purposes inherent in the (necessary) illusions of consciousness, the mutually dependent aspects of life's purposes found in sentient existence (existential reality).
- c. The principle of the middle way (madhyamā pratipat, 中道義) is the *meaning* ('the golden mean') that mediates between and resolves any contradictions between the first two.

Zhiyi describes the dynamic nature of these three truths through a sequence of meditations:

- a. In entering into the nature of emptiness from the mental constructs of consciousness (從假入空), there is the attainment of freedom through deconstructing attachments to the existential reality of life's identities and purposes.
- b. In entering into these mental constructs from the nature of emptiness (從空入假), there is the deconstruction of attachments to this freedom (nihilism) through compassion for sentient beings (investing identities and purposes with a greater meaning). Through this reconstruction of life's purposes, consciousness is only endowed with a virtual nature (vijñapti matratā, 唯識).
- c. With both of these meditations only being employed as skillful ways & means, there is entry into a synthesis, a perfect integration of their duality. This is the dynamic realization of an ever-greater meaning to life's identities and purposes through the dialectical principle of the middle way (兩觀為方便得入中道第一義諦).

In explaining the seamless unity of these three as found in the sūtra, Zhiyi called it 'opening up the three & revealing the one'. In explaining it in terms of his meditation system, he called this 'the three-fold observation of the single mind' (一心三觀) & 'the three-fold knowledge of the single mind' (一心三智).

33. The various different levels, stages or steps on the ladder of the bodhisattva path (avasthā, 位):

The steps on this path are variously enumerated in the greater vehicle sūtras as being from anywhere from five to ten to forty, even up to fifty-two. Here we will briefly touch on the steps which were first described in The Sūtra on the Ten Levels of Grounding (Daśa Bhūmika Sūtra, 十地經) and elaborated as forty steps in The Sūtra on the Garland of Universal Enlightenment (Mahā Vaipulya Buddha Avataṃsaka Sūtra, 大方廣佛華嚴經). The Lotus Sūtra (which was apparently composed earlier than The Sūtra on the Ten Levels of Grounding) does not distinguish the different steps in this explicit detail but its second chapter summarizes them as the four steps in realizing the knowledge & vision of enlightenment:

Opening it up (in the mind) ----- through the ten abodes of mindful introspection
 Revealing it (through one's own life) ----- through the ten practices of deliverance
 Awakening it (through another) ----- through the ten-fold dedication of one's life
 Entering it (beyond there being or not being self & other — through the ten levels of grounding

In keeping with the principle of 'opening up the three & revealing the one', Zhiyi explains that the first thirty are the provisional steps of preparation (abhūmi praviṣṭa, 地前), the merit-producing stages of bodhisattvas who are worthy found in 'the distinguished doctrine' that are then offered up, while the last ten are about the levels of the transcendental nature found in 'the perfect doctrine' for those who are truly noble.

A. Opening it up (samādāpana, 開): *the ten abodes of mindfulness on the bodhisattva's purpose*

(daśa bodhisattva dharma upasthāna, 十菩薩法住): These *ten levels of meditation with introspection* gradually open the embryonic nature of enlightenment (tathāgata garbha, 如來藏):

1. The first inspiration of the mind (prathama bodhi citta utpādika, 初發心住), the seed or vow
2. Preparing the ground (ādhībhūmika, 治地住 or 阿闍浮)
 - a. The Ground (bhūmi, 地) refers to the environment where the seed of inspiration is planted
 - b. The Preparing of the Ground refers to loving kindness for humanity
3. Coupling, or engagement (yogācāra, 修行住 or 渝阿闍) is cultivation of the (father's) mental resolve of meditation (samādhi, 定) and the (mother's) discernment of purpose (prajñā, 慧)
4. Conception, or germination of the precious life (janmaja, 生貴住 or 闍摩期), entering into the lineage of a Buddha's house, or family (kula, 家); a belief system, a school of thought

5. Endowment with preliminary skills (pūrva yoga saṃpanna, 方便具足住 or 波淪三般), gestation of the embryo of enlightenment (tathāgata garbha, 如來藏)
 6. Endowment with conviction (adhyāśaya saṃpanna, 正心住 or 阿耨三般), Sustained gestation of this embryonic nature through moral commitment, enduring observation & diligent effort.
 7. No turning back (avinivartaniyā, 不退住 or 阿惟越致) refers to the irreversible nature of resolve in this spiritual gestation.
 8. The birth of a child of destiny (kumāra bhūta, 童真住 or 鳩摩羅浮童男): With the fruit of transcendental discernment, there is rebirth of the Buddha's spiritual life in this world.
 9. The crown prince (yauva rājya, 法王子住 or 淪羅闍): As a prince of the noblest purpose, there is doing the business of the king (the Buddha) and receiving a prophecy of enlightenment (vyākaraṇa, 受記), with the ultimate purpose for a bodhisattva's life being fully revealed.
 10. The anointment (abhiṣeka prāpta, 灌頂住 or 阿惟顏): Consecration, taking the Buddha's place and so fulfilling the prophecy of enlightenment.
- B. Revealing it through one's own life (saṃdarśana, 示): *the ten distinguished practices* (daśa viśeṣa adhiḡama, 十勝行) *or ten ways of delivering* (daśa pāramitā, 十波羅蜜多) *sentient beings* from the sphere of life & death to the other shore of spiritual freedom: While the abodes are the places where bodhisattvas meditate on their objectives, in cultivating distinguished practices (putting their purposes into practice), there is the gradual accumulation of spiritual merit.
1. The deliverance of generosity (dāna pāramitā, 施波羅蜜多): The nature of generosity is an absence of any greed (alobha, 無貪) arising in one's thoughts, words and deeds. There are three kinds:
 - a. Bestowing material wealth
 - b. Bestowing fearlessness
 - c. Bestowing a sense of purpose
 2. The deliverance of moral commitment (śīla pāramitā, 戒波羅蜜多): The nature of moral commitment is remaining ever dedicated to the acceptance of training in the mission of the bodhisattvas, with all one's thoughts, words and deeds arising from this commitment. There are three kinds:
 - a. Commitment to rules of personal conduct
 - b. Commitment to virtuous purposes
 - c. Commitment to benefiting all sentient beings
 3. The deliverance of enduring observation (kṣānti pāramitā, 忍波羅蜜多): The nature of enduring observation is a diligence of effort (vīrya, 精進) in seeking transcendental discernment (prajñā, 慧) with an absence of any hatred (adveṣa, 無瞋) in one's thoughts, words & deeds. There are three kinds:
 - a. Calmly abiding anger and injury
 - b. Calmly accepting feelings of suffering
 - c. Calmly reflecting on life's greater purpose
 4. The deliverance of diligent effort (vīrya pāramitā, 精進波羅蜜多): The nature of diligence is an attentiveness (prayatna, 勤) arising in thoughts, words & deeds. There are three kinds:
 - a. Diligence in producing greatness of resolve
 - b. Diligence in acquiring virtues
 - c. Diligence in providing meaningful benefits and contentment to all sentient beings
 5. The deliverance of meditation with introspection and stillness of mind (dhyāna pāramitā, 禪波羅蜜多): This meditation ever maintains a penetration of resolve (samāpatti, 等持) with impartiality of mind (upekṣā, 捨). There are three kinds:
 - a. Securely abiding in stillness of mind
 - b. Invoking spiritual powers
 - c. Accomplishing great works

The last five have the nature of examining life's purpose (dharma pravacaya, 擇法). Aśaṅga's Summary of the Greater Vehicle Doctrine (Mahāyāna Saṃgraha, 攝大乘論) explains that

transcendental discernment of purpose (prajñā, 般若) is the primary knowledge beyond any speculations (nirvikalpa jñāna, 無分別智) while the last four (7. - 10.) are the different kinds of knowledge attained subsequently (tat prṣṭha labdha jñāna, 如後得智).

6. The deliverance of transcendental discernment (prajñā pāramitā, 般若波羅蜜多):
 - a. Discerning the empty nature of life in this world, beyond any speculations about its distinctions
 - b. Discerning the empty nature of life's transcendental purpose, beyond all speculations about it
 - c. Discerning the empty nature of any difference between life in this world and the transcendental nature of its purpose. This is a discernment beyond any speculations
 7. The deliverance of skillfulness in ways and means (upāya pāramitā, 方便波羅蜜多):
 - a. The skillfulness that turns hearts towards a greater sense of life's purpose
 - b. The skillfulness that delivers sentient beings from suffering
 8. The deliverance of vows (praṇidhāna pāramitā, 願波羅蜜多):
 - a. Vows to awaken the transcendental nature of life's purpose in all sentient beings
 - b. Vows to providing meaningful benefits and the bliss of contentment to all sentient beings
 9. The deliverance of spiritual powers (bala pāramitā, 力波羅蜜多):
 - a. The power to seek out the transcendental nature of life's purpose
 - b. The power to cultivate it in practice
 10. The deliverance of transcendental knowledge (jñāna pāramitā, 智羅蜜多):
 - a. The knowledge that finds contentment in accepting and employing the grace of the Buddha's spiritual life
 - b. The knowledge that brings this purpose to maturity in all sentient beings
- C. Awakening it through another life (pratibodhana, 悟): *The ten-fold dedication of merit* (daśa pariṇāmana, 十迴向) refers to the nature of devotion, of turning from an orientation based on the attainment of merit in one's own practice to offering it all up to another, greater purpose. This 'other life' is a reference to both the Buddha's spiritual life (working through one's own) and the lives of all other sentient beings (to which it is dedicated). In offering up one's very life and all of one's treasure to the Buddha's work, there is serving all sentient beings. This commitment was made long ago by the Buddha and is ever renewed in the present.
1. A dedication to save & protect sentient beings regardless of the circumstances (救護衆生離衆生相迴向): Dedication to rescuing and protecting all sentient beings.
 2. A dedication that is indestructible (不壞一切迴向): An unbreakable faith in this moral commitment.
 3. A dedication that serves all enlightened beings equally (等一切諸仏迴向): An enduring dedication to all regardless of their appearance, and whether they are friendly or hostile.
 4. A dedication that reaches all places everywhere (至一切處迴向): Through diligent effort, this dedication reaches everywhere, from the timeless place where the Three Treasures are found to all the places in this temporal world where sentient beings dwell.
 5. A dedication that is an inexhaustible treasury of merits and virtues (無盡功德藏迴向): Abiding in the never-ending roots of spiritual capacity that are dedicated to doing the Buddha's work, with joyful acceptance, contentment and stillness of mind.
 6. A dedication with equanimity of mind (隨順平等善根迴向), equally dedicated to planting all roots of virtue, whether great or small.
 7. A dedication that is without any attachments to emancipation (無縛無著解脫迴向), not clinging to any purpose, any end result or any emancipation for oneself.
 8. A dedication that has the transcendental character of the noble path (眞如相迴向): With one's transcendental vow ever following the dialectical principle of the middle way.
 9. A dedication that serves all sentient beings with equanimity of mind (等隨順一切衆生迴向): In serving all equally, there is the power to increase the roots of virtue found in all of them.
 10. A dedication that penetrates the infinite sphere of life's purpose (入法界無量迴向): With

dedication to the transcendental sphere of life's purpose as a whole (dharma dhātu, 法界) that is infinite like empty space, bodhisattvas attain the knowledge penetrating all roots of virtuous spiritual capacity that are countless and continue on forever without end.

D: After these thirty, there are ten levels of grounding in the bodhisattva's nobility of purpose:

Entering the transcendental nature (avatāraṇa, 入) beyond there being or not being any dualities of self & other - The Ten Levels of Grounding (daśa bhūmi, 十地): While the first thirty stages transform sentient beings in terms of self & other, the ten levels of grounding emphasize the unity of enlightenment. Having attained mindfulness of purpose (dharma smṛti upasthāna, 法念住), spiritual deliverance (pāramitā, 度) & dedication of their lives (pariṇāmana, 迴向), bodhisattvas attain an enduring meditation on the nature of life's purpose that neither arises nor perishes and transcends their lives in this world (anūtpattika dharma kṣānti, 無生法忍). This is the grounding of the spiritual life in its field of blessings (environment), beyond any distinctions of self and other, space and time. In this blending of actions (svakarma phala, 正報) and the environment they depend on (parakarma phala, 依報), these blessings endure after one leaves this world, entering a state of grace that still guides sentient beings. These ten levels of grounding in the transcendental nature of life's purpose are:

1. Grounding in its ultimate joyfulness (pramuditā bhūmi, 極喜地): This is a vision of the noble path (darśana mārga, 見道), an awakening to the nature of selflessness as well as the empty nature of purpose, realized through the deliverance of generosity (dāna pāramitā, 施波羅蜜). It is also a transcendental knowledge that is endowed with equanimity of mind (samatā jñāna, 平等性智). Because it is able to equally benefit both oneself and others, it is said to produce greatness of joy.
2. Grounding in its immaculate nature (vimalā bhūmi, 離垢地) is endowment with the deliverance of a moral commitment (śīla pāramitā, 戒波羅蜜多), a faith that is pure of any affliction. Through this there is complete elimination of any stain of emotional disturbance arising from violation of this commitment.
3. Grounding in its luminous radiance (prabhākārī bhūmi, 發光地): This is attainment of a distinguished resolve of meditation (samādhi viśeṣa, 勝定) through the deliverance of an enduring observation (kṣānti pāramitā, 忍波羅蜜多). Because there is the retaining of a continuous remembrance of the nature of life's greater purpose through prayer (vows, resolves and requests for guidance) and retention of a Buddha's words about it (mahā dharma dhāraṇī, 大法總持), there is the ability to inspire a boundlessly subtle light that is the luminescence of transcendental discernment (prajñā, 慧).
4. Grounding in its blazing discernment (arciṣmatī bhūmi, 焰慧地) is abiding in cultivation through the thirty-seven facets of awakened purpose (saptatṛiṃśad bodhipakṣa dharma, 菩提分法, see footnote 34 for more on these). Through the deliverance of diligent effort (vīrya pāramitā, 精進波羅蜜多) this blazing discernment burns up the firewood of affliction.
5. Grounding in the realization of it that is most difficult (sudurjayā bhūmi, 極難勝地) is a knowledge of both the transcendental and the conventional reality of life's purpose (paramārtha jñāna & samvṛti jñāna, 真俗兩智) and the contradictory ways they appear in the mind (ākāra, 行相). This is attained through the deliverance of meditation with introspection and stillness of mind (dhyāna pāramitā, 禪波羅蜜多). Because of the ability to combine them and make them correspond, there is a realization of the nature of life's purpose that is most difficult to attain.
6. Grounding in its presence before one (abhimukhī bhūmi, 現前地) is the transcendental knowledge that faces the conditions of consciousness arising here and now (pratītya samutpāda jñāna, 緣起智) through the deliverance of transcendental discernment (prajñā pāramitā, 般若波羅蜜多). Because it brings about a most distinguished discernment of life's purpose (prajñā viśeṣa, 最勝般若) that is beyond any speculations (nirvikalpa, 無分別), it is said to be a presence before one (abhimukhī, 現前).

7. Grounding in it that is far-reaching (dūraṃgamā bhūmi, 遠行地) is reaching beyond mental objects (objectives) that are imagined (nirnimitta, 無相) through the deliverance of skillfulness in ways and means (upāya pāramitā, 方便波羅蜜多). Because it maintains the highest possible motivation for the full functionality of virtue (ābhoga, 功用), there is a transcendence of this world as well as the realizations of the saints on the lesser vehicle who seek freedom from affliction on the individual level.
 8. Grounding in it that is unshakeable (acalā bhūmi, 不動地) is a transcendental knowledge of the nature of life's purpose that is beyond any speculations about its distinctions (nirvikalpa jñāna, 無分別智) that is continuously effortless and spontaneous, yet still involving all its imagined mental objectives and all of its diligence of effort. This is realized through the deliverance of a transcendental vow (praṇidhāna pāramitā, 願波羅蜜多). Because of this, no afflictions are able to shake it.
 9. Grounding in its sublimely compassionate understanding (sādhumatī bhūmi, 善慧地) is realizing the most subtly compassionate discernment of this transcendental nature of life's greater purpose through the deliverance of spiritual power (bala pāramitā, 力波羅蜜多), including four unobstructed powers of interpretation (catasraḥ pratisaṃvidāḥ, 四無礙解) (see footnote 26). Through the seamless blending of compassion & discernment, there is the ability to skillfully teach of life's purpose to all sentient beings.
 10. Grounding in the cloud of its purpose (dharma meghā bhūmi, 法雲地) is a reference to the great cloud of life's purpose, the grace realized through deliverance of the transcendental knowledge of purpose (jñāna pāramitā, 智). Because it harbors the waters of all virtues, it covers all the unrefined natures that rise up from the obstacles of emotional disturbance (kleśa āvaraṇa, 煩惱障) & cognitive dissonance (jñeya āvaraṇa, 所知障), just as the sky covers the ground. With both thunder and the gentle pouring down of the rain of life's transcendental purpose, there is fulfillment of the Buddha's (three-fold) spiritual life.
34. **The tree of spiritual awakening** (S. bodhi vṛkṣa, 菩提樹): This literally refers to the tree in Bodhgayā where the Buddha Śākyamuni sat contemplating the true nature of life's true purpose and attained perfect enlightenment. More figuratively, it represents the cultivation of the spiritual life through *the thirty-seven facets of spiritual awakening* (saptatrimśad bodhipakṣa dharmāḥ, 三十七道品):
- a. *The ground, the foundation sustaining the tree* (sthāna, 處) represents the mindfulness of the four subjective spheres (catvāri smṛty upasthānāni, 四念處) that are sustenance of the spiritual life:
 - #1 Mindfulness of the body (kāya smṛty upasthāna, 身念處)
 - #2 Mindfulness of emotional feelings (vedanā smṛty upasthāna, 受念處)
 - #3 Mindfulness of thoughts (citta smṛty upasthāna, 心念處); mental distinctions (vikalpa, 分別) and associations (saṃjñā, 想)
 - #4 Mindfulness of purposes (dharma smṛty upasthāna, 法念處); motivations (saṃskāra, 行) and intent (cintanā, 思)
 - b. *The tree's deepening roots* represent the four-fold cultivation of the roots of spiritual capacity (catuḥ kuśala mūla, 四善根):
 1. The four moral exertions (catvāri samyak prahāṇāni, 四正勤) refers to the heating, or warming up (uṣmagata, 煖), generating mindfulness through invoking prayers, resolves and vows:
 - #5 Those that cultivate and further develop existing virtues (utpannānāṃ kuśalānāṃ dharmāṇāṃ sthitaye ... chandaṃ janayati, 已生善令增長)
 - #6 Those that produce virtues that have not yet arisen (anutpannānāṃ kuśalānāṃ dharmāṇāṃ utpādāya chandaṃ janayati, 未生善令得生)
 - #7 Those with the diligence to eliminate existing evil (utpannānāṃ akuśalānāṃ dharmāṇāṃ prahāṇāya chandaṃ janayati, 已生惡令永斷)
 - #8 Those that produce vigilance to prevent evil that has not yet arisen (anutpannānāṃ pāpakānāṃ akuśalānāṃ dharmāṇāṃ anutpādāya chandaṃ janayati, 未生惡令不生)

2. The four magical feet (catvāra ṛddhipādāḥ, 四如意足). This refers to peak experiences (mūrdhān, 頂), intensified moments of mindfulness attained through deliberation:
 - #9 Intensified mindfulness of aspiration (chanda, 欲)
 - #10 Intensified mindfulness of diligent effort (vīrya, 勤)
 - #11 Intensified mindfulness of words and their meaning (mimāṃsā, 觀)
 - #12 Intensified mindfulness of true intent (citta, 心)
3. The five virtuous capacities (pañca indriyāṇi, 五根): This refers to enduring observation (kṣānti, 忍) through ever deepening meditation:
 - #13 Enduring faith (śraddhā, 信) in a transcendent moral purpose to life
 - #14 Enduring diligence of effort (vīrya, 精進) in its observation
 - #15 Enduring remembrance (smṛti, 念) of it
 - #16 Enduring resolve (samādhi, 定) of meditation in realizing it
 - #17 Enduring discernment (prajñā, 慧) of the transcendental nature of this purpose
4. The five powers of spiritual capacity (pañca bālāni, 五力): This refers to moments of mindfulness on one's greater purpose in this world (laukika agradharmā, 世第一法):
 - #18 The power of faith overcoming doubt (vicikitsā, 疑)
 - #19 The power of diligent effort overcoming apathy (styāna, 惛眠)
 - #20 The power of remembrance overcoming lapses of forgetfulness (musītasamṛtitā, 失念)
 - #21 The power of mental resolve overcoming distraction (vikṣepa, 散亂)
 - #22 The power of discernment overcoming delusion (moha, 癡)
- c. The tree's trunk & limbs (aṅga, 支) branch out into seven limbs, rising up from the ground towards the heavens of transcendental purpose. These represent the seven branches of spiritual awakening (sapta bodhyaṅgāni, 七覺支) (a trunk, three branches to the left & three to the right):

The three limbs of meditation with introspection (vipaśyanā, 觀心), the penetration of the inner mind that fosters transcendental discernment of purpose (prajñā, 慧):

 23. Examination of purpose (dharma pravacaya, 擇法), the seeking (vitarka, 尋) & discovery (vicāra, 伺) of prayer & meditation, overcoming doubt (vicikitsā, 疑) & hesitation (saṃśaya, 無決斷)
 24. Diligence of effort (vīrya, 精進), exerting the effort to maintain this introspective observation, overcoming apathy (styāna, 惛) & fatigue (middha, 眠)
 25. Rejoicing (prīti, 喜), the rapture that comes from the illumination of transcendental meaning, the answer to prayer, overcoming disinterest (vyāpāda, 厭) & antipathy (pratigha 瞋恚)

The trunk, the one limb that balances and centers the others:

 26. Remembrance (smṛti, 念), a continuity of mindfulness here & now about the transcendental nature of life's purpose, overcoming lapses of forgetfulness (musītasamṛtitā, 失念) and so maintaining a proper balance between meditation with introspection (vipaśyanā, 觀心) and stillness of mind (śamatha, 止)

The three limbs of inner calm (śamatha, 止), the stillness of mind that fosters the bliss of contentment (sukha, 樂) & singleness of mind (ekāgratā, 一心):

 27. Confidence (praśrabdhi, 輕安), the peace of mind and self-assurance arising from an elevated sense of purpose that overcomes worry (auddhatya, 掉舉) & regret (kaukṛtya, 惡念)
 28. Mental resolve (samādhi, 定) overcoming distraction (vikṣepa, 散) and desire for sensual gratification (kāmacchanda, 樂欲)
 29. Impartiality (upekṣā, 捨), the equanimity of mind attained through discerning the seamless integration of the nature of emptiness (śūnyatā, 空), the virtual nature of mental constructs (prajñāpti, 假) and the dialectical principle of the middle way (madhyamā pratipad, 行中道)
- d. The seat under the tree, the place of cultivation; From here one nears enlightenment through the three-fold training (śikṣa, 學), the eight steps on the noble path (aṣṭa ārya mārga, 八聖道):

The three steps in moral commitment (śīla, 戒):

 30. Proper conduct (samyak karmānta, 正業)

31. Proper speech (samyag vāc, 正語)
32. Proper livelihood (samyag ājīva, 正命)
- The three steps in mental resolve* (samādhi, 定):
33. Proper exertion (samyag vyāyāma, 正精進)
34. Proper mindfulness, or continuous remembrance (samyak smṛti, 正念),
35. Proper resolve (samyak samādhi, 正定)
- The two steps in the transcendental discernment of purpose* (prajñā, 慧):
36. Proper vision (samyag dṛṣṭi, 正見)
37. Proper deliberation (samyak saṃkalpa, 正思惟)
- 35. Atoms, or particles of dust** (paramāṇu, 極微): The building blocks of gross physical form (audārika rūpa, 麤色) that cannot be any further divided are given the name ‘atoms’. Although ultimately minute, these atoms are said to still occupy space. In this chapter they are used to illustrate the highest possible number of things that are impermanent.
- 36. Prophecies of enlightenment** (S. vyākaraṇa, 得記): Moments when Buddhas bestow bodhisattvas with an awakening to the ultimate purpose for their lives as Buddhas. At this moment, the Buddha gives them #1 names for their spiritual lives that describe their purposes, #2 names for the pure lands that they will create (for others), #3 how long their lives in these lands will be and #4 how long the dispensations of their purposes (legacies) will last after they have passed from these lands.
- 37. The meantime** (S. antara, J. chūgen, 中間): This is a reference to the interval or duration between cause & effect, the beginning of time (from eternity) and the present (here & now). This is used to distinguish between the original (vow) of the enlightenment (本覺) that is timeless & eternal and the (‘first’) manifestations of enlightenment (始覺) that arise and then perish, such as those of the young Buddha Śākyamuni in Bodhgaya and the Buddha named ‘Steadily Shining Beacon’ (S. Dīpaṃkara, J. Nendo Butsu, 然燈佛) who first predicted his future enlightenment long ago.
- 38. The twelve different narrative styles** (dvādaśāṅga dharma pravacana, 十二部經) in the sūtras: The last three are said to only be found in the greater vehicle scriptures.
- #1 Prose discourses of the Buddha (sūtra, 經 or 長行)
 - #2 Verse that reiterates prose (geya, 重頌)
 - #3 Verse that stands by itself (gāthā, 孤起頌)
 - #4 Historical narratives (nidāna, 因緣)
 - #5 Past lives of the Buddha’s disciples (itivṛttaka, 本事)
 - #6 Past lives of the Buddha (jātaka, 本生)
 - #7 Miracle stories (adbhuta dharma, 未曾有)
 - #8 Allegories, parables (avadāna, 譬喻)
 - #9 Doctrinal expositions, often as questions & answers (upadeśa, 論議)
 - #10 Spontaneous teachings, unprompted by disciples’ questions (udāna, 自說)
 - #11 Teachings that deal with broad, universal principles (vaipulya, 方廣)
 - #12 Prophecies of the future (vyākaraṇa, 授記)
- 39. Receptivity** (āśaya, 機) refers to the potential of sentient beings for approaching enlightenment through faith and other spiritual capacities (indriya, 根) such as diligence of effort, remembrance, resolve and discernment of purpose.
- Sympathy** (upanayana, 感) refers to the Buddha’s ability to detect these capacities (or the lack of them) in sentient beings so that they may be guided to approach enlightenment when there are opportunities at hand (here & now).
- Response** (nirmāṇa, 應) refers to manifestations of enlightenment (spiritual transformation) in forms

that are in accordance with their capacities and needs. In this world (which we must all endure together), these forms especially involve visible forms and voiced sounds.

When a receptivity for this transformation in sentient beings is detected, the spiritual life of the Buddha responds with a manifestation that is in accordance with their capacities and there are the mutually dependent causes & conditions (hetu pratyaya, 因緣) in the transmission of enlightenment.

40. The three-fold cause of enlightenment (tri hetu buddhatā, 三因佛性):

- a. The conditional cause (pratyaya hetu, 緣因佛性) refers to spiritual transformation through the processes of cause and effect (karma & retribution), the mutually dependent causes and conditions that increase merit through thought, word and deed.
- b. The revealing cause (jñāpaka hetu, 了因佛性) refers to the (grace of) knowledge & discernment that reveals life's higher purpose.
- c. The main cause (samyak hetu, 正因佛性) refers to the resolve of purpose (that descends from the Buddha's transcendental vow).

41. The reward of blossoms (S. puṣpa vipāka, 花報 or 華報) refers to transient benefits in this world for those still in the sphere of desire while the reward of fruits (S. phala vipāka, 果報) refers to spiritual benefits for noble beings who transcend this world.

42. The four (progressively deeper) levels of Buddhist doctrine about life's purpose according to Zhìyǐ:

- a. *The doctrine on the three baskets* (tripiṭaka, 三藏): Traditionally the scrolls of the scriptures and discourses were sorted by the members of the monastic community (saṃgha, 僧) into three different baskets according to their type:
 - a. The basket of scriptures (sūtra piṭaka, 經藏) contained the actual words of the Buddha, said to be compiled through their faithful remembrance by his close disciple Ānanda.
 - b. The basket of the monastic code (vinaya piṭaka 律藏) contained rules of conduct for the community, said to originally be compiled through their remembrance by the disciple Upali.
 - c. The basket of the spiritual science (śāstra or abhidharma) defined the terms used by the Buddha and provided metaphysical explanations of life's purposes, based on the Buddha's teachings. These were gleaned from the Buddha's words by teachers in the monastic community after the Buddha's death.

In terms of 'the three turns of the wheel'⁵⁶ found in the teachings from India, this 'first turn' was about the empty nature of the self (ātman, 我) but real nature of life's purposes (dharma, 法). Zhìyǐ explained that this was the most literal understanding of the Buddha's teachings found in the earliest teachings about the cause & effect of life's purpose, e.g., the four truths, the arising & perishing of affliction, spiritual cultivation & realization, etc., particularly as they are understood by those on the two lesser vehicles of attaining freedom from affliction on the individual level - for students of life's purpose (śrāvakas, 聲聞) and those awakened to the afflicted conditions of sentient existence in their own lives (pratyeka buddhas, 緣覺). However, this can also refer to the teachings about the bodhisattva path when only viewing them from the point of view of their cause & effect (cultivation & realization), without accounting for its transcendental nature through an understanding of the nature of emptiness. In this case, Zhìyǐ sometimes called this 'the doctrine on the six kinds of spiritual deliverance' (ṣaḍ pāramitā, 六度) or 'the doctrine on the arising & perishing of life's purposes' (utpanna niruddha 生滅).

- b. *The general doctrine* (通教): In terms of 'the three turns of the wheel' in the teachings from India, this was on the empty nature of both the self & life's purposes. In terms of Zhìyǐ's understanding, it was the teaching common to all three vehicles of spiritual awakening, for both those on the two lesser vehicles as well as those on the greater vehicle of the bodhisattvas. It involved awakening to the transcendental nature of life's purpose (tathatā, 眞如) through a greater penetration of the nature of emptiness (śūnyatā, 空). In these teachings found in the early (Prajñā Pāramitā) sūtras on the greater vehicle, there is an understanding that all the teachings about the cause & effect of life's purpose, including the four truths, the arising & perishing of affliction, spiritual cultivation

and realization, etc., are all just temporary mental constructs (prajñapti, 假), without a real existential reality of their own. In penetrating this transcendental nature, there is getting beyond all speculations about identities of a self (ātman, 我) and its purposes (dharma, 法), and the discarding of all attachments, even those to one's own virtues and realizations. Because of its emphasis on the nature of emptiness, Zhìyǐ also called this 'the doctrine on life's purpose that neither arises nor perishes' (anutpanna aniruddha, 不生滅).

- c. **The distinguished doctrine** (別教): In terms of 'the three turns of the wheel' found in the teachings from India, this was a realization that there is only a virtual (dream-like) nature of consciousness (vijñapti matratā, 唯識) as a 'self' (ātman, 我) and its 'purposes' (dharma, 法). In terms of Zhìyǐ's understanding, this was the teaching specific to bodhisattvas, those realizing an ever-higher sense of life's purpose through the spiritual deliverance of fellow sentient beings. In these teachings found in the later sūtras on the greater vehicle, there is an ever more refined understanding of the transcendental nature & its three truths (the nature of emptiness, the constructs of life's purpose & the dialectical principle of the middle way) and an awakening to this virtual nature in which all of the countless constructs about the existence of life's purpose (including its nature of emptiness) only serve as skillful means in the deliverance of sentient beings to realization of both spiritual freedom (nirvāṇa, 涅槃) and a sublime sense of life's true purpose (saddharma, 正法). Being 'distinguished' (viśeṣa, 別) can be understood two ways:
 - #1 Being on the bodhisattva vehicle means having an ever higher or 'more distinguished' sense of life's purpose.
 - #2 The teachings of this doctrine most explicitly distinguish all of the gradual and progressively greater steps on this path, often enumerated as forty-two or fifty-two.³³
 Due to its emphasis on the use of the countless different constructs in the virtual nature of consciousness, Zhìyǐ also called this 'the doctrine on the infinite meanings of life's purpose' (ananta nirdeśa, 無量義).
- d. **The perfect doctrine** (圓教) is the highest realization in which all attachments to the three vehicles are discarded and only the one universal vehicle of enlightenment remains, as found in The Lotus and Nirvāṇa Sūtras. In this doctrine, there is a seamless penetration of the dialectical principle of the middle way in fulfillment of the transcendental vow of the Buddha's spiritual life through one's own life in this world. Due to its seamless integration with the dialectical principle, Zhìyǐ also called this 'the doctrine of life's purpose that is effortless, spontaneous and beyond any further need for self-consciously induced motivation' (anabhisaṃskāra, 無作)

43. **The benefits (anuśaṃsa 利益) from visible forms (形, rūpa) and voiced sounds (vāk, 聲):**

Visible forms and voiced sounds are the two kinds of sensory objects that are most effective in reaching and penetrating the mind during spiritual transformation in our world because the senses of smell, taste and touch are more easily distracted by desire. (This is why the object of worship and the invocation of the sacred words are most explicitly manifested in ritual worship while smells (incense), tastes (food offerings) & touch (clothing, adornments such as prayer beads, etc.) are more subliminally employed). In his explanation of the word 'sūtra' (經), the following citation from volume eight of Zhìyǐ's 'Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra' (C. Fǎhuá Xuányì, J. Hokke Gengi, 法華玄義) describes the special benefits transmitted from the spiritual life of the Buddha (as the sūtra) in terms of visible forms and voiced sounds:

"Explaining the word 'sūtra' in terms of its different functions: If we settle on 'scripture' as the most valid translation of the word 'sūtra', how does it function? Since long ago, it has been said that there are three ways:

- a. **The scripture functions as a voiced sound** (vāk, 聲): Just as when the Buddha was in this world, the golden mouth (reciting his words) propagates the teaching about the true nature of life's purpose. With just the sound of this voice explaining and interpreting it, those who listen are awakened to it. Because of this, it is said that the scripture serves as a voice. On this, The Longer Version of the Sūtra on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment says:

"From good spiritual friends (kalyāṇa mitra, 善知識) it is heard."

b. *The scripture functions as a visible form* (rūpa, 色): When the Buddha was in this world, it was just the sound of his voice that served as the scripture. Now that the Buddha has departed from this world, ink on paper (also) serves to maintain and transmit it and so properly serve as visible form for the scripture. On this, The Longer Version says:

“It is heard from seeing the scrolls of the scripture.”

c. *The scripture functions as a mental object, an objective purpose* (dharma, 法): Through one’s own deliberations, the mind is connected to the true nature of life’s purpose, not because of someone else’s teaching about it, and not just because of something written with paper and ink. Only through the dawning of one’s mind is spiritual awakening really known. This is the scripture as a mental object, an objective purpose. And so it is said:

“Through cultivation of my life’s purpose is there my own knowledge of enlightenment.”

The scripture is bestowed in this land we must all endure together (sahā loka, 娑婆世界) through consciousness of three (of the six) kinds of sense objects.

- a. Those who benefit through hearing it (śrotra vijñāna, 耳識) are able to distinguish the sound of its voice and so retain its spiritual awakening in mind. This is the scripture serving through voiced sounds and no other way.
- b. Those who benefit through thinking about it (mano vijñāna, 意識) are able to polish their deliberations on it and so maintain their determination. This is the scripture serving through its objective purpose and in no other way.
- c. Those who benefit through a vision of it (cakṣuḥ vijñāna, 眼識) study and examine its words and letters and so grasp its principles. This is the scripture serving as a visible form and no other way.

With regards to the other three kinds of consciousness

- * The nose will not fathom the scripture by smelling its paper and ink.
- * The body will not be able to understand it by touching its scrolls.
- * Could the tongue distinguish right and wrong through tasting its words and letters?

When those from other lands use the six kinds of sense objects they also have their preferences in using one kind or another. As The Sūtra on the Teachings of the Layman ‘Of Spotless Reputation’ (Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra, 維摩詰所說經) says:

“By bestowing a single kind of food to all (then you may also eat of it) in being able to have equanimity of mind with regards to all kinds of food, there is also equanimity of mind with regards to all of life’s purposes. In having equanimity of mind with regards to all of life’s purposes, there is also equanimity with regards to all kinds of food.”

This is about a preference for use of the tongue in dealing with the scripture.

- * In some lands, divine clothes touching the body leads to spiritual awakening. This illustrates a preference for the scripture to employ the sense of touch.
- * Some see the radiance emanating from the Buddha and are spiritually awakened. Here there is a preference for using the scripture through the sense of visible form.
- * For some, there is spiritual awakening upon observing the serene transcendence of the mind that is beyond any words, and so there is the preference for using the scripture through the consciousness of thought.
- * Like a perfumed land, the Buddha’s work emits a fresh fragrance. This illustrates a preference for using the scripture through the sense of smell.

In other places, different sense faculties have a sharper consciousness, and so different sense objects are used there to apprehend the scripture. In our land, the senses of touch, taste and smell are dull, with noses not like those among donkeys, dogs and deer. How can we use fragrances, flavors and physical contacts to penetrate the sūtra? (此土三根識鈍，鼻不及驢狗鹿等，云何於香味觸等能得通達?)

Question: So with the sense faculties being keen, the scripture is apprehended through their objects, but with the faculties being dull they are not. Is that right?

Answer: The six different objects of consciousness constitute the sensory sphere of life’s purpose, while the scripture is its very existential nature. It is not then through the keenness of the sense faculties that the scripture is retained and kept in mind?”

44. **The four means of accomplishing the objective** (catvāri siddhānta, 四悉檀) of opening up the knowledge and vision of enlightenment in sentient beings
- Accomplishing the objective through the worldly means of adapting to the needs and aspirations of sentient beings (laukika siddhānta, 世界悉檀) to teach them about the nature of life's purpose
 - Accomplishing the objective through arousing their personal capacities that are worthy and noble (prāti pauraṣika siddhānta, 為人悉檀)
 - Accomplishing the objective through correcting their errors and healing their sicknesses (prati pākṣika siddhānta, 對治悉檀)
 - Accomplishing the objective through revealing the ultimate meaning (pāramārthika siddhānta, 第一義悉檀) found in the dialectical principle of the middle way

45. **Joyful acceptance** (S. anumodanā, 隨喜) is described as both the ultimate cause and the ultimate effect all of the blessings (merits & virtues) that arise from this spiritual life (the sūtra). In chapter seventeen of The Lotus Sūtra On Distinguishing the Merits & Virtues (Punya Paryāya, 分別功德品), the Buddha described the four dimensions of faith and five facets of putting it into practice (五品).
- First he described the four dimensions of faith in the Buddha's words (buddha vacana, 佛語) that are said to arise while he is still in this world. These four are:
 - An instant understanding realized through (the power of) faith (一念信解)
 - A general understanding the intent of the words (略解言趣) (not needing too much detail)
 - Broadly teaching of it to people (廣為人說)
 - Attaining a realization of it through a vision endowed with this deep faith (信深觀成)
 - Then he described the five facets of putting this faith into practice (五品) after the Buddha has passed from this world through the words of the sūtra. These five include:
 - Joyful acceptance (anumodanā, 隨喜品) of the sūtra
 - Reading it and reciting its words (vācayiṣyati svādhyāyiṣyati, 讀誦品)
 - Teaching about it to others (說法品)
 - Practicing the six kinds of deliverance while at the same time faithfully accepting the sūtra and ever keeping it in mind (兼行六度品)
 - Perfecting the six kinds of deliverance (正行六度品); This refers to a seamless blending of spiritual deliverance with the sūtra's practice (through the transcendental vow of the Buddha's spiritual life).

Chapters eighteen (On the Merits & Virtues Attained Through Joyful Acceptance) and nineteen (On the Merits and Virtues of the Teacher of Life's Purpose) then teach how joyful acceptance, the first of these five facets of putting this faith into practice, are the ultimate cause (in chapter eighteen) and the ultimate effect (in chapter nineteen) of all of the blessings (merits & virtues) that arise from this spiritual life (the sūtra).

46. **The aroused lion** (S. siṃha vikrīḍita samādhi, 師子奮迅), the resolve of the bodhisattva that travels fearlessly through the sphere of life's purpose, doing the work of the Buddha. There are said to be two mutually dependent aspects of this resolve:
- The fearless resolve of entering into meditation on the transcendental nature (入禪奮迅三昧) &
 - The fearless resolve of leaving this meditation to engage in this world in order to teach and spiritually transform sentient beings (出禪奮迅三昧)
47. **The four devils** (catvāro mārāḥ 四魔) are the external forces that prevent enlightenment through their powers of distraction and playing on ignorance, fear (hatred), temptation (greed) and vanity (pride):
- The devil in emotional disturbances* (kleśa māra, 煩惱魔): The mental objects of greed, hate, stupidity, doubt, pride and false belief that distract one from resolve and singleness of mind
 - The devil in the projections of one's own purpose* (skandha māra, 陰魔): The trap of believing in the reality of one's self-centered existence (and its vanity) that prevents awakening to the transcendental nature

- c. *The devil in mortality* (mr̥dyu māra, 死魔): The fearsome specter of death and one's own mortality
- d. *The devil 'prince of the sixth heaven'* (devaputra māra, 第六天魔王子): Objects of temptation, the allure of attaining ecstasy, glory & power over other sentient beings (the fever of heaven and delusions of grandeur).

48. The ten kinds of unwholesome conduct (S. daśa akuśalāḥ karma pathāḥ, 十惡業道): :

- a. Three from deeds of the body: #1 killing, #2 stealing, #3 sexual immorality
- b. Four from words of the mouth: #4 false speech #5 a double tongue, #6 hateful speech, #7 dissembling speech
- c. Three from thoughts of the mind: #8 greedy desire, #9 hatred and anger, #10 flawed beliefs

On the ten kinds of virtuous actions (daśa kuśalāḥ karma pathāḥ, 十善業道) **made on the bodhisattva path:** The following is a description of these ten from volume 35 in Śikṣānanda's translation of The Sūtra on the Great Garland of Universal Enlightenment (Mahā Vaipulya Buddha Avatamsaka Sūtra, 大方廣佛華嚴經):

(On the three kinds of deeds):

1. By nature, bodhisattvas who abide at the levels of grounding (bhūmi, 地) in the transcendental nature of life's purpose never *kill* sentient beings. Without brutality or the need to use weapons, they do not harbor feelings of anger or resentment. With humility, they are full of good will and forgiveness towards sentient beings, never turning to thoughts about doing them harm.
2. By nature, these bodhisattvas never *steal*. They are always perfectly satisfied with their own possessions and, with kindness and good will towards others, do not encroach upon their belongings. If they have thoughts about the possessions of others, it is never with an intention of taking them. They would never even think of taking a single blade of grass not given to them, much less any other possession.
3. By nature, they never commit acts of *sexual immorality*. They are satisfied with their own spouses and do not seek those of others. They do not bear any thoughts of desire or lust for others' spouses or lovers, much less act on thoughts of having sexual relations with them.

(On the four kinds of words)

4. By nature, they never *speak falsely*. They speak the truth, saying what is so and what is appropriate to the occasion. Even in their dreams they do not desire to use words to deceive or cover up the truth, much less do so consciously.
5. By nature, they never speak with *a double tongue*. They do not wish to sow dissension among sentient beings or distress or harm them in any way. They do not accuse others to put them down, nor do they speak ill of them behind their back. They do not try to break up those who are together and they do not try to increase the rift between those who are divided. They do not rejoice or take pleasure in divisiveness, and do not use speech that will cause it, whether such speech is valid or not.
6. By nature, they never have *a hateful mouth*. This is speech that is poisonous and injurious, coarse and rude, hurtful to others, speech that makes others angry and hateful, and speech that is openly or covertly mean, cheap and low, unpleasant to hear, angry and hateful like a fire burning up the mind, tied up in resentments, hot and distressful, impossible to care for or like, or capable of harming themselves or others. Having completely forsaken this kind of speech and freed themselves from it, they always speak with words that are kind, affectionate, gentle and pleasing to hear. They give joy to those who hear them and skillfully reach peoples' hearts. Their speech is graceful and refined, authoritative, loved and enjoyed by all people, bringing comfort to their bodies and joy to their minds.
7. By nature, they never use *dissembling speech* that is silken and flowery. Their speech is always intentional and judicious, appropriate to the occasion, truthful, meaningful, logical and reasonable, carefully considered, thoughtful and well measured. Even when telling a joke, bodhisattvas are always intentional and judicious, and they are never just prattling nonsense.

(On the three kinds of thoughts)

8. By nature, they are without *greedy desire* for the wealth or belongings of others. They do not seek it nor even wish for it.

9. By nature, they are free from *anger and hatred*. For sentient beings they always inspire a mind of mercy and benevolence, offering sympathy, joy, friendship, and acceptance. They are forever free of anger, resentment, malice and the heat of distress. They are always considerate and act with good will, kindness and a desire to care for and be of benefit to others.
10. And, being free from *flawed beliefs*, they always remain steadfast on the straight and noble path that leads to enlightenment. Not practicing in divination, fortune-telling, sorcery or other superstitious beliefs, their vision is straight and true, without any deception or flattery. Their resolute faith is always in the Three Treasures:
 - * The enlightened being, the teacher (Buddha, 佛)
 - * The purpose of life, that taught (Dharma, 法), and
 - * The community of faith, those taught (Saṃgha, 僧).'

Like this, the great bodhisattvas unceasingly keep to the ten-fold path of virtuous actions and make this thought:

‘No sentient beings fall into the destiny of hell without making the ten evil kinds of actions (daśa akuṣālāḥ karma pathāḥ, 十惡業道). I must therefore cultivate the proper practice of virtuous actions for myself and encourage others to do so as well. Why is this so? Because it is impossible to make others cultivate this path if one is unable to cultivate it for oneself.’

These great bodhisattvas further make these thoughts:

- a. The paths of the ten karmic deeds that lack virtue lead to the destinies of hell, brutality & hunger.
- b. The path of ten virtuous actions leads to the spiritual realms of humanity and heaven, ultimately resulting in the highest heaven of divine bliss above all others in the sphere of form (akaniṣṭha deva loka, 究竟天).
- c. This path of ten virtuous actions further leads to cultivation of the transcendental knowledge attained through spiritual training (śikṣa, 學). However, in being narrow-minded and fearing the three-fold realm of sentient existence, they are deficient in compassion, only understand after hearing from others and only ride the vehicle of the student of the noble path (śrāvaka, 聲聞) who seeks freedom from affliction on the individual level.
- d. With further cultivation, this path of ten virtuous actions leads to purification from all afflictions so that one seeks freedom from them on the individual level without further need for instruction from others, ultimately reaching the peak existential experience (bhavāgra, 有頂), the boundlessness of the dialectical principle that is beyond any mental associations (naiva saṃjñā anāsaṃjñā āyatana, 非想非非想無邊處). Although deeply understanding the causality of life’s purpose, they still lack the skillfulness of ways and means needed (to awaken others) and only ride the vehicle called ‘the solitary awakening’ (pratyeka buddha, 緣覺 or 辟支佛).
- e. With further cultivation, this path of ten virtuous actions leads to purification from affliction on a greater level that is broad-minded and without limitations. Being full of sympathy and compassion for others, one is skillful in the management of ways and means that are inspired by great vows to never forsake other sentient beings. In seeking the great transcendental knowledge of the Buddhas, there are the bodhisattva’s levels of grounding (bhūmi, 地) in the purification and healing of sentient beings through cultivation of all the different kinds of spiritual deliverance (pāramitā, 度). This is attaining the broad and great practice of the bodhisattvas.
- f. With the path of these ten virtuous actions reaching its ultimate conclusion, there are all the different kinds of purification that lead to realization of the ten spiritual powers, the four kinds of fearlessness and attainment of all of the different virtues that are unique to perfectly enlightened beings (Buddhas). May we now practice these ten kinds of virtuous acts so that their true purpose will become fulfilled.’

Bodhisattvas must keep training until they become skillful in all these different ways and means.

These great bodhisattvas then also make these thoughts:

‘The path of these ten evil actions cause hell in the worst case, brutality in the middle case & hunger in the least case.

1. *Killing* sentient beings can make one fall into hell, brutality and hunger. In terms of human destiny, it leads to two kinds of retribution: #1 sickness & #2 the shortening of life.

2. *Stealing* can also make one fall into these three evil roads. In terms of human destiny, it leads to two kinds of retribution: #1 poverty & #2 shared possession of property and a resultant lack of any sense of investment or responsibility for ownership.
3. *Acts of sexual immorality* can make one fall into these three evil roads. In terms of human destiny, they lead to: #1 unfaithful spouses & #2 untrusting associates.
4. *False speech* can make one fall into these three evil roads. In terms of human destiny, it leads to: #1 slander and ridicule & #2 the deception of others.
5. *A double tongue* can make one fall into these three evil roads. In terms of human destiny, it leads to: #1 disobedience and loss of followers & #2 intimates and family that are corrupt and evil.
6. *A hateful mouth* can make one fall into these three evil roads. In terms of human destiny, it leads to always hearing: #1 malevolent voices & #2 arguments.
7. *Dissembling speech* can make one fall into these three evil roads. In terms of human destiny, it leads to: #1 lack of trust & #2 lack of clarity in speech.
8. *Greed* can make one fall into these three evil roads. In terms of human destiny, it leads to: #1 dissatisfaction & #2 endless ambition.
9. *Anger and hatred* can make one fall into these three evil roads. In terms of human destiny, it leads to suffering as a result of: #1 other people's merits & flaws & #2 other people's distress & malice.
10. *False beliefs* can make one fall into these three evil roads. In terms of human destiny, it leads to: #1 abiding in schools of false views & #2 minds that are crooked and deceitful."

These ten evil actions are able to produce a great host of countless and boundless sufferings.

Therefore, bodhisattvas make this thought.

'We must completely forsake the path leading to the ten evil kinds of action and abide in the bliss of contentment found in the garden of life's true purpose by means of the ten virtuous acts. Upon abiding in them through one's own life, one encourages others to do so as well.'

49. Spiritual transformation (āśraya parāvṛtti, 轉依) of the eight projections of sensory consciousness (vijñāna, 識) into four kinds of transcendental knowledge (jñāna, 智), as described in the School of Engaged Meditation (S. Yogācāra, also called Dharma Lakṣaṇa & Vijñapti Matratā, 法相宗 or 唯識宗):

- a. *Knowledge of the perfect mirror of life's greater purpose* (mahā ādarśa jñāna, 大圓鏡智), attained through spiritual restoration of the subconscious store of memory (ālaya vijñāna, 阿賴耶識)
- b. *Knowledge of this purpose with the nature of equanimity* (samatā jñāna, 平等性智), attained through spiritual restoration of the deliberating & calculating mind of self-interest (manas, 末那)
- c. *Knowledge of observing this purpose with subtly compassionate discernment* (pratyavekṣaṇa jñāna, 妙觀察智), attained through spiritual restoration of the mind imagining and distinguishing objects (mano vijñāna, 意識)
- d. *Knowledge of its accomplishment* (kṛtyānuṣṭhāna jñāna, 成所作智), attained through spiritual restoration of the five sensory projections of consciousness (pañca vijñāna, 五識)

50. The twenty-five levels of sentient existence (pañca viṃśati bhava, 二十五有) is an elaboration on the three-fold sphere of sentient existence (trayo dhātavaḥ, 三界):

The fourteen realms in the sphere of desire (kāma dhātu, 欲界):

The four lower spiritual destinies in the sphere of desire:

1. The destiny of hell (naraka gati, 地獄)
2. The destiny of brutality (tiragyoni gati, 畜生)
3. The destiny of hungry demons (preta gati, 餓鬼)
4. The destiny of the giants of ego (asura gati, 阿修羅)

The four continents, or four classes of human society in the sphere of desire:

5. The Western Land of Sacrificial Rites (Apara Godānīya, 西牛貨) containing the professing class (brahmins, 婆羅門), scholars and ministers of the word (clerics), intellectual and moral leaders.
6. The Eastern Land of Conquerors (Pūrva Videha, 東毘提訶) containing the ruling class (kṣatriyas, 剎帝利), military, civil and political leaders, makers, enforcers and judges of worldly law.

7. The Northern Land of Plenty (Uttara Kuru, 北俱盧) containing the business class (vaiśyas, 吠舍), owners and managers of the means of production, leaders of industry & agriculture.
8. The Southern Land of the Jungle , or Wilderness (Jambū Dvīpa, 南閻浮提), containing the servant class, manual labor and menial help (śūdras, 首陀羅).

The six heavens in the sphere of desire:

9. The four kings of heaven (catur devarājā, 四天王) protecting humanity
10. The thirty-three gods of heaven (trāyastriṃśa devaloka, 忉利天) ruling over human nature
11. The heaven of submission (suyāma devaloka, 須夜摩天); judgment, repentance & atonement
12. The heaven of rebirth in grace (tuṣita devaloka, 兜率天) of forgiveness, redemption & rejuvenation
13. The heaven of mastery over pleasant spiritual transformations (sunirmita devaloka, 樂變天), where there is complete mastery over the sphere of desire in one's own life
14. The heaven of mastery over the transformations of others (paranirmita vaśavartin devaloka, 他化自在天), where there is mastery over all lives in the sphere of desire.

The seven heavens of meditation on the objective reality in the sphere of form (rūpa dhātu, 色界):

15. The first level of meditation (prathama dhyāna, 初靜慮), seeking and discovery through prayer
16. The greatness of the creator (mahā brahma devaloka, 大梵天), author of the word, lord of speech
17. The second level of meditation (dvitīya dhyāna, 第二靜慮), illuminating transcendental meaning
18. The third level of meditation (tṛtīyaṃ dhyānam, 第三靜慮), the bliss of contentment
19. The fourth level of meditation (caturtha dhyānam, 第四靜慮), perfect singleness of mind
20. The heaven of meditation beyond mental associations (asaṃjñi devaloka, 無想天); the trance state
21. The pure abode of heaven (śuddhāvāsika devaloka, 淨居天) of the never-returner (anagamin, 阿那含), looking down at creation from above like a perfect mirror

The four heavens of meditation on existential principles in the sphere beyond form

(arūpa dhātu, 無色界):

22. The boundlessness of empty space (ākāśa ananta āyatana, 空無邊處), beyond objective reality
23. The boundlessness of consciousness (vijñāna ananta āyatana, 識無邊處), beyond subjective reality
24. The nature of nothingness (ākīṃcanya āyatana, 無所有無邊處), beyond the existential nature
25. The peak existential experience (bhavāgra, 有頂), also called 'beyond perception/existence & non-perception/non-existence' (naiva saṃjñā anāsaṃjñā āyatana, 非想非非想無邊處) & 'beyond all emotional feelings and mental associations' (saṃjñā vedita nirodha samāpatti, 滅受想定).

51. Affliction with emotional disturbances is the innate condition shared by all sentient beings due to the fundamental ignorance that is the source ('origination') of the existential reality of life and death in this world. Broadly speaking, 'affliction' and 'emotional disturbance' are synonymous, but a distinction can be made between these terms. This explanation is from Vasubandhu's Commentary About the Collection of Verses on the Spiritual Science (Abhidharma Kośa Bhāṣyam, 俱舍論):

- * 'Affliction' (āsrava, 有漏) is the process by which emotional disturbances arise while 'emotional disturbances' (kleśa, 煩惱) refers to the different characteristics of affliction that are distinguished.
- * Affliction literally means 'leakage', referring to the arising of the seeds of emotional disturbance from the subconscious to the conscious mind while emotional disturbances literally refer to the 'pains', that is, the explicit manifestations of affliction in the conscious mind.

With cognitive development, one learns to deal with the world around one, with all of its conflicts between what is identified as self-interest, competing interests and greater purposes beyond both. The suffering from these conflicts causes emotional impacts (vedanīya karma, 受業), psychic traumas from past experiences that result in mental and emotional battle scars. These subconscious scars lead to the prejudices and predispositions that serve as survival mechanisms of defense in the subconscious memory against future anticipated conflicts. This will be explained in three parts:

- A. The twelve conditions causing the arising of the afflicted nature of sentient existence
- B. The nature of affliction
- C. The characteristics of emotional disturbance.

- A. The twelve conditions causing the afflicted nature of sentient existence (dvādaśāṅgaḥ hetu pratyaya, 十二因緣 or dvādaśāṅga pratītya samutpāda, 十二緣起) were said to be the object of meditation during the Buddha's first enlightenment under a tree in Bodhgaya and that realized by those spiritually awakened to the true conditions of sentient existence through their own introspective meditation (pratyeka buddhas, 辟支佛). This cycle of causes & conditions can be summarized as having three links or be elaborated into twelve links.

The three-fold cycle of affliction consists of:

1. Subconscious afflictions (āsrava, 有漏) arising as conscious *emotional disturbances* (kleśa, 惑)
2. *Consequence-producing actions* (karma, 業) that sow and nourish ('perfume') the seeds for future afflictions in the subconscious mind, and
3. *The consequential suffering* (duḥkha vipāka, 苦報) that is the existential reality of life & death

The twelve links elaborating on this are described in The Sūtra On the First Arising of Mutually Dependent Conditions (Pratītya Samutpāda Adi Vibhaṅga Nirdeśa Sūtra, 緣起經), saying:

"Question: What is the principle underlying origination, the arising of mutually dependent conditions (causing affliction)? Answer: When this exists, so that exists; because this arises, so that arises." (yaduta asmin sati idam bhavaty, asya utpadād idam utpadyate, 此有故彼有此生故彼生). In applying this principle:

- #1 When conditions of *ignorance* (avidyā, 無明) (about the transcendental nature of life's purpose) exist, motive forces (from the afflicted nature of sentient existence) arise.
- #2 When conditions of *motive force* (saṃskāra, 行) exist, consciousness arises.
- #3 When conditions of *consciousness* (vijñāna, 識) exist, dualities arise between the objects distinguished in the mind and the objective reality of form (nāma rūpa, 名色).
- #4 When conditions of *duality* exist *between objects distinguished in the mind and the objective reality of form* (nāma rūpa, 名色), alignments arise between the six faculties of sensory & mental perception and their objects.
- #5 When conditions of *alignment* exist *between the six faculties of sensory & mental perception and their objects* (ṣaḍ āyatana, 六處), sensory & mental contacts arise.
- #6 When conditions of *mental & sensory contact* (sparśa, 觸) exist, emotional feelings arise.
- #7 When conditions of *emotional feeling* (vedanā, 受) exist, cravings arise.
- #8 When conditions of *craving* (trṣṇā, 愛) exist, attachments arise.
- #9 When conditions of *attachment* (upādāna, 取) exist, a continuity in the afflicted nature of sentient existence arises over time.
- #10 When conditions of *continuity* (bhava, 有) in affliction exist over time, rebirth arises.
- #11 When conditions of *rebirth* (jāti, 生) in this world exist, old age and death arise.
- #12 When *old age & death* (jarā maraṇa, 老死) arise, it is combined with sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and distress. This is called the origination of all the projections that are found in the great aggregation of suffering."

In integrating these twelve links with the three-fold cycle of affliction described previously:

- A. Three constitute the afflicted nature of *emotional disturbance* (kleśa, 惑):
 - #1 Ignorance (avidyā, 無明) (about the transcendental nature of life's purpose)
 - #8 Cravings (trṣṇā, 愛)
 - #9 Attachments (upādāna, 取)
- B. Two constitute *consequence-producing action* (karma, 業):
 - #2 The arising of motive forces (saṃskāra, 行) (from the afflicted nature)
 - #10 The continuity of this afflicted sentient existence (S. bhava, 有) over time
- C. Seven constitute the existential reality of *consequential suffering* (duḥkha vipāka, 苦報):
 - #3 Consciousness (vijñāna, 識)
 - #4 The duality between the objects distinguished in the mind & the objective reality of form (nāma rūpa, 名色)

- #5 Alignments between the six mental & sensory faculties and their objects (ṣaḍ āyatana, 六處)
- #6 Mental and sensory contact (sparśa, 觸)
- #7 Emotional feeling (vedanā, 受)
- #11 Rebirth (jāti, 生) in this world
- #12 Old age & death (jarā maraṇa, 老死)

These twelve links in the arising of afflicted conditions are also divided into four categories:

- a. That which induces the conditions of affliction (ākṣepaka, 能引): This refers to the source of consciousness, *innate seeds of primordial consciousness* (vijñāna bīja, 識種) and *seeds of motive forces acquired in the subconscious memory through the consequences of past actions* (karma bījaḥ, 業種):
 - #1 *The darkness of ignorance* (avidyā, 無明), the innate lack of awareness of and indifference to any transcendental nature of life's purpose that goes beyond (self-centered) sentient existence
 - #2 *The arising of motive forces* (saṃskāra, 行), as latent seeds that are both innate and acquired.
- b. The conditions of affliction that are induced (ākṣipta, 所引): This refers to *the effects of the present*, the passive disposition of (primordial) consciousness induced by innate motive forces:
 - #3 *Consciousness* (vijñāna, 識): Here there is the primordial nature of the mind that is innate and its store of memories that is acquired.
 - #4 *The objects distinguished in the mind and the objective reality of form* (nāma rūpa, 名色) produce the existential duality between subject and object
 - #5 *Alignments of the six mental & sensory faculties with their objects* (ṣaḍ āyatana, 六處)
 - #6 *Mental/sensory contacts* (sparśa, 觸)
 - #7 *Emotional feelings* (vedanā, 受) of pleasure, pain and indifference
- c. That which produces manifestations of its conditions (janaka, 能生): This is a reference to the active disposition of consciousness, *the causes of the present* that serve as the seeds of consequence-producing actions (karma bījaḥ, 業種), producing the consciousness that is learned and acquired.
 - #8 *Cravings* (tṛṣṇā, 愛), desires for pleasure, hatred of pain and selfish indifference
 - #9 *Attachments* (upādāna, 取) to these cravings
 - #10 *The continuity* of this afflicted nature of sentient existence (S. bhava, 有) over time
- d. The manifestations of its conditions that are produced (janya, 所生) is a reference to the conscious manifestations of the mind that arise and perish. As *the causes of the future*, they condition ('perfume') the seeds of actions that will arise from the subconscious memory.
 - #11 *Rebirth* (jāti, 生) in this world
 - #12 *Old age & death* (jarā maraṇa, 老死), leading to grief and suffering, which either nourishes latent motive forces in the darkness of ignorance or is transformed into a spiritual awakening.

The four categories above are viewed as occurring over the past, present & future:

- a. That which induces the conditions of sentient existence are *the conditions similar to and immediately connected with those of the past* (samanantara pratyaya, 等無間緣).
- b. Its conditions that are induced & c. that which produces manifestations of its conditions are *the objective conditions before one in the present* (ālambana pratyaya, 所緣缘).
- d. The manifestations of its conditions that are produced are *the conditions that will prevail over others in the future* (adhipati pratyaya, 增上缘).

When seen as timeless forces that all occur in a single moment, they are *the conditions that directly (immediately) cause the arising of consciousness* (hetu pratyaya, 因緣) and are always here and now. In awakening to this transcendental nature of life's purpose from the sleep of ignorance, bondage to the wheel of these twelve links ceases. As this Sūtra Explaining the First Arising of Mutually Dependent Conditions says:

“When this doesn't exist, so that does not exist; because this ceases, so that ceases.”

(yaduta asmin asati idaṃ na bhavaty, asya nirodhād idaṃ nirudhyate,

此無故彼無，此滅故彼滅)

In observing that the arising and perishing of these conditions are both endowed with the (timeless) nature of emptiness, there is no further attachment to them in one's meditation. With there being no further attachment to them, they neither arise nor perish.

Distinguishing between affliction (āsrava, 有漏) **& *emotional disturbance*** (kleśa, 煩惱):

Generally speaking, these two terms are synonymous. However, in distinguishing between them, there are different nuances of meaning:

- B. ***Affliction*** (āsrava, 有漏) is *the dynamic process* by which seeds of latent emotional disturbances sprout, grow and ripen into conscious manifestations. This ripening process of consciousness (vipāka vijñāna, 異熟識) from latency to disturbance (from subconscious seeds to conscious manifestations) occurs in different steps:
 1. ***Latency*** (anuśaya, 隨眠): Latent prejudices and predispositions are subtle and difficult to recognize. Like seeds (bijaḥ, 諸種子) embedded in the subconscious memory, they are not yet nourished by objects in the environment and conscious purposes.
 2. ***Leakage*** (āsrava, 有漏): When these latent seeds are induced by objects in the conscious mind, they sprout and grow, leaking through that in which they are contained, like water leaking through a cracked vessel or air escaping from a balloon. This 'leakage' is caused by the 'cracks' or 'faults' of a spiritual vessel and is the very nature of affliction. At first these leakages may be slight, but upon giving way to their influence, there is an intoxication, an ecstatic feeling of release. With repeated stimulation, one becomes inured to their influence and builds up a tolerance for them. As such cracks or faults open up in the healthy state of serene illumination that is literally called 'the peak of existence' (bhavāgra, 有頂), there is a continuous leakage or outflow towards objects to satisfy these urges. Only with effort is one able to overcome this flow. It is like trying to steer a boat against an opposing current.
 3. ***Flooding*** (ogha, 暴流): As this force is further stimulated, it suddenly becomes a torrent that floods the entire zone of consciousness and all the objects in it. Wholesome tendencies that would oppose this current are carried away, drowning in the flood of emotional feelings (vedanā, 受), mental associations (saṃjñā, 想) and other motive forces (saṃskāra, 行).
 4. ***Adhering*** (yoga, 輓 or 扼): This current has habitual forces (vāsanā, 習) with a sticky, adhesive nature. Its tentacles adhere to objects, becoming yoked or harnessed to them.
 5. ***Knotting*** (grantha, 繫): Upon adhering to objects, these threads form knots that intertwine with each other. Fastening onto the objects securely, escape becomes ever more difficult.
 6. ***Attachment*** (upādāna, 取): The force of attachment then becomes locked on tight to objects, anchored to them with an obstinance, resisting every effort to become free of them. This is the immediate cause for the continuous existence (bhava, 有) of emotional disturbances in the conscious mind.
- b. ***Emotional Disturbance*** (kleśa, 煩惱) refers to *the different kinds* of neuroses or psychological disorders that constitute such maladjustments. These maladjustments are ever improperly trying to resolve the conflicts between perceived self-interest and one's environment, making choices that are ever defining one's identity. These emotional disturbances serve as obstacles that prevent the resolve of meditation with stillness of mind (dhyāna, 靜慮), and they can be latent or active.
 1. ***Latent emotional disturbances*** (anuśaya, 隨眠): In their latent state, emotional disturbances are prejudices & predispositions existing in a repressed state of sleep as seeds (bijaḥ, 諸種子)

in the subconscious memory. They are partially revealed in dreams, where they are not masked by external sensory perceptions. When one is awake, these seeds of affliction are stirred by objects in the environment (ālambana, 所緣) and so become active and conscious emotional disturbances. Impulses that lead to actions with consequences (karmas, 業) can cause further traumas and plant the seeds for further latent emotional disturbances.

2. Active emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) are the conscious manifestations of prejudicial views and predispositions of motive in one's behavior (samudācāra, 現行), one's thoughts, words and deeds. These disturbances are ever arising in a cycle of mutually dependent cause and effect, consequence-producing action (karma, 業) and consequential suffering (duḥkha, 苦). The latent seeds are found in the subconscious store of memory (ālaya vijñāna, 阿賴耶識) while their active states are found in the seven evolving manifestations of consciousness (pravṛtti vijñāna, 轉識, which are:

- * #1-#5 The five sensory kinds of consciousness (pañcā vijñāna, 五識),
- * #6 Thought, the distinction of imagined objects (mano vijñāna, 意識) and
- * #7 Thinking, the deliberations and calculations of self-interest (manas, 末那).

The Sanskrit term kleśa literally means 'pain' or 'distress', as latent disturbances in the subconscious mind are only subject to feelings of indifference while the active disturbances in the conscious mind are subject to feelings of pain (duḥkha, 苦) and grief (daurmanasya, 憂), that is, loss of contentment.

3. The enumeration of primary emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) is identical with that of their latent seeds (anuśaya, 隨眠). They are really the same phenomena, only being the latent (subconscious) and active (conscious) aspects of each other. There are different groupings, that of six and that of ten:

The enumeration of six kinds includes:

- #1 Greed (lobha, 貪) found in feelings of attachment to cravings & appetites (rāga, 貪欲)
- #2 Hatred (dveṣa, 瞋) found in feelings of attachment to aversions & disgust (pratigha, 瞋恚)
- #3 Delusions (moha, 癡) found in feelings of attachment to selfish indifference (mūḍha, 愚)
- #4 Pride (māna, 慢) and its reverse, jealousy and envy
- #5 Doubt (vicikitsā, 疑), that is, lack of pride or belief
- #6 Flawed beliefs (dṛṣṭ or kudṛṣṭi, 惡見)

The enumeration of ten kinds is the same, except that flawed beliefs are divided into five parts (pañca dṛṣṭayaḥ, 五見):

- #6 False beliefs about the reality of self-centered existence (satkāya dṛṣṭi, 有身見 or 薩迦耶見)
- #7 False beliefs about the transcendental nature of life's purpose (mithyā dṛṣṭi, 邪見)
- #8 False beliefs attached to either of the extremes of duality (antagrāha dṛṣṭi, 邊執見), that is, attachments to existential beliefs or their opposite, attachment to nihilistic beliefs.
- #9 Exaggerating the importance of beliefs, confusing subjective beliefs with objective reality (dṛṣṭi paramārśa, 見取見)
- #10 Superstitious beliefs, attachments to formalized moral rules, austerities or ritual practices, confusing the means & ends of the noble path (śīla vrata paramārśa, 戒禁取見)

The six primary afflictions also serve as seeds for the six kinds of spiritual destiny (gati, 趣):

- #1 Seeds of hatred lead to the destiny of hell (naraka gati, 地獄趣).
- #2 Seeds of greed lead to the destiny of hunger (preta gati, 餓鬼趣).
- #3 Seeds of selfish indifference lead to the destiny of brutality (tiragyoni gati, 畜生趣).
- #4 Seeds of pride lead to the destiny of egotism (asura gati, 阿修羅趣).
- #5 Seeds of doubt lead to the destiny of wholesome social personality (manuṣya gati, 人趣).
- #6 Seeds of belief lead to the destiny of heaven (deva gati, 天趣).

4. The development of complexes: secondary emotional disturbances (upakleśa, 隨煩惱). Primary emotional disturbances can combine with each other, compounding their qualities and forming confluences of secondary disturbances. They are usually enumerated as twenty:

- #1 Anger (krodha, 忿) #2 Resentment (upanāha, 恨)
 #3 Concealment (mrakṣa, 覆), inwardly as states of denial and outwardly as hypocrisy
 #4 Hostility (pradāsa, 惱) #5 Jealousy (īrṣya, 嫉)
 #6 Stinginess (mātsarya, 慳) #7 Deceit (śāṭhya, 誑)
 #8 Dishonesty (māyā, 詭) #9 Cruelty, or violence (vihimsā, 害)
 #10 Arrogance (mada, 憍) #11 Lack of shame (ahrīkya, 無慚)
 #12 Lack of humility (anapatrāpya, 無愧) #13 The restlessness of worry (auddhatya, 掉舉)
 #14 Apathy (styāna, 惛沈) #15 Lack of faith (aśraddhā, 無信) in a higher moral purpose
 #16 Negligence (kausīdya, 懈怠) #17 The idleness in lack of self-restraint (pramāda, 放逸)
 #18 Forgetfulness (muṣitasmṛitā, 失念), moral lapses
 #19 Distraction (vikṣepa, 散亂) #20 Lack of self-awareness (asamprajanya, 不正知)
5. Primary and secondary emotional disturbances can develop into further complexes, such as:
- Entanglements (pari avasthāna, 纏縛), in which the various threads of these primary and secondary disturbances become habitual flows (vāsanā, 習氣) that perpetuate themselves and become intertwined. In creating a web of evil wrapping itself around oneself and others, the immoral environment becomes ever more difficult to unravel as others in the environment become involved.
 - Defilements (kleśa mala, 煩惱垢) in which the entire environment exudes a filth, a foulness that permeates the atmosphere, ever perpetuating its own continuity.
6. Attachments (saṃyojana, 結) that prevent meditation with stillness of mind include:
- The five lower attachments (pañca āvara bhāgiya saṃyojanāni 五下分結 or 五下分繫縛) are connected to the sphere of desire (kāma dhātu, 欲界) with its pleasure and displeasures:
 - Love of pleasure (kāmacchanda saṃyojana, 樂欲結), chasing after pleasant objects
 - Hate of displeasure (vyāpāda saṃyojana, 瞋恚結), aversion to unpleasant objects
 - Doubts (vicikitsā saṃyojana, 疑結) about a greater moral purpose beyond self-interest
 - False beliefs in the reality of self-centered existence (satkāya dṛṣṭi saṃyojana, 有身見結)
 - Flawed beliefs about precepts, austerities & rituals, superstitions that confuse the means and ends of the noble path (śīla vrata paramārśa saṃyojana, 戒禁取見結).
 - The five higher attachments (pañca ūrdhva bhāgiya saṃyojanāni, 五上分結 or 五上分繫縛) are attachments in the higher spheres of meditation. Here there is no hate or attachment to unpleasant feelings, although there can be a lack of contentment.
 - Love of meditations on truth, beauty and purity (rūpa rāga saṃyojana, 色貪結), an attachment to beliefs about objective reality (dṛṣṭi paramārśa, 見取見)
 - Love of meditations on existence (arūpa raga saṃyojana, 無色貪結), attachments to existential principles that necessarily entail the extremes of duality (antagrāha dṛṣṭi, 邊執見) and prevent full comprehension of the dialectical principle of the middle way.
 - Fetters of restlessness (auddhatya saṃyojana, 掉舉結), discontent with realizations, a result of disillusionment with the falsehoods found in all attachments to truths (mithyā dṛṣṭi, 邪見)
 - Fetters of pride (māna saṃyojana, 慢結), identification with one's realizations
 - Fetters of ignorance (avidyā saṃyojana, 無明結) about the nature of the greater, transcendent purpose beyond any self-interest and the unconditional nature of purpose beyond any identity
7. There are various enumerations emotional disturbances (81, 98, 108, etc.) based on the means of eliminating them through the cultivation of meditation (bhāvanā mārga, 修道), up to there being 84,000 different kinds, based on there being a myriad (ten thousand, 萬) kinds being eliminated through the eight-fold noble path and the four noble truths.

52. **The three vehicles** (tri yāna, 三乘) of **spiritual awakening** are the different means of attaining *freedom from affliction* (nirvāṇa, 涅槃) and *awakening to a higher sense of life's purpose* (bodhi, 菩提):
- The vehicle of students** (śrāvaka yāna, 聲聞乘) of life's purpose on the noble path: This refers to those learning about life through hearing the words of others (teachers), particularly by studying the Buddha's words in the scriptures (sūtras) on the four truths about the nature of its purpose, those still in the process of realizing the four fruits of freedom from affliction as 'trainees' (śaikṣa, 有學). Since students are followers, learning through faith in the words of others, the third chapter of The Lotus Sūtra illustrates them as having carts driven by sheep or goats.
 - The vehicle of those awakened to the afflicted conditions of sentient existence in their own lives** (pratyeka buddha yāna, 辟支佛乘): This refers to those who have already eliminated afflictions in their own lives and attained a realization of the twelve mutually dependent conditions that cause the afflicted nature of sentient existence. No longer having attachments to life in this world, they are said to have attained at least three of the four fruits of spiritual freedom. Those with this level of awakening are said to be beyond any further need for training (aśaikṣa, 無學) and are neither leaders nor followers. For this reason, the third chapter of The Lotus Sūtra illustrates them as having carts driven by deer. Sometimes they are likened to a rhinoceros or a unicorn.
 - The vehicle of those awakening to a higher sense of life's purpose** (bodhisattva yāna, 菩薩乘) refers to those who eliminate afflictions and awaken a higher sense of life's purpose in both their own lives and the lives of others. They are said to seek freedom from affliction but ever return to the shore of life & death in this world to help others. Through the six distinguished practices that deliver sentient beings to the 'other shore' of spiritual freedom, they are said to be the leaders among sentient beings who will eventually attain perfect (universal) enlightenment. For this reason, the third chapter of The Lotus Sūtra illustrates them as having carts driven by young bulls (bullocks) who can carry a greater load.

These are also called the three provisional kinds of knowledge. The first two are the 'lesser vehicles' (at the individual level) while the third is the 'greater vehicle' (also dealing with the societal level).

53. **The Buddha Śākyamuni took seven steps** (S. sapta krama, 七步): Legends of the Buddha's birth say that, upon being born from this mother Māyā, he took seven steps and declared his advent in this world, with lotus blossoms arising where his feet touched the ground. This appears in many sources, such as The Acts of the Buddha (Buddha Carita, 佛所行讚經), The Sūtra on the Drama of the Buddha's Life (Lalitā Vistara, 普曜經), The Longer Scriptures (Dirgha Nikaya/Agamas, 長阿含經) and others. Various meanings are ascribed to the seven steps, including the seven factors found in the thirty-seven facets of spiritual awakening (see footnote 34) and the seven ways & means (sapta upāya, 七方便) by which afflictions are overcome (see footnote 21).

Kātyāyanī Putra (迦旃延子 or 迦多衍可子, c. 200-100 BCE): Major contributor to The Commentaries on Spiritual Science (Adhidharma Vibhāṣa Śāstra, 阿毘曇毘婆沙論) according to The School on the Real Existence of All Purposes (Sarvāstivāda, 一切有部), including its Foundation of Transcendental Knowledge (Jñāna Prasthāna Śāstra, 阿毘達磨發智論 or Aṣṭa Skandha Śāstra, 阿毘曇八犍度論). He also elaborated on the meanings ascribed to the 'seven steps' of the Buddha.

54. **The thirty-four stages of meditative cultivation** (三十四心) that sever afflicted beliefs (見惑) and afflicted intentions (思惑), in two parts:
- Sixteen stages of meditation** (十六心) eliminate afflicted beliefs (darśana heya kleśa 見所斷惑) serve to cultivate 'proper vision' (samyag dṛṣṭi, 正見) or 'vision of the noble path' (darśana mārga, 見道). They consist of eight kinds of enduring meditation (八忍) & eight kinds of transcendental knowledge (八智).
 - Eighteen stages of cultivation** (十八心) eliminate afflicted motives (bhāvanā heya kleśa, 修道所斷 or 思所斷惑) serve to cultivate 'proper intent, or deliberation' on the noble path (bhāvanā mārga, 修道). They consist of nine ways of getting beyond obstacles (九無礙) and nine ways of attaining emancipation from them (九解脫).

The following is gleaned from Vasubandhu's Commentary on the Collection of Verses about Spiritual Science (Abhidharma Kośa Bhāṣyam, 俱舍論).

- a. **The 16 stages of meditation** provide an analytical view of the four truths (vyava sthita satya, 安立諦) with a transcendental vision of the characteristics on the noble path (lakṣaṇa darśana mārga, 相見道). Here, the four truths are observed in a sequential order, with each being of them being penetrated before moving on to the next. One will not fully grasp the latter truths without first penetrating the prior truths, with each step of meditation involving comprehension of the prior ones. Each of these meditations on the truths involves two steps of progress and two levels of direct and immediate comprehension in which observation and knowledge are simultaneous:
 1. In the two steps of progress, enduring observation leads to transcendental knowledge and disconnection (visaṃyoga, 離繫) from the prejudices of false beliefs (kudṛṣṭi, 見惑).
 - a. *The practice is an enduring observation* (kṣanti, 忍) of the truth, also called 'overcoming the interruptions on the noble path' (ānantarya mārga, 無間道) that distract meditation.
 - b. *The result is a knowledge* (jñāna, 智) or purpose with equanimity that is maintained (ādhāra, 持). This is called 'the emancipation of the noble path' (vimukti mārga, 解脫道).
 2. The two levels of direct and immediate comprehension (abhisamaya, 現觀) involve:
 - c. *Comprehension in terms of its purpose* (dharma, 法): At first one observes, penetrates and then realizes each truth in terms of the sphere of desire (kāma dhātu, 欲界)
 - d. *Comprehension in terms of its greater context* (anvaya, 類) beyond the sphere of desire, in terms of objective reality (rūpa dhātu, 色界) & existential principles (arūpa dhātu, 無色界)
- The first fifteen steps prepare one for the final one, transcendental knowledge of the noble path in its greater context (mārga anvaya jñānam, 道類智). At this sixteenth and final step, all of the earlier stages are realized in a single moment (eka kṣaṇa, 一念) and there is an immediate, direct comprehension (abhisamaya, 現觀) in which observation and knowledge are simultaneous. This moment is said to be one in which there is a transcendental vision of the noble path (darśana mārga, 見道). This sixteen-step method depends on distinguishing purposes (dharma, 法) and their context (anvaya, 類) in each of the four truths through a four-step process, resulting in sixteen steps of meditation in a sequential order, as follows:
- 1a. Enduring observation of the purpose for suffering (duḥkhe dharma jñāna kṣāntiḥ, 苦法智忍).
 - 1b. Knowledge of the purpose for suffering (duḥkhe dharma jñānam, 苦法智)
 - 1c. Enduring observation of suffering in its total context (duḥkhe anvaya jñāna kṣāntiḥ, 苦類智忍)
 - 1d. Knowledge of suffering in its total context (duḥkhe anvaya jñānam, 苦類智)
 - 2a. Enduring observation of the purpose for the arising of suffering (samudaye dharma jñāna kṣāntiḥ, 集法智忍)
 - 2b. Knowledge of the purpose for the arising of suffering (samudaye dharma jñānam, 集法智)
 - 2c. Enduring observation of the arising of suffering in its total context (samudaye anvaya jñāna kṣāntiḥ, 集類智忍)
 - 2d. Knowledge of the arising of suffering in its total context (samudaye anvaya jñānam, 集類智)
 - 3a. Enduring observation of the purpose for transcending suffering (nirodhe dharma jñāna kṣāntiḥ, 滅法智忍)
 - 3b. Knowledge of the purpose for transcending suffering (nirodhe dharma jñānam, 滅法智)
 - 3c. Enduring observation of transcending suffering in its total context (nirodhe anvaya jñāna kṣāntiḥ, 滅類智忍)
 - 3d. Knowledge of transcending suffering in its total context (nirodhe anvaya jñānam, 滅類智)
 - 4a. Enduring observation of the purpose for the noble path (mārga dharma jñāna kṣāntiḥ, 道法智忍)
 - 4b. Knowledge of the purpose for the noble path (mārga dharma jñānam, 道法智)
 - 4c. Enduring observation of the noble path in its total context (mārga anvaya jñāna kṣāntiḥ, 道類智忍)
 - 4d. Knowledge of the noble path in its total context (mārga anvaya jñānam, 道類智)

Of these sixteen steps, those on the purpose for the four truths provides a visualization of them both objectively & introspectively (darśana bhāga 見分 & sva samvitti bhāga, 自證分) while those on their greater context provides a vision of the transcendental principle of the noble path (tattva darśana mārga, 真見道). Because of this, this is called an analytical view of the truths (vyava sthita satya, 安立諦) in a transcendental vision of the characteristics on the noble path (lakṣaṇa darśana mārga, 相見道). In attaining a vision of the noble path, there is attainment of the first fruit of freedom from affliction as a stream enterer' (srotāpanna, 須陀洹).⁷⁷ It is said that, upon attaining this fruit, one will attain complete spiritual freedom (nirvāṇa, 涅槃) from affliction in no more than seven more lifetimes.

- B. **The 18 stages of cultivation** (十八心): In attaining a transcendental vision of the noble path (darśana mārga, 見道), one next eliminates afflicted predispositions that remain ingrained in the subconscious mind through cultivation of the noble path (bhāvanā mārga, 修道) and the realization of proper deliberation, or intent (samyak saṃkalpa, 正思惟). This consists of cultivating nine grades (nava prakāra, 九品) of ever more refined levels of intent (cetanā, 思), getting beyond the obstacles of afflicted motivations while on the noble path (ānantarya mārga, 無礙道 or 無間道), and nine progressively deeper levels of meditation (nava bhūmika 九地) that constitute emancipation from these obstacles (vimukti mārga, 九解脫道).

The nine grades (nava prakāra, 九品) **of ever more refined intentions** (cetanā, 思) **on the path of getting beyond the obstacles of affliction** (ānantarya mārga, 無礙道 or 無間道):

1. The first six refinements of intentions eliminate the attachments of stream-enterers. It is said to take up to six lifetimes before stream-enterers will become once-returners.⁷⁷
 - a. Four lifetimes eliminating unwholesome intentions on the noble path:
 1. Two lifetimes with the weakest of weak refinements (下下品) eliminating the strongest of strong attachments: attachments to unpleasant feelings (hell) being eliminated by dealing with feelings of selfish indifference
 2. One lifetime with the middle level of weak refinements (中下品) eliminating the middle level of strong attachments: attachments to feelings of selfish indifference (brutality) being eliminated by dealing with pleasant feelings
 3. One lifetime with the strongest of weak refinements (上下品) eliminating the weakest of strong attachments: attachments to pleasant feelings (hunger) being eliminated by dealing with feelings of pride
 - b. Two lifetimes eliminating wholesome desires on the noble path:
 4. One lifetime with the weakest of middle level refinements (下中品) being eliminated by the strongest of mid-level attachments: attachments to pride (egotism) being eliminated by dealing with the pride of others' egos (the social nature of personalities)
 5. Half a lifetime with the middle level of mid-level refinements (中中品) being eliminated by the middle level of mid-level attachments: attachments to others' egos (social personalities) being eliminated by dealing with the divine beings of heaven found in the sphere of desire.
 6. Half a lifetime with the strongest of mid-level refinements (上中品) being eliminated by the weakest of mid-level attachments: attachments to the divine beings of heaven found in the sphere of desire by dealing with meditations on objective reality in the pure sphere of form
2. The next three refinements of intentions eliminate the attachments of once-returners. It is said to take up to one more lifetime before once-returners will become never-returners:
 - c. One lifetime of meditation on the existential reality of one's purpose is let go by once-returners, those who are candidates for becoming never-returners:
 7. A half a lifetime with the weakest of strong refinements (下上品) eliminating the strongest of weak attachments: attachments to meditations on objective reality in the pure sphere of form (truth, beauty, etc.) being eliminated by dealing with existential principles

8. A quarter of a lifetime with a middle level of strong refinements (中上品) by eliminating the middle level of weak attachments: attachment to meditations on the existential principles in the sphere beyond form being eliminated by dealing with the dialectical principle
9. A quarter of a lifetime with the strongest of strong refinements (上上品) eliminating the weakest of weak attachments: attachments to meditations on the dialectical principle being eliminated by a transcendental resolve that goes beyond the three-fold sphere of sentient existence

Again, see footnote 51 for more on ‘the four fruits’ (catvāri phalāni, 四果).

Those with the weakest of weak refinements (those of the least virtue) are able to eliminate the strongest of the strong attachments (the greatest evils). Those with the strongest of the strong refinements (those of the greatest virtue) are able to eliminate the weakest of weak attachments (the lightest and most subtle of faults). It is impossible for those with the strongest of the strong refinements to eliminate the strongest of strong attachments because, if such attachments still existed, they would not yet be those with the strongest of strong refinements. When washing a piece of cloth, the strongest stains are eliminated first and the subtlest stains are only eliminated at the very end. A small light eliminates the greatest darkness, and a great light eliminates the smallest darkness.

The nine progressively deeper levels of meditation (nava bhūmika 九地) *eliminate ever subtler afflicted intentions, resulting in emancipation from these obstacles* (vimukti mārga, 九解脫道).

1. First, in the heaven of meditation on the sphere of desire (kāma dhātu, 欲界) (see footnote 47)
2. - 5. Next in the four levels of meditation on objective reality in the sphere of form (rūpa dhātu, 色界) (see footnote 49.A., 1. - 4.)
6. - 9. Finally, in the four levels of meditation in the sphere of existential principles that are beyond form (arūpa dhātu, 無色界) (see footnote 49.B., 1. - 4.)

In viewing the nine grades of refinement and the nine levels of meditation separately like this, there are **18 such states of cultivation**. In viewing these nine levels of refinement being found in each of these nine levels of meditation, there are said to be **81 states of cultivation** in all.

55. The five habitual forces of attachment (pañca vāsanā, 五住):

- a. Attachments to false beliefs (kudṛṣṭi, 見一處住地)
- b. Attachments to emotional disturbances (kleśa, 煩惱) in the sphere of desire (欲愛住地)
- c. Attachments to meditations on objective reality in the sphere of form (色愛住地)
- d. Attachments to meditations on existential principles in the sphere beyond form (有愛住地)
- e. Attachments to the very source (‘origination’) of sentient existence, the fundamental nature of ignorance of the transcendental nature (無明住地)

56. Turning of the wheel of life’s purpose (dharma cakra pravartana, 轉法輪): This is an ancient Indian term for ‘making the world turn’, transforming the world we all live in. Those able to turn this wheel (cakravartins, 轉輪王) over history were the great leaders, kings or emperors, literally those we might call ‘big wheels’. In the worldly sense these are leaders who have defined ages with their great accomplishments and enduring influence on the world. Some ruled with noble purpose and ushered in golden ages. The emperor Aśoka of the third century BCE was said to have been such a great turner of life’s wheel of purpose (ārya cakravartī, 轉輪聖王).

This title of turner of the wheel of life’s noble purpose is also a name for a Buddha by virtue of his teachings about the nature of life’s purpose to sentient beings that spiritually transform them.

The three turns of the wheel (dharma cakra tri pravartana, 三轉法輪) is a reference to the Buddha’s teachings and there are different interpretations of its meaning:

- a. *In the early sūtras* it describes the three-fold methodology of his teaching:
 - #1 Naming and explaining (示轉) the truths of life's true purpose
 - #2 Certifying (證轉) them through the praise of their use by Buddhas from time immemorial
 - #3 Encouraging (勸轉) faith in them and putting them into practice.
- b. *In the later, 'greater vehicle' sūtras* (mahāyāna, 大乘), 'the three turns' also referred to the progressively deeper levels of Buddhist teachings about the nature of life's purpose as they evolved in India over time. In *The Sūtra on Understanding the Deep Mystery* (Saṃdhi Nirmocana Sūtra, 解深密經), a definitive scripture of the Yogācāra school, Buddhist doctrine is explained to have evolved through three cycles called that revealed ever deeper levels of the teachings:
 1. The first turn of the wheel consisted of teachings for those on the lesser vehicle, those who sought freedom from affliction on an individual level, as students of life's purpose learning from others. This doctrine made a distinction between the inner purposes (motive forces) associated with the mind and the realities of form (objective reality). It also taught that *the identity of a soul or self-centered existence (ātman, 我) is only a hypothetical construct* endowed with the nature of emptiness, and clinging to this identity is the cause of all the sufferings of life & death. In this view, *only purposes (dharma, 諸法) had a real, existential reality*. These teachings are found in the earliest revealed scriptures of Buddhism and the spiritual science (abhidharma, 阿毘曇摩) established in its schools describing the characteristics of life's purpose (dharma lakṣaṇa, 法相).
 2. The second turn of the wheel consisted of teachings for bodhisattvas, those aspiring to a higher purpose, the greater vehicle of awakening all sentient beings to its transcendental nature. This doctrine taught about the dialectical principle of the middle way to break up selfish attachments to the pursuit and attainment of spiritual freedom. It also taught of the inseparability of all of life's purposes - that there is no freedom from affliction separable from the existential reality of life & death and there is no spiritual awakening separable from the nature of this affliction. It explained that, like identities, *all purposes are only hypothetical constructs so that there is an absence of any real existential reality in both identity (ātman, 我) & purpose (dharma, 法)*. These teachings are found in the Sūtras on the Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment (Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtras) and the discourses of the Dialectical School (Madhyamaka) composed by Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva and others.
 3. The third & final turn of the wheel consisted of teachings on the practice of engaged meditation (Yogācāra) that break up attachments to nihilistic beliefs about there not being any existential reality. In this school, *although both identity (ātman, 我) & purpose (dharma, 法) are just hypothetical constructs, there is still the real existential reality of the mind itself, even though its consciousness only has a virtual nature (vijñapti matratā, 唯識)*. This mind is ever arising & perishing in each moment of thought and the choices made in the here and now as 'the conditions that directly cause the arising of consciousness' (hetu pratyaya, 因緣). Through the reciprocal and mutually dependent relationship between seeds of memory rising up from the well of the subconscious mind and their conditioning ('perfuming') by the actions of the conscious mind, there is this real, existential reality of life & death. Everything else is just empty speculation. Although it is really without identity or purpose, this existential reality is the foundation for all the projections of identity and purpose that are imagined. These speculations are only hypothetical, based on the value they have for sentient existence and the use to which they are put. However, through ever deeper transcendental knowledge of this existential reality, there is grounding in an ever-higher sense of purpose through which bodhisattvas engage in the work of bringing meaningful benefits and the bliss of contentment to sentient beings. 'Meaningful benefits' here refers to awakening to this higher sense of purpose while the bliss of contentment refers to freedom from affliction. Grounding in the transcendental nature of life's purpose entails knowledge of the virtual nature of the inner mind in the existential sphere of life and death with an ever deeper and broader sense of its purpose as the means to action here and now that will lead to its accomplishment. This

doctrine was taught in the fully developed scriptures on the greater vehicle of spiritual awakening and by the founding teachers of the School on the Practice of Engaged Meditation (Yogācāra, 瑜伽宗) such as Asaṅga, Vasubandhu and others who taught about there only being the virtual nature of consciousness (vijñapti matratā, 唯識).

These three turns of the wheel were each said to last for hundreds of years after the death of the Buddha. The teachings of first two periods were said to be incomplete in that they only partially revealed the ultimate nature of life's purpose, leaving part implicit but unrevealed. Only the final period was said to fully reveal it.

57. **Māyā's womb** (Mahā Māyā garbha, 摩訶摩耶胎). Mahā Māyā, literally 'The Great Illusion', was a name for the Buddha's mother, who died giving him birth. Her name here also serves as a metaphor for the divine illusion, the womb or subconscious store of memory from which springs the embryonic nature of enlightenment endowed with transcendental knowledge of life's purpose. The sūtras often depict the Buddha riding a six-tusked white elephant descending into Maya's womb from the heaven of divine grace (tuṣita devaloka, 兜率天) with its forgiveness, redemption & rejuvenation. The six tusks represent the Buddha's six kinds of spiritual penetration (ṣaḍ abhijñāḥ, 六神通).¹¹ The immaculate conception of every Buddha is said to be like this in descending into this world.
58. **Leaving home** (S. pravrajita, J. shukke, 出家) originally referred to the Buddha giving up his worldly titles as a member of the royal family and his years of seeking the true meaning of life's purpose before attaining enlightenment. More broadly, 'leaving home' refers to those who renounce the worldly life and become ordained as monks and nuns, seeking freedom from affliction and finding life's true purpose through the holy order (Saṃgha).
59. **An enduring observation of the transcendental nature of life's purpose that neither arises nor perishes and goes beyond one's own life in this world** (anutpattika dharma kṣānti, 無生法忍): The meditative state that results in attaining a transcendental vision of the noble path (darśana mārga, 見道) that is timeless.
60. **The three-fold sphere of sentient existence** (trayo dhātavaḥ, 三界) is the realm of consciousness as an object of introspective meditation:
 - a. **The sphere of desire** (kāma dhātu, 欲界) is the arena of attachments, the realm of consciousness that is afflicted with six primary kinds of emotional disturbance (kleśa, 煩惱) and the six corresponding spiritual destinies (gati, 趣) that are their reward, ranging from the sufferings of hatred to the bliss of heaven (see footnote 3 for more on this).
The two other spheres of sentient existence are the higher realms of consciousness where there is meditation on its subtler aspects, its objective reality & existential principles, revealed by getting beyond attachment to desires:
 - b. **The sphere of form** (rūpa dhātu, 色界) is the objective reality of sentient existence, the conditional sphere of life's purpose characterized by cause & effect. The Sanskrit word rūpa literally means 'physical form', but it also means 'beauty' & 'visible form', as once the afflictions found in the (subjective) sphere of desire are transcended through meditation, there is the sublime splendor revealed in the forms of objective reality. There are said to be four levels of meditation on this sphere of form that are progressively freer from the sphere of desire, with the fourth becoming completely free of such affliction. Because the afflictions in these levels of meditation are more subtle and rarefied, they are called heavens of meditation. There are said to be two components in this sphere of form:
 1. **Physical forms** offer resistance to other forms, each occupying their own space (sa pratigha rūpa, 有對色) in space and composed of divisible atoms (paramāṇu, 極微). These include:
 - a. The elemental principles (bhūta, 大) of form (rūpa, 色) & their qualities (guṇa, 德):
 1. Earth (pṛthivī, 地); solidity, density
 2. Water (apah, 水); fluidity, liquidity

3. Wind (vāyu, 風); motion, turbulence
4. Fire (agni, 火); the radiance of heat and light
- b. The forms that produce consciousness; the five sense faculties
- c. The five objects of sense they behold
2. *Mental forms* (apratigha rūpa, 無對色) do not offer resistance to other forms or occupy space in the environment. Such thought forms are not composed of divisible atoms. There are said to be two kinds:
 - a. Thought forms that are outwardly expressed or communicated (vijñapti rūpa, 表色):
 1. Those expressed through the physical body (kāya vijñapti, 身表): deeds
 2. Those expressed through the voice (vāg vijñapti, 言表): words
 - b. Thought forms not outwardly expressed or communicated (avijñapti rūpa, 無表色):
These are innermost thoughts, beliefs & intentions unexpressed through words & deeds.
- c. *The sphere beyond form* (arūpa dhātu, 無色界) is the unconditional sphere, the existential principles of life that are subject to meditation upon transcending the spheres of both desire and form. Where the sphere of form can be likened to the hardware of consciousness, the sphere beyond form is its software, the binary forces consisting only of ones and zeros, +’s and -’s, being and nothingness, the existentialism of an eternal life and the nihilism of nothingness after death. There are said to be four progressively deeper levels of meditation that penetrate this sphere beyond form.

61. The five kinds of corruption (pañca kaṣāyāḥ, 五濁) that prevail in the world after the demise of the Buddha’s dispensation (saddharma vipralopa, 末法) in this world:

1. *The corruption of the age* (kalpa kaṣāya, 劫濁): This is a reference to an apocalyptic age when the earth itself (the ‘land’) will undergo great upheaval, dissolution and destruction. Actually, it is not just the fact of the world’s decline that is corrupting. More properly ‘the corruption of the age’ refers to the evils that proliferate at these end times when there is great desperation.
2. *The corruption of society* (sattva kaṣāya, 眾生濁): Emerging societies tend to be more purely virtuous when they begin to form. However, when they are in their final stage of demise, the ten unwholesome acts between the members of these societies become increasingly fierce as they disintegrate. See footnote 48 for more on these ten unwholesome acts.
3. *The corruption of mental associations through false beliefs* (dṛṣṭi kaṣāya, 見濁): Attachment to extremes and self-serving views in which one’s own evils are rationalized as virtues while those of others are not.
4. *The corruption of feelings through emotional disturbances* (kleśa kaṣāya, 煩惱濁): When worlds and societies fall apart, sentient beings have more evil dispositions and family troubles, facing all those before them with dispositions of greed, hatred and selfish disinterest.
5. *The corruption of lifespans* (āyu kaṣāya, 命濁): Because of the corruption from false beliefs and emotional disturbances, many resort to killing and harming one another without any mercy or compassion, causing there to be great suffering and the shortening of lifespans.

62. The projections of life’s purpose is explained in two parts:

- a. *The five (afflicted) projections of life’s purpose* (pañca skandha, 五蘊) seem to continuously emanate from an individual’s life, simulating a permanently separate self-centered existence. The Sanskrit ‘skandha’ refers to a place from which there are the projections of several branches from a single point, ‘of many arising from one’. Some examples of this term’s use include:
 - * Where the head & neck branch from the shoulders to the torso & limbs (‘skandha’ can also mean ‘shoulders’).
 - * The point of a tree’s trunk where different branches split off
 - * The divisions of a general’s army that are deployed

Earlier Chinese translators (like Kumārajīva) used the character 陰 (yīn, as in the Taoist idea of yīn & yáng) which literally refers to shadows or penumbras. Xuánzàng used the character 蘊 (yùn) which literally refers to those things which are gathered together and aggregated into one (or,

conversely, split from one into many). These five projections of purpose originate in the duality found between named (identified) objects distinguished in the mind (nāma, 名) & the objective reality of form (rūpa, 色) as a whole. They consist of:

- #1 The projections of form (rūpa skandha, 色蘊): This includes physical matter but, in terms of meditation, it particularly refers to the sensory faculties of the physical body and its objects.
- #2 The projections of consciousness (vijñāna skandha, 識蘊) (see footnote 48) and its three mental states (caitta, 心所):
 - #3 Projections of emotional feelings (vedanā skandha, 受蘊)
 - #4 Projections of mental distinctions and associations (samjñā skandha, 想蘊)
 - #5 Projections of other motive forces (saṃskāra skandha, 行蘊), prejudices & predispositions

The meaning of the term ‘*motive forces*’ (saṃskāra, 行) is closely related in meaning and etymology to ‘conditional purposes’ (saṃskṛta dharma, 有為法).

 - a. In its broadest sense, the term ‘motive force’ is virtually identical to ‘conditional purpose’, as mind and matter (consciousness and form) are both certainly motivating forces. However, in distinguishing between them, motive forces are that which energize mind and matter, bringing them to life.
 - b. In narrowing the term somewhat, ‘motive force’ may specifically refer to the conditional purposes energizing consciousness. Some motives are directly associated with the mind (samprayukta saṃskāra, 相應行) while others are indirectly associated with it (viprayukta saṃskāra, 不相應行). See footnote 90 for more on this. Those directly associated with it are also called ‘mental states’ (caitta, 心所), which include its emotional feelings (vedanā, 受), its mental associations (samjñā, 想) as well as its underlying moods, attitudes, prejudices and predispositions.
 - c. In terms of defining the five projections of purpose, ‘motive forces’ can be further narrowed to refer to all mental states other than emotional feelings (vedanā, 受) and mental associations (samjñā, 想) to emphasize the prevailing nature of these two, which are motive forces that are found in all mental states (sarvatraga saṃskāra, 遍行).
- b. *The five unafflicted projections of life’s purpose* (asamasama pañca skandha, 五分法身) are those emanating from the Buddha’s spiritual life. They are said to be in contrast to the five afflicted projections of life’s purpose found in ordinary sentient beings. In these:
 - #1 The projections of form (rūpa skandha, 色蘊) are transformed into the moral commitments of the spiritual life (śīla skandha, 戒身).
 - #2 The projections of emotional feeling (vedanā skandha, 受蘊) are transformed into the meditative resolves of the spiritual life (samādhi skandha, 定身).
 - #3 The projections of mental association (samjñā skandha, 想蘊) are transformed into the transcendental discernments of the spiritual life (prajñā skandha, 慧身).
 - #4 The projections of motive force (saṃskāra skandha, 行蘊) are transformed into the emancipations of the spiritual life (vimukti skandha, 解脫身).
 - #5 The projections of consciousness (vijñāna skandha, 識蘊) are transformed into emancipated knowledge and vision of the spiritual life (vimukti jñāna darśana skandha, 解脫知見身).

63. ‘**Oral Transmissions**’ (kuden hōmon, 口傳法門) were secret teachings communicated between Japanese monks (masters and disciples) about the esoteric meaning of scriptural doctrines. These proliferated from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, particularly in the Mantra School (Shingon Shū, 眞言宗 or Tōmitsu, 東密) and the esoteric branch of the Tendai School (Taimitsu, 台密) as ideas about the nature of an ‘original enlightenment’ or ‘source of enlightenment’ (hongaku, 本覺). This movement purported to go beyond ‘exoteric’ teachings about the ‘manifestation of enlightenment’ by Śākyamuni and emphasized the innate nature of enlightenment found within all sentient beings that was said to be first revealed in the sixteenth chapter of The Lotus Sūtra. The nature of this three-fold spiritual life (tri kāya, 三身) is described as a timeless grace descending into our lives in this world

from the Buddha's original (transcendental) vow. A proliferation of 'oral transmissions' also occurred in other schools, including the Nichiren School. Some oral transmissions were attributed to earlier masters while in other cases they were attributed to living persons. Whether or not those attributed to earlier masters were actually spoken by them is not knowable, very likely by intention. Some may have been directly from the lips of these masters, some initiated by them and then later redacted by others, and some may be entirely apocryphal in the sense that they were entirely composed later by others but then attributed to earlier masters. The question about whether or not Nikkō composed The Orally Transmitted Commentaries on The Lotus Sūtra (J. Shūjū Hokke Kyō Ongi Kuden, 就注法華經御義口傳) entirely from the words of Nichiren is not provable either way, but this work is certainly indicative of a major current of 'original enlightenment' thought about The Lotus Sūtra found in Nichiren Schools. Another 'oral transmission' said to be from Nichiren to one of his disciples is the one attributed to the disciple Nikō (日向, 1253–1314) from Mount Minobu (身延山) in his Recorded Lectures (Onkō Kikigaki, 御講聞書). Similar debates exist about this work.

64. **The three gateways of meditation** (三三昧門) are also called the three gateways of emancipation (三解脫門) and the three gateways of spiritual freedom (三涅槃門): These constitute the three progressively deeper levels of realizing the spiritual life through meditation on:
 - a. Its nature of emptiness (śūnyatā, 空)
 - b. Its being beyond any mutually dependent aspects (animitta, 無相)
 - c. Its being beyond any striving (apranihita, 無願), and so said to be innately spontaneous and beyond any further need for self-consciously driven motivation (anabhisamkāra, 無作)
65. **The five levels of profound meaning in the sūtra** (五重玄義): Gleaned from the twenty-first chapter of The Lotus Sūtra In the Spiritual Power of The One Who Has Descended Into This World, these five form the basis for analysis of the sūtra as a whole in Zhìyǐ's 'Profound Meaning of The Lotus Sūtra':
 - #1 **The name (title) of the sūtra** (nāma, 名) is the quintessence of its words that perfectly identifies, distinguishes and transmits all of the teachings and practices of Buddhism as a universal vehicle of enlightenment, opening up, revealing, awakening and penetrating life's most sublime purpose in a single moment of thought.
 - #2 **Its existential reality** (svabhāva, 體) is the transcendental meaning of the mutually dependent aspects found in its purpose that is opened up and revealed through the dialectical principle of the middle way and a seamless integration (blending) of its three truths as one (圓融三諦).
 - #3 **Its objective** (siddhānta, 宗) is a reference to the ultimate aim beyond the interplay and blending of the mutually dependent causes & conditions found in this transcendental meaning. This includes both the cultivation & realization of enlightenment as well as the karma & retribution found in the lives of all sentient beings. It is understood to be both a process over space & time (in the first half of the sūtra) and a process that is timeless & eternal (in the second half).
 - #4 **Its application** (kriyā, 用) is a reference to its employment of the power of words through the dual (provisional & transcendental) knowledge of spiritual transformation, the transmission of enlightenment, both in one's own practice and the influence of others.
 - #5 **Its doctrine** (deśanā, 教) is a reference to the perfect doctrine between teacher and disciple that is a seamless blending of:
 - * The four doctrines⁴² ascending from a lesser to a greater sense of life's purpose
 - * The five flavors of doctrine⁷⁴ found in the evolution of the teachings of the sūtras over time
 - * Doctrines that can awaken gradually, suddenly, secretly (beyond words), explicitly (though words) or indeterminately (not being limited by the first four variables).
66. **The six levels of identity with enlightenment** (六即):

The first is theoretical:

 - a. **Identity in principle** (理即): All sentient beings are endowed with the potential or 'embryonic nature' of enlightenment (tathāgata garbha, 如來藏).

The next one is an external level of standing, common to all people of faith (外凡):

- b. **Identity in name** (名字卽): This is the vision realized through hearing the sūtra's words on life's most sublime purpose (or its title) through the four dimensions of faith (四信).

The next two are the internal levels of standing, common to those doing inner work (內凡):

- c. **Identity in meditation with introspection** (觀行卽): This is the cultivation of this purpose through deliberating on it, the five facets of putting this faith into practice (五品弟子位).
- d. **Identity in reemblance** (相似卽): This is resemblance to the fruit of spiritual freedom, attained by purifying mental and sensory perception in the first six kinds of consciousness (六根清淨位) of the afflictions in the deliberations and calculations of self-interest (kliṣṭa manas, 染污末那) that obscure the subconscious store of memory (ālaya vijñāna, 阿賴耶識). This purification is also called transformation of the spiritual foundation of sentient existence (āśraya parāvṛtti, 轉依).⁴⁹

The last two entail a higher sense of life's purpose:

- e. **Identity in incremental realization** (分證卽): These are the awakenings attained through the 41 noble causes (聖因) on the bodhisattva path (十住位, 十行位, 十迴向位, 十地位) that transform the spiritual foundation of consciousness (vijñāna, 識) into transcendental knowledge (jñāna, 智) and propagate the manifestation of enlightenment to life's greater purpose (等覺位).
- f. **The ultimate identity** (究竟卽): This is the noble fruit (聖果) of perfect awakening (妙覺位), the immaculate consciousness (amala vijñāna, 阿摩羅識) of the original enlightenment (本覺) that is the timeless source of the Buddha's spiritual life (dharma kāya, 法身).

67. On reciting the sūtra:

In his 'Confessional Resolve of Meditation Attained Through The Lotus Sūtra (法華三昧懺儀), Zhiyi provided advice for the use of the voice in scripture recitation (svādhyāya, 讀誦):

"The sound of the voice should be neither too loud nor too soft and the pace of recitation should be neither too fast nor too slow. One focuses on the proper diction and pacing of the prose and verse of the scripture, facing each and every syllable as it comes without partiality and without mistake. The mind should remain still and one should recognize that the sound of the voice is like an echo in a canyon. Although one does not become attached to the sound of the voice, one clearly illuminates the meaning of the words. In one's pacing and diction, one turns the wheel of life's purpose, making one's recitation an offering to the Three Treasures with a voice that fills the whole of the spiritual realm, the sphere of life's purpose (dharma dhātu, 法界). One offers it up for sentient beings everywhere so that they may all enter into the greater vehicle of this transcendental sphere."

There are four levels in penetrating the nature of the voice that are realized through recitation:

1. One begins by mastering the proper articulation of the voiced sounds.
2. Having memorized the words and mastered their proper articulation, one becomes ever more attuned to the steady pacing, the evenness of the pitch, the vitality of the breath and the rhythmic flow of the words through the fluid medium of the voice until they are completely spontaneous. The voice becomes clear, resonant and without any hesitation, carrying out the work of the Buddha by invoking the true nature of life's purpose.
3. Having attained a spontaneous harmony of expression, there is an illumination of the words' meaning that is the result of one's prior study and memorization of them. Through continuously keeping the words in mind with introspective meditation and stillness of mind, their meaning and purpose radiates and extends equally in all directions, being revealed in all things.
4. Finally there is the ultimately transcendental nature of the voice, the primordial sound that includes all sounds and goes beyond space and time.

The posture of the body is a key to the quality of the voice. Having a confident posture will have a subconsciously beneficial impact on one's attitude, even if one doesn't initially feel it. One's spine should be upright (without straining) and one's palms should be gently pressed together as a gesture of reverent respect. One should be single-mindedly focused on the practice without any distractions. One's eyes should be focused on the scripture's words or, if already committed to memory, a representation of the Three Treasures as an object of worship.

1. The enlightened being (Buddha) is the one teaching the sūtra.
2. The true nature of life's purpose (Dharma) is that being taught
3. The community of faith (Saṃgha) are those being taught.

The words arise from the mouth of the enlightened being (Buddha), reach the ears of the faithful (Saṃgha) and their true purpose (Dharma) is retained in the heart. When reciting the sūtra with others, one harmonizes one's pitch and pacing with the group so that all are reciting as one.

68. On the nature of the sublime (S. sat, C. miào, J. myō, 妙) **as expressed in the title of the sūtra, there are the ten levels in the nature of the sublime** (十妙) that are elaborated in Zhìyǐ's 'Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra'. First it is described as that which is subtle and refined (sūkṣma, 妙) as opposed to that which is coarse and explicit (sthūla, 麤). This is explained by Zhìyǐ in four ways:

1. In terms of the nature of life's purpose
2. In terms of the teachings in the sūtras
3. In terms of the observation of the mind with introspection
4. In terms of the identity of a person with the enlightened being (Buddha)

On this, at the beginning of volume two of his 'Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sūtra', it is said:

"1. First we briefly explain 'that which is sublime' in terms of the ten-fold sphere of life's purpose.⁸²

- a. In terms of the cause of enlightenment, there are three meanings to 'that which is sublime':
 1. The sphere of life's purpose as a whole is endowed with nine spiritual realms. This is said to refer to *the horizontal breadth of its existential reality* (體廣).
 2. These nine spiritual realms are all found within the sphere of the Buddha's enlightened purpose. This is a reference to *the loftiness of its standing* (位高).
 3. With there being these ten spheres of life's purpose, there is its nature of their emptiness, there is the nature of their temporary (virtual) mental constructs and there is the dialectical principle of the middle way. This is said to be a reference to *the endurance of its use, or application* (用長).

These are one and yet they are said to be three. They are three but are said to be one. Being inseparable from one another, they are neither different nor the same. Because of this, their nature is said to be 'sublime'.

- b. In terms of the fruit of enlightenment, it also has three meanings.
 1. Its existential reality is everywhere in all places. This refers to its horizontal breadth.
 2. Being enlightened since the beginning of time refers to the loftiness of its standing.
 3. From its source it takes on manifestations, benefiting all through the course of the past, the present and the future. This is said to be a reference to the endurance of its use.

These are the six kinds of meanings found in the sublime nature of its cause and effect. In being different from other sūtras, it is said to be 'sublime'.

2. Next we explain 'the sublime' in terms of the teachings found in the sūtras:⁷⁴

- a. In the teachings that are like fresh milk (found in The Garland Sūtra), there is one kind of teaching about cause and effect that is broad, lofty and of enduring use, while the other is narrow, inferior and of only temporary use. It follows that one of the teachings is subtle and refined while the other is explicit and coarse.
- b. In the teachings that are like curdled milk (found in the Sūtras of the Three Baskets), there is only the one kind about cause and effect that is narrow, inferior and only of temporary use. These teachings are only explicit and coarse and never subtle and refined.
- c. In the teachings that are like revived milk (found in the Vaipulya Sūtras), there are three kinds of teachings about cause and effect that are narrow, inferior and only of temporary use while one kind is broad, lofty and of enduring use. It follows that three kinds are coarse and explicit while one kind is subtle and refined.
- d. In the teachings that are like butter (found in the Prajñā Sūtras), there are two kinds of teachings about cause and effect that are narrow, inferior and of only temporary use while one kind is broad, lofty and of enduring use. It follows that the two kinds are explicit and coarse while one is subtle and refined.
- e. In the teachings that are like clarified butter, or ghee (found in the Lotus & Nirvāṇa Sūtras),

there is one kind of teaching about cause and effect that is (at the same time) broad, lofty and of enduring use. These teachings are only subtle and refined, never explicit and coarse. And because the sublime cause and effect of these sūtras are like clarified butter, they do not really contradict the other sūtras and are said to be 'sublime'.

3. Next, there is explaining 'the sublime' in terms of observing the mind with introspection:
 - a. If one observes one's own mind and it is endowed with neither the enlightened purpose of the Buddha nor the purposes of all sentient beings, its existential reality is narrow. In being endowed with them, its existential reality is broad.
 - b. If one observes one's own mind and it is inconsistent with the Buddha's enlightened purpose, its standing is inferior to it. If it is consistent with that of the Buddha, its standing is lofty.
 - c. If one observes one's own mind, the minds of all sentient beings and the mind of the Buddha and they are not all identical with the nature of emptiness, the nature of temporary mental constructs and the dialectical principle of the middle way, this observation is only of temporary use. If it is identical with them, it is of enduring use.
4. Finally, there is an explanation in terms of the six kinds of identity with enlightenment (六即): With each sphere of life's purpose interpenetrating and reaching all ten spheres, its existential nature is broad, its standing is lofty and it is of enduring use."

And so, in summary:

1. In terms of the ten spiritual realms, there is the unity of its dialectical principle.
2. In terms of the five flavors of teachings found in the sūtras,⁷⁴ there is the unity of its doctrine.
3. In terms of observing the mind with introspection, there the unity of its practice.
4. In terms of the six kinds of identity with enlightenment (the spiritual life of the Buddha), there is the unity of the person.

This briefly reveals the meaning of the term 'sublime'."

In explaining the meaning of the term 'sublime purpose' in his *Profound Meaning of The Lotus Sūtra*: **Zhìyǐ first explains the meaning of the term 'purpose'** (S. dharma, C. fǎ, J. hō, 法) in volume two as the moral nature of sentient existence, describing its different levels, its existential reality and its cause and effect. This portion of the text explains that this sphere of life's purpose is an inseparable trinity:

1. The broad nature of purposes found in sentient existence,
2. The lofty nature of purpose found in enlightenment and
3. The nature of the purposes found in one's own mind, realized through introspective meditation

His explanation of the word 'sublime' (S. sat, C. miào, J. myō, 妙) then takes up about half of the entire text, from volume two to volume seven. First he explains it generally, then more specifically.

In his general explanation of the word, he says it refers to the Buddha's purpose that is inconceivable, subliminal and unknowable by the words and thoughts employed by the discursive mind, and that knowledge of it is a seamless integration of:

- a. A provisional knowledge of life's conditional purposes & their mutually dependent aspects (相待)
- b. A transcendental knowledge of life's unconditional purpose that goes beyond any aspects (絕待)

In his specific explanation of it, Zhìyǐ describes this seamless integration on two levels:

- a. In terms of the gateway to penetrating the manifestation of enlightenment, Zhìyǐ explains ten aspects of this sublime purpose through the dialectical principle that 'opens up the three and reveals the one', as found in the first fourteen chapters of the sūtra.
- b. In terms of the gateway to penetrating the source of enlightenment, he explains ten aspects of this sublime purpose through the original vow of the three-fold spiritual life that 'discards the manifestations and reveals the source', as found in the last fourteen chapters of the sūtra.
 1. *The part on the ten-fold nature of the sublime realized through the gateway to penetrating the 'footprint' or manifestation of enlightenment* (C. jìmén, J. shakumon, 迹門) is the longest, covered from volume two to well into volume seven. This is on the unfolding of the dialectical principle through the mutually dependent aspects found in the transcendental sphere of life's purpose, or 'opening up the three & revealing the one' in the first fourteen chapters of the sūtra.

This ten-fold nature includes:

- #1 The sublime nature of the object (境妙): The object of meditation is the ten-fold sphere of life's purpose (dharma dhātu, 法界),⁸² including the ten mutually dependent aspects in which one's own mind, the enlightened being and all sentient beings are an inseparable trinity revealed through the dialectical principle. The second chapter of the sūtra calls this: 'That which 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 aspects of transcendental meaning found in these purposes: just as-it-is, being an outer appearance, just as-it-is, being an inner nature, etc.'

In teaching of this object in his Profound Meaning of The Lotus Sūtra, Zhìyǐ explains six objects of meditation that reveal the dialectical principle in the mutually dependent aspects of life's purpose:

- a. The ten mutually dependent aspects found in the transcendental meaning
 - b. The twelve mutually dependent conditions causing (afflicted) sentient existence
 - c. The four truths (suffering, its origination, its transcendence and the noble path)
 - d. The two truths (the absolute and the relative)
 - e. The three truths (the nature of emptiness, temporarily constructed existence and the dialectical principle of the middle way.
 - f. The one truth (with all seamlessly blended)
 - g. That beyond any truth
- #2 The sublime nature of the knowledge (智妙): With there being this knowledge, there is the arising of the undivided and seamless wholeness of this object of meditation. Because of the sublime nature of this object, there is the (subjective) knowledge of it that is also sublime. It is inconceivable, just as the size of a cover corresponds with the size of a box. On this, lines 123c-d of verse in this second chapter say:
'The transcendental knowledge and discernment I realized ... was the most sublime of all.'
With the box and its cover corresponding, the box illustrates the object while the cover illustrates the knowledge.
- #3 The sublime nature of the practice (行妙): With there being aspiration to practice, there is its cultivation. With the sublime knowledge guiding the practice, it follows that the practice is sublime and inconceivable as well. On this, lines 4b-c of verse in this second chapter say:
'Having traveled this path ... I have attained the ultimate fruit at the seat of enlightenment.'
- #4 The sublime nature of spiritual standing (位妙): Spiritual standing here refers to the progressively deeper levels of realization attained through cultivating the bodhisattva practice; the ten abodes of mindfulness on the bodhisattva's purpose, the ten distinguished practices of deliverance, the ten kinds of dedication and the ten levels of grounding in the transcendental nature of life's purpose. Because the nature of the practice is sublime, so the standing of realization is also sublime and inconceivable. On this, the verse in the third chapter of the sūtra says:
'The bejeweled cart is a great vehicle that travels in all four directions (of the horizon).'
- #5 The sublime nature of the three-fold track of (enlightened) purpose (三法軌妙): These are:
 - a. The transcendental nature of life's purpose (bhūta tathata, 真性軌) endowed with the dialectical principle that is the foundation of the object of meditation
 - b. Illumination (pratyaśaṅkā, 觀照性軌) with subtlety of compassion, the subjective nature of transcendental discernment (prajñā, 慧)
 - c. Provisioning (sambhāra, 資成性軌) with merits and virtues, which is sustained through the resolve of meditation (samādhi, 定).This three-fold track is the realization of the Buddha that is sublime and inconceivable. On this, lines 59c-60a of verse in the second chapter of this sūtra say:
'The Buddhas themselves abide on the greater vehicle.
The purpose that they have realized
Is adorned with the powers of transcendental resolve and discernment.'

- #6 The sublime nature of sympathy & response (感應): Sympathy is a reference to the Buddha's connection with the potential capacities of sentient beings while responses are the Buddha's manifestations of enlightenment that adapt to them. The Buddha sympathizes with the faith and other spiritual receptivities of sentient beings and so makes various different kinds of responses to their needs and aspirations to spiritually awaken them to their true purpose. This process is sublime and inconceivable, just as how water does not rise up into the sky and the moon does not descend down into this world, yet the (influence of the) moon is manifested in all of its waters. On this, two lines of verse in chapter three of the sūtra say:
'All sentient beings ... everywhere are my children.'
- #7 The sublime nature of spiritual penetration (神通妙): This is a reference to the response of The One Who Has Descended Into This World (Tathāgata, 如來) that goes beyond any methodology or technique, spiritually transforming sentient beings with words that adapt to their capacities and the opportunities at hand through a mastery of skillful ways and means that is sublime and inconceivable. As Maitreya said in the first chapter of the sūtra:
'The Buddha, The Blessed One, has now revealed the rare sign of entering into this deep resolve of meditation (samādhi).'
- #8 The sublime nature of teaching about life's purpose (說法妙): In teaching about life's purpose through the greater and lesser vehicles, there are words with meaning that can be partial or completely full. Through these, sentient beings are awakened and enter into the Buddha's knowledge and vision that is sublime and inconceivable. As chapter two of this sūtra says:
'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.'
- #9 The sublime nature of followers (眷屬妙): When the Buddha appears in this world, many great bodhisattvas come from the ten directions to surround, praise and assist him. Some come from the future, arising here through the power of grace, some come through vows made in past lives and some come through responding to the present moment. All of these followers are said to be sublime and inconceivable. On this, chapter two of the sūtra says:
'If any of my disciples deem themselves to be truly worthy beings or spiritually awakened to the (afflicted) conditions of sentient existence in their own lives, but they have not heard or understood that all the enlightened beings who have descended into this world only teach about this transcendental nature of life's purpose to bodhisattvas, then they are not genuine disciples of the Buddha.'
- #10 The sublime nature of benefits (利益妙): With the Buddha teaching about life's purpose, all sentient beings everywhere open up their minds and awaken to its original (transcendental) nature, attaining entry into the knowledge and vision of enlightenment. These benefits are sublime and inconceivable, just as when the rain comes down, covering and nourishing the whole earth. On this, at the beginning of chapter ten of the sūtra it says:
'If now or in the future, any beings such as these hear a single line or stanza of The Lotus Sūtra, and they rejoice in it for even a single moment, I will bestow upon them my prophecy that they will attain the supremely perfect enlightenment.'
2. *The ten-fold nature of the sublime realized through the gateway to penetrating the source of enlightenment* (C. běnmén, J. honmon, 本門) is found in volume seven. This is on revelation of the timeless grace from the original enlightenment and its three-fold spiritual life (tri kāya, 三身) that descends from the Buddha's transcendental vow, taught as 'discarding the manifestation & revealing the source' in the last fourteen chapters of The Lotus Sūtra. These ten include:
- #1 The sublime nature of the original cause (本因妙): This is the original cause for the very first inspiration of the awakened mind (bodhi citta utpāda, 發菩提心), the timeless transcendental vow that is the cause for cultivation of the bodhisattva path. On this, the sixteenth chapter of the sūtra says:
'Ever since I started on the bodhisattva path, this has been my livelihood and it still will not be completed for even twice the number of ages described before.'

- #2 The sublime nature of the original effect (本果妙): This is the original effect attained through putting this first cause into practice, a grace endowed with the permanence, contentment, purity & identity of purpose realized at the seat of enlightenment (bodhi maṇḍa, 道場) but without any of the attachments to spiritual freedom that have arisen in the meantime. On this, the sixteenth chapter says:
 ‘Like this I have already attained enlightenment and descended into this world for a very great eternal lifespan of limitless and countless ages ...’
- #3 The sublime nature of the original land (本國土妙): Having attained this original effect, there must certainly be a nation and land (environment) upon which it depends. Now it has been manifested in this land in which we all reside together. Since then, some have found it in the first three lands while others have said it is found in all four lands.⁶⁰ There should also be a land for this original Buddha to be found - where is this place? As this chapter says:
 ‘Since I have descended into this world, I have always been teaching and spiritually transforming sentient beings in this world we all endure together (saḥā loka, 娑婆世界) as well as other places in hundreds, thousands, millions, billions and countless nations ...’
 In citing these words, it is not just in this world we must all endure being manifested today, nor is it just in the provisional manifestations of this world that have unfolded over time. Therefore, in being the original, timeless source of this world we must all endure, there is said to be this sublime nature of the original land (本國土妙).
- #4 The sublime nature of the original sympathy & response (本感應妙): Upon attaining the original effect, there is the timeless source for realizing the resolves of meditation that deliver beings in the twenty-five states of sentient existence (pañca viṃśati samādhiḥ, 二十五三昧).⁹⁶ Through the Buddha’s vows of mercy and compassion there is sympathy for sentient beings to become receptive to the Buddha’s response. With sympathy & response seamlessly connected, all are capable of attaining the serene illumination (of enlightenment). And so there is said to be the original nature of sympathy and response. As this chapter also says:
 ‘When there are sentient beings before me, with my enlightened eye I observe their faith and all of their other capacities, and whether they are keen (strong) or dull (weak).’
- #5 The sublime nature of the original pervading grace of spiritual penetration (本神通妙): This is about the countless untold manifestations of enlightenment that have arisen from long ago (over time) being perfectly integrated with the original cause of mercy and compassion that is timeless. Through the sudden stirring up of this pervading power, there is the very first possibility of delivering sentient beings, and so we speak of its original, timeless nature. On this, the sixteenth chapter speaks about ‘the secret mystery about The One Who Has Descended Into This World and the pervading power of its grace.’ On this, it also says:
 ‘Some teaching through my own life, some teaching through the life of another.
 Some revealing my own life, some revealing the life of another.
 Some revealing my own work, some revealing the work of another.’
- #6 The sublime nature of the original teaching about life’s purpose (本說法妙): This is about being seated at the place of enlightenment (bodhi maṇḍa, 道場) long ago in the past, first attaining perfect enlightenment (sambodhi, 正覺), turning the wheel of life’s purpose and teaching of its transcendental nature through the four unobstructed kinds of interpretation (catasraḥ pratisamvidah, 四無礙解). This is called the sublime nature of the original teaching about life’s purpose. As the (chapter fifteen of the) sūtra says:
 ‘(Since attaining enlightenment at Bodhgaya) / I have made bodhisattvas / Inspire the greater path for the very first time. / Now they all abide in the stage of never turning back.’
- #7 The sublime nature of the original followers (本眷屬妙): Those who accept this teaching about the true nature of life’s purpose at the original place of enlightenment are like the bodhisattvas who rose up from the earth (in the fifteenth chapter of the sūtra). Maitreya was not previously aware of their existence. And so they are said to be the original followers of the Buddha that are timeless. Paraphrasing the fifteenth chapter:
 ‘These bodhisattvas below abiding in space are my children. I, it follows, am their father.’

- #8 The sublime nature of the original spiritual freedom (本涅槃妙): This is about the original time when there was a realization of the virtue of detachment that is found in spiritual freedom (nirvāṇa, 涅槃). It is also said to be the original time when there was a response of the Buddha's spiritual life (nirmāṇa kāya, 應身) in two (of the four) lands, the land where all similarly reside and the land of skillful ways and means.⁶⁰ Having attained deliverance in terms of realizing the purpose for the conditions of life that exist (before one), there is also a declaration of 'entry into the serene transcendence'. On this, the sixteenth chapter says: 'Although I am really undying, as a device I announce that I must perish.'
- #9 The sublime nature of the original lifespan (本壽命妙): In speaking about perishing, there are lifespans that are long and lifespans that are short, lives that have occurred recently and lives that occurred in the distant past. On this, the sixteenth chapter says: 'Here and there I have taught of my spiritual life with different names and terms for various periods of time, great and small.'
- #10 The sublime nature of the original benefits (本利益妙): The act of the original vow responds to followers by bestowing an abundance of benefits. As the sixteenth chapter says: 'Making all sentient beings rejoice.'

69. Those who trouble teachers of life's true purpose will have their heads break into seven pieces like a fallen arjaka branch (惱亂說法者，頭破作七分，如阿梨樹枝): This quote comes from the twenty-sixth chapter of The Lotus Sūtra On Prayer-Formulas That Are Retained (Dhāraṇī, 陀羅尼品). Here, the witch Hārītī (鬼子母) and her ten step-daughters (rākṣasīs, 羅刹女) offered up a prayer-formula to protect teachers of life's most sublime purpose from those who would try to prevent its fulfillment. After offering it, they declared two and a half stanzas of verse reiterating it, saying: "May those who do not accept this prayer-formula
And trouble the teachers of life's true purpose,
Have their heads split into seven pieces
Like the fallen branch of an arjaka plant.
Just like those who kill their own parents
Cheat people by mixing precious oil with impurities,
And falsely rig scales,
Those like Devadatta who break up the community of faith
And malign these teachers of life's true purpose
Shall suffer such consequences (as falling into the hell of incessant suffering)."
The arjaka plant grows in south Asia, When its blossoms fall off, they are said to break apart into seven pieces, possibly symbolizing the shattering of the mind by the three-fold cycle of affliction⁵¹ and the four devils of temptation.⁴⁷

- 70. The ten attitudes of faith** (daśa śraddhānāni, 十信) in The Sūtra on the Necklace of the Bodhisattvas' Practice (Bodhisattva Maṇḍa Prayoga Sūtra, 菩薩瓔珞本業經). The first six, moral commitment and the five spiritual capacities for it (pañca indriya, 五根), are attained through one's own efforts:
1. **An attitude of faith** (śraddhā, 信心) is a reference to the essential nature of faith, believing with utter sincerity that there is a transcendental moral purpose to life. Being unconditional, it neither arises nor perishes, transcending our lives in this world. In wishing to fully realize this purpose as an enlightened being, one seeks it with a single-minded determination.
 2. **An attitude of remembrance** (smṛti, 念心): This refers to cultivation of six kinds of mindfulness on: #1 the enlightened being (buddha, 念佛), #2 the transcendental nature of life's purpose (dharma, 念法), #3 the community of faith (saṃgha, 念僧), #4 moral commitment (śīla, 念戒), #5 generosity (dāna, 念施) and #6 entering the heavens of meditation (devaloka, 念天).
 3. **An attitude of diligent effort** (vīrya, 精進心): This is listening to the scriptures about those who awaken sentient beings to the transcendental nature of life's true purpose (bodhisattva piṭaka, 菩薩藏) and diligently cultivating virtuous moral actions (kuśala karmaḥ, 善業) in thought, word and deed so that they will be continuous without interruption (ānantarya, 無間).

4. *An attitude of mental resolve* (samādhi, 定心): In focusing the mind on the words of these scriptures and their meaning with introspection, the bodhisattva steadfastly abides in a resolve of meditation, completely detached from all false, trivial and disturbing thoughts as well as all the speculations found in sophistry.
5. *An attitude of transcendental discernment* (prajñā, 慧心): Upon listening to the scriptures about the bodhisattva practice and deliberating on them with introspection, one recognizes that one is invested with a transcendental nature that is ultimately selfless and endowed with the serenity found in the nature of emptiness.
6. *An attitude of moral commitment* (śīla, 戒心): Through accepting & embracing the bodhisattva's precepts of moral commitment, the merits and virtues of the above five spiritual capacities are acquired. This is the pure code of the bodhisattva's conduct. When there is purity of intent in thought, word & deed there are no violations of this code. If there are violations, there is repentance in order to quickly eliminate them.

In the seventh, one dedicates one's life and turns over any merit one has attained in the first six to a higher purpose.

7. *An attitude of dedication* (pariṇāmana, 迴向心): With dedication one reaches beyond one's own identity and purpose. In cultivating the roots of these wholesome spiritual capacities (kuśala mūla, 善根) they are dedicated to awakening all beings to the transcendental nature of life's true purpose before anything else.
 - * One is dedicated to offering up any spiritual capacity one attains for the benefit of all sentient beings, without just seeking these capacities for one's own benefit.
 - * One is dedicated to seeking out the ultimately true dialectical principle of the noble path without being attached to any of the words, views or outer appearances associated with it.

In the last three, the grace of a higher purpose works through one's own:

8. *An attitude of grace* (parigraha, 護法心): With grace, a higher purpose works through one's life. With the power of this greater purpose guarding and protecting one's mental state, emotional attachments do not rise up and there is the cultivation of the five characteristics of grace:
 - a. The grace of silence
 - b. The grace of remembrance
 - c. The grace of unafflicted knowledge
 - d. The grace of serenity (peace of mind)
 - e. The grace of a power emanating (descending) from a purpose greater than one's own.
9. *An attitude of impartiality* (upekṣā, 捨心): In transcending attachments, one is never stingy with one's own life or one's own wealth. In being able to let go of attachments, one has perfect equanimity of mind.
10. *The attitude of the transcendental vow* (praṇidhāna, 願心): In transcending impartiality, one cultivates and learns the various transcendental vows of the enlightened beings who descend into this world with a purity of intent that is innately spontaneous, beyond any further need for self-consciously induced motivation (anabhisaṃskāra, 無作) and in accordance with the occasions and circumstances presented before one.

71. **The announcement of impending mortality** (唱滅度): This is a reference to the means used by the Buddha to awaken sentient beings to life's greater purpose when they have afflictions that cannot be eliminated any other way. Although the grace descending from the Buddha's spiritual life is really deathless (as it neither arises nor perishes), it is said to arise and then perish in order to reach those who cannot faithfully accept this higher purpose. Those who believe in their own immortality with complacency and arrogance will only awaken upon facing the existential reality of death.
72. **The 80,000 gateways** (S. dharma paryaya, 法門), said to represent the myriad ('10,000') manifestations found in the eight-fold noble path. Sometimes 84,000 gateways are cited, representing the myriad manifestations found on the eight-fold noble path³⁴ and in the four truths of life's purpose.³²

73. The eight signs of becoming a Buddha (S. aṣṭa buddha kārya, 八相成道):

- a. Descent from the heaven of grace (S. tuṣṭita devaloka, 兜率天)⁵⁷
- b. Entry into the womb (S. Mahā Māyā yoni or Mahā Māyā garbha, 摩訶摩耶胎)⁵⁷
- c. Leaving the womb, birth into (a family of) this world (jāti, 出生)
- d. Leaving home, letting go of attachments to this world (S. pravrajita, 出家)⁵⁸
- e. Defeating the devil (S. māra pramardana, 魔) by overcoming mortality⁴⁷
- f. Realizing perfect enlightenment (S. anuttara samyak sambodhi, 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提)
- g. Turning the wheel of life's true purpose; the cycles of teaching about the true nature of life's purpose and so spiritually transforming sentient beings (S. dharma cakra pravartana, 轉法輪)⁵⁶
- h. Entering into the ultimate spiritual freedom (S. parinirvāṇa, 般涅槃)

74. The five flavors (S. pañca rasāḥ, 五味) illustrate the evolution in Buddhist teachings according to the perfect doctrine that assumes that the timeless nature of the Buddha has always been perfectly enlightened but ever adapts the teachings in response to the needs and capacities of the audience.

- a. *The Sūtra on the Great Garland of Universal Enlightenment* (Avataṃsaka Sūtra, 大方廣佛華嚴經) was the doctrine of fresh milk - The first construction of teachings about enlightenment without regard to the capacity of the audience. Most in the audience had a low capacity and so could not understand it. They were said to be like the deaf and dumb.
- b. *The Sūtras on the Three Baskets of Teachings* (Tripiṭaka, 三藏) was the doctrine of coagulated milk (curds) - The construction of teachings about life's purpose in words for those with less capacity for understanding. These were the teachings of the two lesser vehicles on attaining freedom from affliction on an individual level (in one's own life).
- c. *The Sūtras on the Broad Meaning of the Greater Vehicle* (Vaipulya Sūtras, 方等經) was the doctrine of curdled milk - The reconstruction of teachings about life's purpose through the virtual nature of consciousness and its three truths, leading to a penetration of the greater vehicle.
- d. *Sūtras on Deliverance of Transcendental Discernment* (Prajñā Pāramitā Sūtras, 般若波羅蜜多經) offered the doctrine of ripened milk (butter) - An ever more refined understanding of the three truths through an ever greater penetration of the dialectical principle.
- e. *The Lotus Sūtra* (Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra, 妙法蓮華經) & *The Sūtra on the Ultimately Great Spiritual Freedom* (Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra, 大般涅槃經) were the final doctrine of clarified butter (ghee) - the perfect doctrine of the dialectical principle first 'opens up the three and reveals the one' and then 'discards the manifestations and reveals their source'.

75. Only the fisherman benefited when the snipe and the clam tried to kill each other: This parable comes from The Annals of the Warring States (Zhàn Guó Cè, 戰國策, 5th to 3rd centuries BCE) about how, when two parties fight, it is a third one who profits: When the Zhao nation was about to attack the Yan, Su Dai spoke to King Hui of the Zhao on behalf of the king of the Yan, saying:

On my way here I crossed the Yi River and saw a snipe flying over the beach that spotted a clam with its shell open, sunning itself. Thinking it would make a good meal, the snipe swooped down and began pecking away on the clam's shell to get its flesh. To defend itself, the clam immediately closed its shell tightly around the beak of the snipe so that it could not get away from it. The snipe kept trying to shake the clam off his beak but was not able to do so. The snipe then said to the clam:

"You are now out of the water. It is not raining today, nor will it rain tomorrow. If you don't open your shell and release me, you won't get any water and you will die of thirst!"

The clam then answered the snipe by saying:

"You shall not escape my grip today, and you will not escape it tomorrow. If I keep hold of your beak like this, you will die of hunger!"

Neither side would yield as they tried to kill each other. A fisherman then came by seeing this and then put them both into his net for his dinner. Today, the Zhao are on the verge of attacking the Yan. They have been at odds with each other for a long time, and as a result they have caused their people to suffer. I am afraid that the fisherman in this case will be the mighty Qin nation. For this reason, I hope your highness will give this matter due consideration. Upon hearing these words

and understanding the meaning of the parable, the king of the Zhao agreed to called off his attack, preventing other nations from taking advantage of their dispute.

76. The ten names of the Buddha described in The Garland (Avataṃsaka) Sūtra (大方廣佛華嚴經):

This is a reference to the ten names of the Buddha found in the Chapter 'On the Names of The One Who Has Descended Into This World' (如來名號品):

1. The Buddha 'With Knowledge that is Unshaken' (āniñjya, 不動智) (meditation with introspection & stillness of mind) in the eastern world With a Golden Radiance (suvarṇa prabhāsa, 金色)
2. The Buddha 'With the Fire of Knowledge' (jñāna agni, 智火) Destroying All Obstacles (afflictions) (apratihata, 無礙智) in the southern world Of Sublime Bliss (niṣprītikaṃ sukham, 樂色 or 妙色)
3. The Buddha 'With the Knowledge of Origination' (samudaya, 習智) Extinguishing the Darkness of Ignorance (avidyā nirodha, 滅暗智) in the western world Made of Red Blossoms (padma, 華色)
4. The Buddha 'With the Knowledge of (Ritual) Practices' (行智) or 威儀智 in the northern world Made of Yellow Blossoms (campaka, 薔華色)
5. The Buddha 'With Knowledge of the Dawn' (aruṇavat, 明智 or 明相智) in the northeastern world Made of Blue Blossoms (utpala, 青蓮華色 or 優鉢羅華)
6. The Buddha 'With Knowledge of the Ultimate End' (jñāna parama, 究竟智) in the southeastern world Made of Gold (金色)
7. The Buddha 'With Knowledge of Life's Higher Purpose' (vara jñāna, 上智 or 勝智) in the southwestern world Made of Precious Jewels (ratna, 寶色)
8. The Buddha 'With Knowledge of Mastery Over (All of) Life's (Lesser) Purposes' (svayambhū jñāna, 自在智) in the northwestern world Made of Diamonds (vajra, 金剛色)
9. The Buddha 'With the Knowledge of the Creator' (brahmā jñāna, 梵智) (and its invocation) in the world below Made of Crystal (sphatika, 玻瓈色)
10. The Buddha 'With that Knowledge That Seeks Out & Subdues All Enemies' (māra pramardana jñāna, 伏怨智 or 觀察智) in the world above Made of the Transcendental Nature (bhūta tathatā, 如實色) That is Endowed With Complete Equanimity of Mind (samatā, 平等色)

77. The four fruits (catvāri phalāni, 四果) of spiritual freedom on the lesser vehicle:

- a. **Stream-Enterers** (srotāpanna, 須陀洹 or 入流) are those who have awakened to the four truths about life's purpose in terms of their beliefs and principles, that is, on an intuitive level that is beyond any doubts and so have attained a proper vision of the noble path (darśana mārga, 見道). They are said to have no more than seven more rebirths before entering into nirvāṇa.
- b. **Once-Returners** (sakṛdāgāmin, 斯陀含 or 一來) are those who have attained merit on an innate level through proper cultivation of wholesome and virtuous motives on the noble path (bhāvanā mārga, 修道). They are said to have but one more rebirth in this world before entering nirvāṇa.
- c. **Never-Returners** (anāgāmin, 阿那含 or 不還) are totally selfless, having let go of all selfish motives in cultivation of the noble path and offered up all the merit they have earned & their very lives for its supreme purpose. They are said to enter into nirvāṇa in this very life.
- d. **Truly Worthy Beings** (arhats, 阿羅漢) offer up their very lives for this greater purpose but still remain in this world to fulfill their destinies as living examples of the noble path, and so are said to be worthy of offerings and veneration from others, those who seek spiritual guidance. They are beyond any further need for training or cultivation (aśaikṣa, 無學者).

78. The sixteen princes who repeated the lessons of the Buddha: A reference to the story of a Buddha named 'Of Great Penetrating Knowledge' (Mahā Abhijñā Jñāna Abhibhū, 大通智勝) in chapter seven of The Lotus Sūtra 'On the Parable About the Magic Fortress' (Rddhi Nagara, 化城喻品), whose enlightenment shined everywhere in the ten directions. The lords of creation in the heavens above (brahma devarāja, 梵天王) were all in awe and wondered what caused this to occur. They approached each other to discuss it and then all sought the source of the light in the same way, with each of them

following it and finding its source in the opposite directions from where they dwelled. This Buddha bestowed ever deeper teachings about life's purpose on them. Then, revealing them to be his sons (as bodhisattvas), he finally bestowed the very highest teaching of all (The Lotus Sūtra) on them in their different lands of the ten directions, where they all in turn became Buddhas. As bodhisattvas they all taught of The Lotus Sūtra in (the interim period of) the past and now they are still teaching it as Buddhas in the present. In each of the eight directions of the horizon, there are now two of them:

- #1 In the east, one is called 'Unshaken' (Akṣobhya, 阿閼) in a land called 'Joyfulness' (Abhirati, 歡喜) & the other is called 'Peak of Mount Sumeru' (Meru Kūṭa, 須彌頂).
- #2 In the southeast one is called 'With the Roar of a Lion' (Siṃha Ghoṣa, 師子音) & the other is called 'With the (Visual) Signs of a Lion' (Siṃha Dhvaja, 師子相).
- #3 In the south, one is called 'Abiding in Empty Space' (Ākāśa Pratiṣṭhita, 虛空住) & the other is called 'Ever Transcending' (Nitya Parinirvṛta, 常滅).
- #4 In the southwest, one is called 'Sign of the Lord Almighty' (Indra Dhvaja, 帝相) & the other is called 'With the Signs of the Creator' (Brahma Dhvaja, 梵相).
- #5 In the west one is called 'With an Infinite Lifespan' (Amitāyus, 阿彌陀) & the other is called 'Delivering All the World From Suffering & Distress' (Sarva Loka Dhātu Upadrava Udvega Pratyutṭirṇa, 度一切世間苦惱).
- #6 In the northwest one is called 'The Spiritually Pervading Fragrance of Sandal and Tamala Leaves' (Tamāla Pattra Candana Gandha Abhijñā, 多摩羅跋栴檀香神通) & the other is called 'With the Form of Mount Sumeru' (Meru Kalpa, 須彌相).
- #7 In the north one is called 'Thundering Cloud' (Megha Svaradīpa, 雲自在) & the other is called 'Lord Over the Thundering Clouds' (Meghasvara Rāja, 雲自在王).
- #8 In the northeast one is called 'Destroying All the Fears of this World' (Sarva Loka Bhayacchambhitatva Vidhvamsanakara, 壞一切世間怖畏) & the sixteenth is the Buddha Śākyamuni (釋迦牟尼), who achieved perfect enlightenment in this world all must endure together (Sahā Loka, 娑婆國土).

79: Upagupta (優婆鞠多): Monk from Mathura in India in the third or fourth century BCE who studied under Śāṇavāsa and later was said to have converted the Mauryan Emperor Aśoka to Buddhism. Aśoka would subsequently propagate Buddhism far and wide throughout India. According to the introduction of Zhiyi's Greatness of Meditation With Introspection & Stillness of Mind (C. Mólē Zhǐguān, J. Maka Shikan, 摩訶止觀), the lineage of patriarchs who passed down the Buddha's true purpose (Saddharma, 正法) from the Buddha Śākyamuni included #1 Mahā Kāśyapa, #2 Ānanda, #3 Śāṇavāsa & Madhyāntika jointly and then #4 Upagupta. And so, by the time of Upagupta, there were no longer any connections with those who directly knew the Buddha while he was in this world.

80. The worthy (bhadra, 賢) are those blessed with spiritual merits and virtues.

- a. In terms of the lesser vehicle, this refers to the seven skillful ways & means that prepare one for freedom from affliction on the individual level.²¹
- b. In terms of the greater vehicle, this refers to the thirty stages of preparation (abhūmi praviṣṭa, 地前)^{33A-C} for the ten levels of grounding in the transcendental nature of life's purpose.

The noble (ārya, 聖) are those who are selflessly dedicated of a higher, transcendental purpose, beyond their own lives and their own self-interest.

- a. In terms of meditation on the lesser vehicle this refers to the four fruits:⁷⁷
 1. A vision of the noble path (darśana mārga, 見道) is attained through the first fruit of the 'stream-enterer'.
 2. Cultivation of the noble path (bhāvanā mārga, 修道) is attained by the second and third fruits, 'the once-returner' and 'the never returner'.
 3. Beyond any need for further cultivation (aśaikṣa, 無學), there is the fourth fruit of a 'truly worthy being.'
- b. In terms of the greater vehicle, this refers to the ten levels of grounding (daśa bhūmi, 十地) in the transcendental nature of life's purpose.^{23D}
 1. Transcendental vision of the noble path is attained at the first level of grounding in joyfulness
 2. Cultivation of the noble path is attained at the second through the seventh level
 3. The eight through the tenth levels are said to be beyond any further need for cultivation

81. **Nichiren's criticisms of other Buddhist schools** is best understood in the context of his time, during the Kamakura Shogunate of thirteenth century Japan.

The Pure Land School (Jōdo Shū (浄土宗) was especially popular among ordinary, less educated people. It was criticized by Nichiren for its 'exclusive cultivation of keeping the Buddha in mind' (senju nembutsu, 専修念仏) which involved, in the words of its Japanese founder Hōnen (法然), 'discarding, closing, ignoring and abandoning' (捨閉闕抛) all other teachings and practices of Buddhism in favor of the faith based Pure Land practice. Through this process of discarding all other practices, choosing only the essential Pure Land practice and only reappropriating other practices once one has sufficient faith, this school encouraged its followers to disregard the teachings of all other scriptures, claiming that the accessibility of Pure Land practice was all that was needed. For example, Hōnen said that, although The Lotus Sūtra may reveal the supreme doctrine, if ordinary people cannot put it into practice, it was of little or no use, like showing a beautiful painting to the blind or playing beautiful music to the deaf. He claimed trying to use The Lotus Sūtra to attain enlightenment was like a small boy trying to wear his grandfather's shoes or like someone with little physical strength trying to use a stout bow while wearing heavy armor. For these reasons, he said forming a karmic connection with The Lotus Sūtra would prevent one's birth in the Pure Land. Since the Pure Land practice had the practical effect of steering people away from the teachings of The Lotus Sūtra, Nichiren felt it was settling for an inferior teaching that would ultimately deprive them of enlightenment to life's supreme purpose.

The Meditation School (Zen Shū, 禅宗) was especially popular among the intellectual and samurai classes. It was criticized by Nichiren for its advocacy of cultivating an enlightenment that is beyond any words. This had the practical effect of steering people away from the sūtras generally, and The Lotus Sūtra in particular. This unmooring of Buddhism from the words of the Buddha was said to tempt the unwary into substituting their own self-serving beliefs and fantasies about life's supreme purpose for that which was truly taught by the Buddha.

The indifference of the closed temple was reference to schools of Buddhism only open to those initiated into its secret (esoteric) doctrines & practices, particularly The 'Mantra' School (Shingon Shū, 真言宗) and the Tendai School that had been become heavily influenced by these practices.

Regarding The Lotus Sūtra as inferior or 'third rate': A reference generally to those who did not recognize The Lotus Sūtra as the supreme teaching of Buddhism; More specifically it referred to :

- a. The analysis of Kūkai (空海, 774-835) (the founder of the 'Mantra'(Shingon) School in Japan, who, in his 'Precious Key to the Secret Treasury' (Hizō Hōyaku, 秘蔵宝鑰) and 'Treatise on The Ten Stages of the Development of Mind' (Jūjū Shinron (十住心論) ranked the teachings of The Lotus Sūtra as only the third most profound, after those of #1 The Sūtra on the Great Illuminator (Mahā Vairocana) and #2 The Garland (Avatamsaka) Sūtra.
- b. The analysis of Enchin (圓珍, 814 - 891), the fifth abbot of the Tendai School who, in his 'Essentials of the Mahā Vairocana Sūtra' (大毗盧遮那經指歸), seemed to suggest that this esoteric sūtra was equivalent to The Lotus Sūtra in terms of doctrine but superior to it in terms of ritual practices.

82. **The three thousand-fold sphere** is the or matrix of 'tapestry' of existence that includes all of life's purposes, from the depths of hell to the peak of enlightenment. It is enumerated through:

- a. *The ten-fold sphere of life's purpose* (daśa dharma dhātu, 十法界), or 'the spiritual realm'
- b. *The mutual possession* (S. anyonya āśritatva, C. hùjù, J. gogu, 互具) through which these ten all interact and interpenetrate one another so that they become a one hundred-fold sphere.
- c. *The ten mutually dependent aspects* (S. daśa yathātatham, C. shí rúshì, J. jū nyoze, 十如是) through which the existential nature of cause & effect in this one hundred-fold sphere unfolds so that there is a one thousand-fold sphere
- d. *The three levels* (S. tri loka, C. sān shìjiān, J. san seken, 三世間) on which the interaction and interpenetration of this sphere is found, ultimately revealing its full three thousand aspects

- a. ***The ten-fold sphere of life's purpose*** (daśa dharma dhātu, C. shí fǎjiè, J. ji hokkai, 十界) is the 'spiritual realm', the moral hierarchy of all of life's purposes as a whole. These ten are also called 'the ten mental states' (daśa caitasika dharma, 十心數法) found in meditation with introspection and the ten spiritual destinies of life (daśa dharma gati, 十趣). In contemplating these ten, there are nine spheres (three sets of three) that are properly integrated through the tenth:
1. There are three kinds of evil found in the sphere of desire that are ultimately one.
 - #1 The suffering found in the destiny of hell (naraka gati, 地獄趣) that arises from the seeds of hatred, attachments to unpleasant feelings
 - #2 The brutality found in the destiny of beasts (tiragyoni gati, 畜生趣) that arises from the seeds of stupidity (delusions), attachments to feelings of selfish indifference
 - #3 The hunger found in the destiny of insatiable appetites (preta gati, 餓鬼趣) that arises from the seeds of greed, attachments to pleasant feelings
 2. There are three kinds of virtue found in the sphere of desire that are ultimately one.
 - #4 The endless strivings of envy and rivalry found in the destiny of ego and possession (asura gati, 阿修羅趣), arising from the seeds of pride that manage unpleasant feelings
 - #5 The virtuous actions found in the destiny of human social personality (manuṣya gati, 人趣), arising from the making of associations and the seeds of doubt (about pride & beliefs) that manage feelings of selfish indifference
 - #6 The bliss of contentment found in the destiny of the gods, the heavens of meditation (deva gati, 天趣), arising from the seeds of belief in a higher being that manage pleasant feelings
 3. There are three kinds of spiritual awakening that are ultimately one.
 - #7 Students of life's purpose (śrāvakas, 聲聞) following the words and ideas of others, those training in nobility of purpose and gradually attaining emancipation from affliction
 - #8 Those awakened to the nature of afflicted sentient existence in their own lives (pratyeka buddhas, 緣覺) through a realization beyond any words, freed from the endless cycles of affliction
 - #9 Those with a higher sense of purpose (bodhisattvas, 菩薩), dedicated to the awakening of fellow sentient beings, beyond just pursuing their own deliverance from affliction
 4. In fulfilling life's greatest and most noble purpose there is:
 - #10 The sphere of enlightenment (Buddha, 佛) endowed with the perfect spiritual freedom (from the nature of affliction) and the transcendental vow ('the single moment') that works through the other nine spheres to deliver all sentient beings to this freedom.
- b. ***Through the principle of their mutual possession*** (S. anyonya aśratatva, C. hùjù, J. gogu, 互具), these ten all interact and interpenetrate one another so they become a one hundred-fold sphere.
- c. ***Through the unfolding of the ten mutually dependent aspects found in the transcendental nature of these ten spheres*** (S. daśa yathātatham, C. shí rúshì, J. jū nyoze, 十如是), the existential nature of cause & effect in this one hundred-fold sphere is revealed to be a one thousand-fold sphere:
1. There are three aspects in their existential reality that are ultimately one:
 - #1 Their outer appearances (S. lakṣaṇa, C. J. sō, C. xiāng, 相)
 - #2 Their inner subjective natures (S. dṛśa, C. xìng, J. shō, 性)
 - #3 Their existential reality (S. svabhāva, C. tǐ, J. tai, 體).
 2. There are three aspects in their causes that are ultimately one:
 - #4 Their spiritual powers (S. bala, C. lì, J. riki, 力)
 - #5 Their forces with karmic influence (S. kriyā, C. zuò, J. sa, 作).
 - #6 Their immediate causes (S. hetu, C. yīn, J. in, 因)
 3. There are three aspects in their effects that are ultimately one:
 - #7 The conditions that sustain their continuity (S. ālambana) pratyaya, C. yuán, J. en, 緣)
 - #8 The fruition of their immediate effects (S. phala, C. guǒ, J. ka, 果)
 - #9 The ultimate reward from all their accumulated consequences (S. vipāka, C. bào, J. hō, 報)
 4. Their seamless integration:
 - #10. Their complete consistency from beginning to end (S. pūrvāparānta niṣṭhā samatva, C. běn mò jiū jìng děng, J. hon matsu kuyō tō, 本末究竟等)

With the first nine becoming three and these three being one, there is its existential reality and its cause & effect, the timeless nature of making life's choices here and now in this temporal world. After death we are no longer able to make these moral choices as our destinies as individuals have been fulfilled. See 'On Skillfulness in Ways & Means' by the author of this work for an elaboration of this as explained in the second chapter of The Lotus Sūtra and its commentaries.

3. **The three levels** (S. tri loka, C. sān shìjiān, J. san seken, 三世間), where this interaction is found:
 - a. The level of the individual with five projections of its purpose (pañca skandha, 五陰)⁶²
 - b. The level of society (sarva sattva, 眾生), with sentient beings interacting with one another
 - c. The level of the land (kṣetra, 國土), the foundation on which sentient beings depend

With the one thousand aspects interacting and interpenetrating one another on these three levels, there are said to be these **three thousand mutually dependent aspects**.

83. **The three great secrets about life's most sublime purpose** (J. sandai hihō, 三大秘法) explain how Nichiren's Lotus Sūtra practice seamlessly blends the three-fold training of moral commitment (śīla, 戒), mental resolve (samādhi, 定) & transcendental discernment of purpose (prajñā, 慧) in such a way that all those with faith can accept and employ them in the latter days. These three, the essence of Buddhist training, are found within each other and are the inseparable aspects of a single practice:

- a. **The original altar** (J. honmon no kaidan, 本門の戒壇) is the place where one makes the sacred promise to maintain a **moral commitment** (S. śīla dhara, 持戒) to life's most sublime purpose. This altar is often depicted as a pericarp, the seed-pod or seed-bearing fruit (S. karṇika, 蓮果) of a lotus, its very highest point (S. kūṭāgāra, 臺 or 台). There are various interpretations:
 - * It is said to be the seat or throne of spiritual awakening (S. bodhi maṇḍa, 道場), the place of the original enlightenment to life's true purpose.
 - * It is said to be Vulture's Peak (Gṛdhrā Kūṭa, 耆闍崛山), where The Lotus Sūtra was taught.
 - * As the place where one practices meditation on life's true purpose with introspection and stillness of mind, it is a **pedestal** where the seated Buddha is worshiped.
 - * As the place where there is propagation of the teaching about life's true purpose, it is a **platform** where the Buddha arises to teach and spiritually transform sentient beings.
- b. **The original invocation of the title** (J. honmon no daimoku, 本門の題目) refers to the **resolve** (samādhi, 定) of the transcendental vow that transmits the profound meaning (玄義) of the sūtra as a whole through a single utterance, or moment of thought. This transmission includes:
 1. Its identification by name (名), invoking (revealing and illustrating) its true purpose
 2. Its existential nature (體) that is realized through the dialectical principle
 3. Its objective (宗) that is fulfilled through the unfolding process of its cause & effect
 4. Its application (用) through the blending of one's own practice & the influence of others
 5. Its doctrine (教) that seamlessly integrates the different teachings about life's true purpose
- c. **The original object of worship** (J. honmon no gohonzon, 本門の御本尊) refers to **transcendental discernment** (prajñā, 般若) of life's purpose as a whole (dharma dhātu, 法界) through meditation on it with introspection and stillness of mind. There are three components of this object:
 1. All of life's purposes, the ten spheres and their three-thousand mutually dependent aspects found in the minds of sentient beings in this afflicted world we must all endure together
 2. Life's supreme purpose, found in the three-fold spiritual life (dharma kāya, 法身) of the enlightened being (Buddha) whose grace is forever descending into this world.
 3. The purposes found in one's mind through meditation with introspection & stillness of mind

On blending these three together, there is meditation on and discovery of the real motives found in one's heart while resolving to realize one's noblest purpose in this afflicted world of sentient existence and put it into practice through one's own actions.

 - * Through this vision of the noble path (S. darśana mārga, 見道) there is knowledge of the 3000 aspects of life's purpose in a single moment in principle (J. ri no ichinen sanzen, 理の一念三千).
 - * Through this cultivation of the noble path (S. bhāvanā mārga, 修道) there is the work of these 3000 aspects in a single moment in actual practice (J. ji no ichinen sanzen, 事の一念三千).

84. Duration, timelessness and their coming together:

- a. *Time as duration* (kālika, 時) involves the conditional nature of life's purposes (saṃskṛta dharmah, 有為法) as it courses through the past, present & future. Its mutually dependent aspects appear to be a series of connected events ever arising and perishing in the stream (continuum) of consciousness, just as a moving picture is a succession of photographs of different connected moments. This apparent (virtual) existence of time as duration is simulated by the meeting place of the three conditions of consciousness (tri saṃghaṭi pratyaya, 三緣):
 1. The conditions of consciousness that are similar to those immediately connected with the past (samanantara pratyaya, 等無間緣)
 2. The conditions of consciousness objectively before one sustaining the present (ālambana pratyaya, 所緣缘)
 3. The conditions of consciousness that will prevail into the future (adhipati pratyaya, 增上缘)The idea of a self-centered existence or an enduring soul with its own purpose is a necessary illusion, defining our lives in this world over time and endowing it with an identity and purpose. Without these hypothetical constructs (prajñapti, 假) of sentient existence in time, our lives as individuals would have no meaning.
- b. *The timelessness of the moment* (kṣaṇika, 刹那) refers to conditions as they directly cause the arising of consciousness (hetu pratyaya, 因緣) here & now, endowing them with emptiness (śūnyatā, 空), the unconditional nature of purpose (asaṃskṛta dharmah, 無為法). This timeless moment is like a photograph that is forever the same. Transcendental knowledge of this timeless nature beyond the changes of the past, present & future is most fully appreciated by most upon facing imminent mortality, when one's whole life suddenly flashes before one's eyes in a single moment. In taking on this deeper view of time and seeing it in the context the greater scheme of all things, it becomes clear that our lives are really only here for an instant and then gone. This perspective about the nature of impermanence is hard to maintain because we are ever being drawn towards and distracted by the necessities of daily life. Through an enduring observation of this nature of life's purpose that neither arises nor perishes and goes beyond our lives in this world (anutpattika dharma kṣānti, 無生法忍), there is a transcendental knowledge of it that outshines any speculations about its distinctions (nirvikalpa jñāna, 無分別智) and is endowed with perfect equanimity of mind (samatā jñāna, 平等智).
- c. *With the meeting, or coming together* (samaya, 三昧耶) of duration and timelessness through the dialectic between the conditional purposes (saṃskṛta dharmah, 有為法) of sentient existence and the unconditional purpose (asaṃskṛta dharmah, 無為法) of life's transcendental nature, there is the deepest knowledge of the nature of time. Just as all conditional purposes that arise must perish, that which perishes must ever rise again. Such is the transcendental nature of cause & effect, karma & retribution. The countless cycles of lifetimes may come and go, but the source of both ignorance and the unconditional vow of the Buddha's spiritual life (dharma kāya 法身) ever return into this world, even as their different forms arise and perish. Through a realization of this timeless coming together of conditions and their transcendental nature, there is that which is eternal in each impermanent moment of thought and the grace of the spiritual life that is ever descending into this world from the timeless sphere of life's purpose (dharma dhātu, 法界). This meeting place is where the sūtra is found, ever being renewed and coming back to life when it is accepted and employed here and now by those with faith. And so it is also the meeting place between our own lives and the eternal. In the sūtra, the Buddha at Vulture's Peak (Gṛdha Kūta, 靈鷲山) was said to be at the meeting place between the timeless, transcendental sphere at the great bejeweled monument (ratna stūpa, 寶塔) found in the sky above and the sentient beings of faith found below in this world we must all endure together (sahā loka, 娑婆世界). Their seamless blending is invoked when the sūtra begins with the words 'at one time' (ekasmiṃ samaye, 一時).