

Part Three:

EXHORTATION
to
RESOLVE ON BUDDHAHOOD

By the Tang Dynasty Literatus & Prime Minister Peixiu
(797–870 CE)

Preface by Huayan & Dhyāna Patriarch Śramaṇa Guifeng Zongmi
(780–840 CE)

anuttarasamyaksambodhi resolve and to select buddhalands where they all succeeded in receiving predictions of future buddhahood.

He additionally encouraged three *koṭīs* of disciples, influencing them to generate the [bodhi] mind. Among them was a man named Shu-ti³³ who addressed him, saying, "Venerable one. What is meant by 'bodhi'? What are the dharmas which assist bodhi? How is it that a bodhisattva goes about cultivating bodhi? How is it that, through focusing one's mindfulness, one realizes bodhi?"

His guru replied to him, saying, "As for 'bodhi,' it is precisely those four inexhaustible³⁴ treasures which are cultivated and accumulated by the bodhisattva, namely the treasury of inexhaustible merit, the treasury of inexhaustible knowledges, the treasury of inexhaustible wisdom, and the treasury of the inexhaustible unified Dharma of the Buddha. It is these things which serve to constitute what we term 'bodhi.'

"According to the Buddha's explanation of what constitutes the bodhi-assisting dharmas, they consist in the accumulation of pure Dharma gateways through which one achieves liberation from cyclic birth-and-death.

"Son of Good Family, the relinquishing of one's wealth is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one succeeds in the restraint and training of beings.³⁵

"Upholding the moral prohibitions is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, no matter what a person aspires to, it results in success.

"Patience is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one perfects the thirty-two physical marks and the eighty subsidiary characteristics.

"Vigor is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one succeeds in the perfect accomplishment of all endeavors.

"Dhyāna absorption is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one's mind is skillfully subdued and trained.

"Wisdom is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one becomes aware of all forms of afflictions.

"Extensive learning is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one gains unimpeded eloquence.

"[The accumulation of] merit is a bodhi-assisting dharma because it is an essential necessity for all beings.

"Contemplative reflection is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one succeeds in severing doubts.

“The mind imbued with loving-kindness is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one perfects a mind free of obstructiveness.

“The compassionate mind is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one carries on tirelessly with the teaching and transforming of beings.

“The mind suffused with sympathetic joy is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one is able to bring forth affectionate happiness based on right Dharma.

“The mind of equanimity is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one succeeds in severing both affection and loathing.

“Listening to Dharma is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one is able to succeed in putting an end to the five hindrances (lit. “coverings”).³⁶

“Transcending the world is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one is able to renounce and abandon all aspects of worldly existence.

“Dwelling in an *arāṇya*³⁷ is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one is able to destroy unwholesome karmic activity.

“Joyfully according [with the wholesome karmic actions of others] is a bodhi-assisting dharma because, on account of it, one is able to bring about the growth of one’s roots of goodness.

“The [four] stations of mindfulness are bodhi-assisting dharmas because, on account of them, one is able to perfect one’s analytic comprehension of the body, feelings, thoughts, and dharmas (i.e. “phenomena”).³⁸

“The [four] right efforts are bodhi-assisting dharmas because, on account of them, one is able to abandon all unwholesome dharmas and carry on with the practice of all good dharmas.³⁹

“The [four] bases of psychic power are bodhi-assisting dharmas because, on account of them, one is able to perfect the light easefulness (*praśrabdhi*) of both body and mind.⁴⁰

“The [five] ‘root-faculties’ are bodhi-assisting dharmas [because, on account of them, one consolidates the faculties.⁴¹

“The {five} powers are bodhi-assisting dharmas] because, on account of them, one destroys all afflictions.⁴²

“The [seven] limbs of enlightenment are bodhi-assisting dharmas because, on account of them, one becomes enlightened to an awareness of dharmas which accords with ultimate reality.⁴³

"The six harmonies are bodhi-assisting dharmas because, on account of them, one is able to restrain and train beings while influencing them towards purification.⁴⁴

"...These [sorts of practices] are what qualify as 'the accumulation of pure Dharma gateways through which one brings about liberation from cyclic birth-and-death.'

"...To cultivate in this manner is in itself precisely what is meant by realizing bodhi through focusing of one's mindfulness.

"...Such manifestations of the bodhi mind as these are those towards which one should now generate zeal. This path is pure. ... This path is free of outflows. ... This path is correct and direct. ... This path⁴⁵ is peaceful and secure. ... You all should, with focused minds, make great vows whereby you choose to take up the adornment of whichever sorts of buddhalands accord with your respective aspirations."

Interlinear note: In this matter of the adornment of buddhalands, each individual is different. Some will select a pure land. Some will select a defiled land. This is described in full in the *Flower of Compassion Sutra*.

Explanation of the Four Bodhisattva Indolence Dharmas

Jeweled Treasury Tathāgata spoke to Vijaya, the Stainless,⁴⁶ saying, "Among bodhisattvas, there exist four indolence-associated dharmas. If the bodhisattva completely engenders these four dharmas, then he undergoes all manner of suffering and affliction within the prison of cyclic birth-and-death and thus remains unable to swiftly gain realization of *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

What then are these four? They are the so-called inferior conduct, inferior companions, inferior giving, and inferior vows.

"What is meant by 'inferior conduct'? There may be times when a bodhisattva breaks moral prohibitions related to verbal and physical karma. Thus he fails then to skillfully guard the quality of his karmic actions. This is what is meant by 'inferior conduct.'

"What is meant by 'inferior companions'? When one draws close to those who adhere to the Śrāvaka (Hearer-disciple) and Pratyekabuddha [vehicles] and then becomes involved with them in taking up the same sorts of endeavors, these then qualify as 'inferior companions'?

"What is meant by 'inferior giving'? When one is unable to

relinquish absolutely everything which one possesses, when one generates mental discriminations with regard to the recipient, and when one practices giving for the sake of gaining the bliss of celestial existences, this is what qualifies as ‘inferior giving.’

“What is meant by ‘inferior vows’? When one is unable to single-mindedly vow to choose to go to the pure and marvelous lands of the Buddhas and when the vows one makes are not able to bring about the training and subduing of beings, these qualify as ‘inferior vows.’”⁴⁷

Interlinear note: This is from the *Flower of Compassion Sutra*.⁴⁸

Explanation of the Four Bodhisattva Swiftness Dharmas

“...There are yet another four dharmas which, if completely engendered by the bodhisattva, bring about swift realization of *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.⁴⁹

As for the first, one is able to uphold the restrictive prohibitions, purify body, mouth, and mind, and thus guard and maintain practice of the Dharma gateways.⁵⁰

“As for the second, one draws close to persons who cultivate and study the Great Vehicle and then becomes involved with them in taking up the same sorts of endeavors.

“As for the third, one is able to relinquish everything one possesses and employ the greatly compassionate mind to engage in giving to everyone.

“As for the fourth, one single-mindedly vows to choose to go to and adorn in many different ways the lands of the Buddhas while also doing so for the sake of training and subduing all beings.

“These are what constitute the four [bodhisattva swiftness] dharmas.”

Interlinear note: This is from the *Flower of Compassion Sutra*.

Description of the Merit from Generating the Bodhi Resolve

[**Translator’s Note:** This entire section is extracted from the *Floral Adornment (Avataṃsaka) Sutra*.⁵¹]

[At that time], the God, Śakra Devānām Indra inquired of Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva, saying, “Son of the Buddha, how much merit is gained by the bodhisattva when he first generates the bodhi mind?”

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva replied, saying, “The meaning of this is extremely profound, difficult to describe, difficult to know,

difficult to analyze, difficult to believe and comprehend, difficult to achieve the realization of, difficult to bring into action, difficult to penetratingly understand, difficult to contemplate, difficult to calculate, and difficult to proceed into. Although this is the case, I shall nonetheless endeavor, through the support of the Buddha's awesome spiritual powers, to explain this matter for you.

"Son of the Buddha. If there were a person who took up every form of happiness-providing phenomena and made offerings of them to all of the beings off in the eastern direction in a number of worlds amounting to an *asamkhyeya's* quantity, and continued to do this for an entire kalpa, and then afterwards instructed them and influenced them to uphold the five precepts purely—and if he also performed the same actions in the same way in all of the other directions of the south, west, north, the four midpoints, the zenith, and the nadir—would that person's merit be abundant, or not?"

Śakra Devānām Indra replied, "Only the Buddha would be able to know the extent of this person's merit."

Dharma Wisdom continued, "This person's merit, when compared to the merit of the bodhisattva who has initially generated the bodhi mind, does not amount to even a hundredth part, does not amount to a thousandth part, does not amount to a hundred-thousandth part. Similarly, it does not amount to one part in a *koṭī*, does not amount to one part in a hundred *koṭīs*, to one part in one thousand *koṭīs*, to one part in one hundred thousand *koṭīs*, to one part in a *nayuta* of *koṭīs*, to one part in a hundred *nayutas* of *koṭīs*, to one part in a thousand *nayutas* of *koṭīs*, to one part in a hundred thousand *nayutas* of *koṭīs*, to one part in a million *nayutas* of *koṭīs*..." and so forth until we come to "not amounting to even a single *upaniṣad's* fraction."⁵²

"Son of the Buddha. Moreover, one may simply set aside this analogy. If instead there were a person who utilized all forms of happiness-providing phenomena to make offerings to all of the beings in an *asamkhyeya*⁵³ of worlds in each of the ten directions and did so for a hundred kalpas and then afterwards instructed them and influenced them to cultivate the path of the ten wholesome karmic actions,⁵⁴ performing this sort of offering for a thousand kalpas—and if he then instructed beings, influencing them to abide in the four dhyānas, doing so for a period of a hundred thousand kalpas—and if he then instructed beings, influencing them to abide in the four limitless minds, doing so for a period of a *koṭī* of kalpas—and

if he then instructed beings, influencing them to abide in the four formless absorptions, doing so for a period of a hundred *koṭīs* of kalpas—and if he then instructed beings, influencing them to abide in the fruit of the *srota-āpanna*,⁵⁵ doing so for a period of a thousand *koṭīs* of kalpas—and if he then instructed beings, influencing them to abide in the fruit of the *sakṛdāgāmin*,⁵⁶ doing so for a period of a hundred-thousand *koṭīs* of kalpas—and if he then instructed beings, influencing them to abide in the fruit of the *ānāgamin*,⁵⁷ doing so for a period of a *nayuta* of *koṭīs* of kalpas—and if he then instructed beings, influencing them to abide in the fruit of the arhat, doing so for a period of a hundred-thousand *nayutas* of *koṭīs* of kalpas—and if he then instructed beings, influencing them to abide in the path of a pratyekabuddha—would this person's merit be abundant, or not?"

Śakra Devānām Indra replied, "Only the Buddha would be able to know the extent of this person's merit."

Dharma Wisdom Bodhisattva then said, "This person's merit, when compared to the merit of the bodhisattva who has initially generated the bodhi mind, does not amount to even a hundredth part and so forth until we come to does not even amount to an *upaniṣad*'s fraction. Why is this the case?"

"When all of the Buddhas first generate the [bodhi] mind, they do not generate the bodhi mind solely for the sake of utilizing all forms of happiness-providing phenomena in the making of offerings to all of the beings in ten *asaṃkhyeyas* of worlds in the ten directions for a period of one hundred kalpas, and so forth until we come to a hundred-thousand *nayutas* of *koṭīs* of kalpas.

"Nor do they generate the bodhi mind solely for the sake of teaching so many beings and thus influencing them to cultivate the five precepts or the path of the ten wholesome karmic deeds, or for the sake of teaching them to abide in the four dhyānas, in the four immeasurables, in the four formless absorptions, or for the sake of teaching them to gain the fruit of the *srota-āpanna*, the fruit of the *sakṛdāgāmin*, the fruit of the *ānāgamin*, the fruit of the arhat, or the path-[result] of a pratyekabuddha.

"When they generate the unsurpassed bodhi mind, it is for the sake of preventing the lineage of the Tathāgatas from being cut off. It is for the sake of their being able to fill up and pervade all worlds [with the influence of Dharma]. It is for the sake of liberating the beings in all worlds. It is for the sake of utterly knowing the

creation and destruction of all worlds. It is for the sake of utterly knowing the defilement and purity of the beings in all worlds. It is for the sake of utterly knowing the purity of the inherent nature of all worlds. It is for the sake of utterly knowing the pleasures, afflictions, and habitual propensities of the minds of all beings. It is for the sake of utterly knowing in regard to all beings their meeting death in this place and their arising to birth in that place. It is for the sake of utterly knowing with regard to all beings their faculties and the appropriate corresponding skillful means. It is for the sake of utterly knowing with regard to all beings the activity occurring in their minds. It is for the sake of utterly knowing with regard to all beings the knowledges relating to the three periods of time. And it is for the sake of utterly knowing the uniformity inhering in the mind state of all buddhas.

“On account of this, [when one initially generates the bodhi mind] he is constantly borne in mind by all buddhas of the three periods of time and becomes bound to receive bestowal of the marvelous Dharma by all buddhas of the three periods of time. He forthwith becomes uniformly the same in substance and nature with all buddhas of the three periods of time. He has [in effect] already cultivated the path-assisting dharmas of all buddhas of the three periods of time, has already perfected the powers and fearlessnesses of all buddhas of the three periods of time, has already created the adornment of those buddha dharmas exclusive to buddhas possessed by all buddhas of the three periods of time, and has already [in effect] gained in its entirety the Dharma-proclaiming wisdom of all buddhas throughout the Dharma realm.

“How is this the case? It is on account of this generation of the [bodhi] mind that one becomes bound to gain the realization of buddhahood. Therefore one should realize that this person immediately becomes identical and equal with all buddhas of the three periods of time, immediately becomes uniformly equal to the mind state of all buddhas of the three periods of time, immediately becomes uniformly equal in merit with all buddhas of the three periods of time, [in effect] gains ultimate identity with the one body and incalculably many bodies of the thus Come Ones, and [in effect gains] their genuine wisdom.

“At that very time of initially generating the [bodhi] mind, one is immediately praised by all buddhas of the ten directions, immediately becomes able to teach, transform, and subdue all of the beings

in all worlds, immediately becomes able to cause the shaking and moving of all worlds, immediately becomes able to illuminate all worlds, immediately becomes able to extinguish the suffering in all of the wretched destinies in all worlds, immediately becomes able to adorn and purify all worlds, immediately becomes able to manifest the achievement of buddhahood in all worlds, immediately becomes able to cause delight in the minds of all beings, immediately becomes able to enter into the very nature of the entire Dharma realm, immediately becomes able to maintain the lineage of all buddhas, and immediately becomes able to gain the wisdom light of all buddhas.

“Yet this bodhisattva who has initially generated the [bodhi] mind does not find that there is even the slightest thing that is attainable in any of the three periods of time, whether that be any of the Buddhas, whether that be any of the Buddhas’ dharmas, whether that be any of the Bodhisattvas, whether that be any of the Bodhisattvas’ dharmas, whether that be any of the Pratyekabuddhas, whether that be any of the Pratyekabuddhas’ dharmas, whether that be any of the Śrāvakas, whether that be any of the Śrāvakas’ dharmas, whether that be transcendence of the world, whether that be any of the world-transcending dharmas, whether that be any being, or whether that be any of the dharmas associated with any beings. One solely seeks omniscience. The mind remains free from any attachments whatsoever with respect to any aspect of the Dharma realm.”

This is what is involved in the merit associated with the initial generation of the *anuttarasamyaksambodhi* mind.

Interlinear note: This is extracted from “The Merit Associated with Generating the [Bodhi] Mind” chapter of the *Floral Adornment [Avatamsaka] Sutra*. This is an explanation referring to the situation of the bodhisattva abiding in the station known as the first ground.

Now, while abiding in the position of a common person, this is [but the very] initial level of generating the bodhi mind. Once one [finally] reaches this station of the first ground, one succeeds in perfecting [one’s generation of] the bodhi mind.⁵⁸

Resolving Doubts About Common Persons Versus Āryas

One might [raise a challenge at this point and] say: “But the great bodhi mind is a mental state exclusively the province of the Āryas

and Worthies. It is most certainly *not* something a common person's superficial consciousness might be able to succeed in emulating. Thus the bodhisattva abiding at the station of the first ground generates the great mind and then becomes able to roam the ten directions carrying out on the work of the Buddhas on a vast scale. Now, however, you are seeking to employ this grand dharma to encourage common persons. Is it not the case, though, that there is really no resolving the problem of their possessing such incomparable [and hence inadequate] faculties and potentials?"

My response to this is to point out that, no, this is *not* the case. The common person and the Āryas share the same source. At root, there are no distinctions. It is simply a matter of a single thought of delusion and inverted views that precipitates one's choosing to sink away into oblivion. If one but awakens to the nature's original perfect brilliance, then one becomes able to generate the bodhi mind from within the uniformly equal nature of the Buddhas. When one avails oneself of this in one's cultivation one straightaway becomes a bodhisattva.

Interlinear note: Bodhisattvas are beings possessing a great mind.

What's the point of subjecting oneself to self-rebuke while claiming that the common person is cut off [from this endeavor]?

Furthermore, in the station of the common person, the three poisons form one's very basis. Now, having vowed to relinquish one's wealth and treasures to transform beings, although one is not yet able to exhaustively carry out the practice, still, [in carrying this out], one naturally diminishes the extent of one's covetousness.

One also vows to practice the four means of attraction in order to transform beings. Although one is not yet able to exhaustively carry out the practice, still, [in carrying this out], one naturally diminishes the extent of one's animosity. One also vows to cultivate meditative absorption and wisdom in order to liberate beings. Although one is not yet able to exhaustively perfect these realizations, still, [in carrying this out], one naturally diminishes one's delusions.

With the development of these three dharmas in one's mind, one becomes a Dharma vessel. Hence, although the bodhisattva hasn't yet severed the afflictions, if he is merely able to let flourish that awesomely meritorious Dharma gateway of the great compassion, truly, this is not an endeavor commenced in vain. Moreover, how can one be so seized by doubt that one fails to proceed with this?

Furthermore, when the common person generates the [bodhi]

mind, this is but the initial generation of the bodhi mind. When an individual at the station of the first ground generates the [bodhi] mind, this constitutes the perfection of that generation of the bodhi mind. If one were to wait until reaching the station of the first ground and only then generate this [bodhi] mind, then just what might it be that one should be cultivating prior to arriving at the station of the first ground?

With the sole exception of this correct path of bodhi, absolutely everything else constitutes causes and conditions for cyclic birth-and-death which only conduce to [entrapment in] cyclic existence. Based on what, then, would you have a person gain realizations and entry [into the bodhisattva path]?

Thus it was that, from the very first time that Shākyamuni Tathāgata generated the [bodhi] mind, he proceeded thereafter on through countless lifetimes to serve an incalculable number of buddhas. In the location of each of those buddhas, he generated the bodhi mind, proceeding directly along in this fashion until he arrived in the presence of Burning Lamp Buddha. Only then did he receive the far-off prediction [of buddhahood]. It was in the assembly surrounding Jeweled Treasury Buddha that he was first given the name "Great Compassion."

Certainly one requires a hundred thousand lifetimes before it becomes perfected. And so it is therefore that I encourage all monastics and laity to emulate in their studies our original guru, the Bhagavān.

One should not take the debating of the teaching's tenets to be some recondite Dharma treasury, resorting then to inherently coarse levels of awareness in trumpeting absolute claims about unsurpassed bodhi.

[Concluding Exhortation]

It is essential to liberate all beings. It is essential to strive to gain the knowledge of all modes (*sarva-ākāra-jñātā*) and plant roots of goodness throughout the Auspicious Kalpa during the reigns of the Thousand Buddhas. Thus one's merit and wisdom will naturally become vast and deep such that, in the world, one will always be among the leaders of those who serve as guides [on the Path].

I pray that all in the Great Community may be able to utilize this text in providing instruction both within this jurisdiction and beyond, in other districts. May those who have affinities with me

generate the bodhi mind on merely perusing this essay.

When about to [formally] generate the [bodhi] mind, it is requested that one first relinquish some form of material wealth in a manner befitting one's abilities to do so. In some cases it may be appropriate to pool one's resources and use them in making offerings to the Triple Jewel. In other cases, one may choose to create a painting of an image or choose to devote energetic service to the operation of the *bodhimāṇḍala*. Then, afterwards, one may rely upon this essay proper as one earnestly brings forth the great vows.

Interlinear note: According to the *Sutra of the Thousand Buddhas of the Auspicious Kalpa*, in each and every case where a buddha on the causal ground encountered a buddha, he would in all cases use material wealth or jewels or even such things as a willow branch and pure water in first making an offering to the Bhagavān. Afterwards, he would then bring forth the bodhi mind.

In the *Flower of Compassion Sutra*, the Brahmācārin, Jeweled Sea, encouraged countless men and gods to generate the bodhi mind, first influencing them to utilize some object as an offering to the Buddha. Then, afterwards, they would announce their vows. From buddha to buddha, the path is identical. Therefore, it is essential to honor this request.

After communicating the generation [of the bodhi mind], one should enact that mind continuously in each succeeding thought. This will then constitute a correct cause for the realization of buddhahood. It is only appropriate that one should then feel profound sentiments of joyful felicitation. Neither monastics nor laity should allow themselves to become estranged from Dharma friends. How could even mountains or rivers [be allowed to] present an obstacle to [the realization of] genuine wisdom?⁵⁹

This man possessed of fortunate causal affinities here leaves behind his name: Written out by District Magistrate Peixiu in Mianzhou on the twentieth day of the sixth month of the third year of the Kaicheng reign period (839 CE).⁶⁰

End of Exhortation to Resolve on Buddhahood