

Part One:

**ON GENERATING THE RESOLVE
TO BECOME A BUDDHA**

Ārya Nāgārjuna's *Ten Grounds Vibhāṣā* – Chapter. 6

发菩提心品第六。

[35a23] 问曰。初发心是诸愿根本。云何为初发心。答曰。

初发菩提心。或三四因缘。

[35a26] 众生初发菩提心。或以三因缘。或以四因缘。如是和合有七因缘。发阿耨多罗三藐三菩提心。问曰。何等为七。答曰。

一者诸如来。令发菩提心。

二见法欲坏。守护故发心。

三于众生中。大悲而发心。

四或有菩萨。教发菩提心。

五见菩萨行。亦随而发心。

或因布施已。而发菩提心。

或见佛身相。欢喜而发心。

以是七因缘。而发菩提心。

[35b08] 佛令发心者。佛以佛眼观众生。知其善根淳熟堪任能得阿耨多罗三藐三菩提。如是人者。

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简体字

正體字

On Generating the Resolve to Become a Buddha¹

By Ārya Nāgārjuna

I. THE SEVEN BASES FOR GENERATING THE BODHI MIND

Question: The initial generation of the resolve [to realize buddhahood] is the root of all vows. What then is meant by this “initial generation of resolve”?

Response:

The initial resolve to realize bodhi

May involve three or four types of causes and conditions.

When beings initially generate the resolve to realize bodhi, it may find its origin in a set of three causal bases or else in a set of four causal bases. Thus, when one combines them, one has a total of seven causes and conditions associated with generating the resolve to gain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*.

Question: What then are those seven?

Response:

In the case of the first, the Tathāgatas

May influence one to generate the resolve to realize bodhi.

Second, observing that the Dharma is on the verge of destruction,

One generates the resolve in order to guard and protect it.

In the case of the third, when in the midst of beings,

One feels compassion for them and therefore initiates the resolve.

As for the fourth, one may have a bodhisattva

Instruct one in generation of the resolve to realize bodhi.

Fifth, one may observe the conduct of a bodhisattva

And, in emulating him, one may generate the resolve.

Or alternatively, in the aftermath of an act of giving,

One may generate the resolve to realize bodhi based on that.

Or else, on seeing the characteristic signs of a buddha’s body,

One may feel delight and then proceed to generate the resolve.

Thus it may be on account of seven causes and conditions

That one generates the resolve to realize bodhi.

A. THE INFLUENCE OF A BUDDHA

As for a buddha influencing one to generate the resolve, the Buddha employs the buddha eye to observe beings. He may then realize that a person’s roots of goodness have become so completely ripe that he is capable of taking on this endeavor and will be able to realize *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*. In the case of a person of this sort, the

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Buddha instructs him and causes him to generate the resolve, saying to him, “Son of good family, come forth. You are now capable of bringing forth the resolve to liberate beings from suffering and affliction.”

B. THE MOTIVATION TO PROTECT THE DHARMA

Or then again there may be persons born into a dreadful era who, on observing that the Dharma is about to meet its destruction, generate the aspiration out of the motivation to preserve the Dharma, and thus contemplate in the following way:

Alas! From a time an immeasurable and boundless number of hundreds of thousands of myriads of *koṭīs* of *asaṃkhyeyas* of kalpas ago on forth to the very present, there has only been:

- A single person,
- On two bases,
- Who has moved forth into the three realms,
- Who has served as the great guiding guru of the four truths of the Ārya,
- Who is that one who has known the five-fold treasury of Dharma,
- Who has gained liberation from the six destinies of rebirth,
- Who has possessed the great jewel of the seven kinds of right Dharma,
- Who has deeply practiced the eight liberations,
- Who has employed the nine categories of sutra text in teaching and transformation,
- Who has gained possession of the ten great powers,
- Who has described the eleven kinds of meritorious qualities,
- Who has skillfully set forth the continuous cycle of the twelve causes and conditions,
- Who has explained the thirteen types of dharmas assisting realization of the Path of the Āryas,²
- Who has possessed the great jewel of the fourteen factors fundamental to awakening,
- Who has gotten rid of the fifteen kinds of craving,
- Who has gained realization of the sixteen mind states involved in the uninterrupted path (*ānantarya-mārga*) and the path of liberation (*vimukti-mārga*),

出十六地獄眾生。及身十七具足十八不共法。善分別十九住果人。善知分別學人阿羅漢辟支佛諸佛二十根是。大悲心者。是大將主大眾主大醫王大導師大船師。久乃得是法。行難行苦行。乃得是法。而今欲壞。我當發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心。厚種善根得成佛道。令法久住無數阿僧祇劫。又行菩薩道時。護持無量諸佛法故勤行精進。或復有人見眾生苦惱。可愍無救無歸無所依止。流轉生死險難惡道。有大怨賊諸惡虫獸生死恐怖諸惡鬼等。

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- Who has extricated beings from sixteen kinds of hells,
- Who has also mastered the seventeen physical dharmas,³
- Who has completely perfected the eighteen dharmas exclusive [to the Buddhas],
- Who has skillfully distinguished the nineteen stations of persons who have gained the fruits [of the Path],
- And who has known well and distinguished clearly the twenty kinds of roots of those still in training, of the arhats, of the pratyekabuddhas, and of all buddhas.

This one possessed of the mind of great compassion, this great lord of generals, the lord of the Great Assembly, this king of the great physicians, this great guide, this great captain of the ship—over the course of a very long time then and only then succeeded in gaining this Dharma.

He cultivated those ascetic practices so difficult to practice and only then succeeded in gaining this Dharma. But now, it is on the verge of meeting its destruction. I should generate the resolve to gain *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*, should plant thick roots of goodness, should thus gain realization of the path to buddhahood, and thus should cause the Dharma to abide for a long time, enduring even for countless *asaṃkhyeyas* of kalpas.

[Of this same sort are those who], while cultivating the Bodhisattva Path, strive with diligence and vigor to guard and uphold the Dharma of the incalculably many Buddhas.

C. COMPASSION FOR THE SUFFERING OF BEINGS

Or, alternately, there may be persons who observe:

- That beings, beset as they are by bitter afflictions, are to be pitied,
- That they have no one to rescue them, no one in whom to take refuge, and no one on whom they can rely,
- That they flow along in the dangers and difficulties of cyclic birth-and-death, risking descent into the wretched destinies,
- That they are afflicted by great adversaries and insurgents, by all manner of fearsome insects and animals, by the terrors involved in births and deaths, by all manner of fearsome ghosts, and by other circumstances as well,

常有忧悲苦恼刺棘。恩爱别离怨会深坑。喜乐之水甚为难得。大寒大热独行其中。旷绝无荫难得度脱。众生于中多诸怖畏。无有救护将导之者。见如是众生。入此生死险恶道中受诸苦恼。以大悲故发阿耨多罗三藐三菩提心。作是言。我当为无救作救无归作归无依作依。我得度已当度众生。我得脱已当脱众生。我得安已当安众生。复有人但从人闻以信乐心等。发无上道心。作是念。我[3]当修善法不断绝故。或堕必定得无生法忍。

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- That they are constantly pierced by the thorns of the sufferings and afflictions from worry and sadness,
- That they fall into the deep pit of [sufferings associated with] separation from those they love and proximity to those they detest,
- That the waters of joy and happiness are only very rarely encountered,
- That they travel alone in the midst of intense cold and intense heat,
- That they are stranded without shade in the vast wilderness and find it difficult to make their way across to liberation,
- That beings in the midst of all of this are possessed by all manner of terror and fearfulness,
- And that they have no one to rescue them or serve as guides for them.

Having observed that beings have entered in this manner into the dangerous and wretched destinies involved in cyclic births and deaths and undergo all manner of suffering and affliction, such a person, on account of the great compassion, may then generate for their sakes the resolve to gain the realization of *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* and may then proclaim: “I shall become a rescuer for those who have no one to rescue them. I shall become a refuge for those who have no one in whom to take refuge. I will become one upon whom those with no one to rely on may then rely.

“Once I have succeeded in making my way across, I shall endeavor to bring beings on across as well. Once I have gained liberation, I shall then liberate these beings as well. Once I have succeeded in gaining peace, I shall see that beings are then established in peacefulness as well.”

D. THE INSTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE OF A BODHISATTVA

Then again, there are also those who need only hear of this matter from others to be inspired to thoughts imbued with faith and happiness, whereupon they generate the resolve to gain realization of the unsurpassed path. They think, “I should cultivate wholesome dharmas.” Now, it could occur that, on account of unremitting practice, [in the absence of timely and appropriate instruction], they might fall down into the [arhat path’s] “right and fixed position” (*samyaktva niyāma*) on realizing the unproduced-dharmas patience.⁴