

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)

Dhyāna Master Zongmi's Original Preface

By Śramaṇa Guifeng Zongmi of Zhongnan Mountain's Caotang Monastery

As for generating the bodhi mind, it is a matter of towering virtue, vastness of karmic deeds, bringing emptiness to one's mind, and treating one's body as merely external. This is as stated in the *Perfect Enlightenment Sutra*. If one has not penetrated through to the path of magnanimity and expansiveness, been endowed with a nature inclined towards humanity and empathy, and also equipped oneself with a far-reaching and grand resoluteness, who would be able to generate this resolve?

Could it be that, in the final five hundred years after the Tathāgata's cessation, when the Buddha Dharma has deteriorated to its endpoint and only a few men of the world maintain faith in it, there now appears this superior Confucian eminence, the noble Pei from east of the River, who has taken on this sort of humanity?

For a long time now, I have already been linked up with the noble Pei on the Buddhist path. I had become aware that he had entered the Buddha's gateway and arrived at the mind state of the Buddha. When I came to the point of examining his "Essay Encouraging Generation of the Bodhi Mind," I realized right then that he is an emissary of the Buddha engaged in carrying on the Buddha's work. How could I, as a son of the Buddha, not be overcome with gratitude and leap up in delight?

Whosoever has taken the Refuge with the Buddha may treasure it as [an exemplary standard] comparable to the turtle-[shell oracle or reflecting] mirror.¹ Now, the gateway of the Buddha is difficult to enter into. One may miss it either through one-sided biases or through straying into deviation. The Buddha's state of mind is difficult to reach. One may miss it through being inclined towards either indolence or haste.

If one seeks for the Dharma outside of the mind or if one reckons the existence of a self within this body, then these are instances of deviation. If one is solely oriented towards the noumenal nature or if one only venerates causes and conditions as one's lineage bases, then these are instances of bias.

If one holds to an [intellectual] understanding while remaining deluded about the practice or, alternately, if one becomes submerged in emptiness and abides in stillness, these are instances of indolence.

If one exhausts the physical body or subjects the spirit to bitter suffering, and by doing so, one seeks to set an appointed time for the arrival of realizations, these are instances of hastiness.

Now, that which the noble Pei has realized, that which he practices, that which he proclaims, and that which he encourages are of an entirely different order from such issues.

As for what is termed “utterly comprehending one’s own mind and achieving meritorious qualities the equal of the Buddha”—these are not instances of seeking outside of one’s own mind. When one penetrates through to utter comprehension that physical forms and consciousness are empty and like an illusory conjuration—this is not an instance of reckoning the existence of a self.

True suchness and original enlightenment constitute that which he reveres as lineage bases. This is not an instance of solely² looking to conditions. The four truths and the six perfections are what he promotes. This is not a case of focusing on “nature” alone.

Engaging in expressions of reverence, making offerings, singing praises, reciting [scripture], and leading through personal example while exhorting others—these are not instances of haste-based practice. Diligently taking on as a matter of duty these matters of merit, wisdom, compassion, and vows—this is not an instance of being submerged [in emptiness] or abiding [in stillness].

Maintaining harmony of one’s energies and adaptability of one’s spirit while according with conditions in responding to situations—this is not a case of exhausting [the physical body] or [subjecting the spirit to] bitter suffering. Allowing oneself to rest when the time is right while engaging in the practice without waiting [expectantly]—this is not an instance of seeking after realizations.

To perfect the manifold meritorious qualities in this fashion while abandoning all faults—if this is not a case of entering the gateway of the Buddha and arriving in the realm of the Buddha, what is it?

I have for a long time now already resolved on the very same vows as he has. Moreover, having perused his essay, I find that “chanting and singing are insufficient to express one’s feelings about it.”³ It is for this reason that, at my own behest, I produced a preface for it. Now and in the future, where there are those who wish to enter the gateway of the Buddha and create for themselves the realm of a buddha, it is only appropriate that they faithfully accept this work and uphold its tenets in their practice.

An Exhortation for All Sangha and Laity To Resolve on Buddhahood

By the Tang Dynasty Prime Minister Peixiu

Let it be known throughout the Great Community⁴ that, whether Sangha or laity, where there are those who are able to unite in generating the resolve to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, I vow that, in life-after-life, for the sake of both Sangha and laity, I shall always join in the same lineage,⁵ in the same pathway,⁶ in the same vows, in the same aspirations, in the same implementation of the great compassion, and in the same cultivation of the great wisdom as we mutually assist each other in progressing directly on through to realization of bodhi.

Let it be known throughout the Great Community that, whether Sangha or laity, where there are those who are able to unite in generating the resolve to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, I vow that, in life-after-life, I will always join with them in performing the same pure karmic works as we each lead forth followers and each separately engage in the transformative teaching of beings. We shall join together again in the Dragon Flower Assembly⁷ to receive predictions of buddhahood and then shall continue on to extensively cultivate great vows, doing so directly on through to the realization of bodhi.

Explanation of the Term “Bodhi”

As for [the term] *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*, this means “the unsurpassed, right, and universal enlightenment.”

Interlinear note: “Unsurpassed” means “ultimate.” “Right” means “knowing which accords with the noumenal.”⁸ “Universal” refers to “immeasurable wisdom.” “Right enlightenment” refers to “wisdom which knows [both] the genuine and the conventional [truths].”

It is the most supreme and marvelous path realized by all buddhas and it is the original marvelous source about which beings are deluded. Having admired the Tathāgata’s eternal separation from all suffering and having been saddened by having long lost the great benefit oneself, one earnestly resolves with abundant spirit that one will strive to gain the body of a buddha. It is this which constitutes the initial generation of the resolve to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

Explanation of the Essence of the Bodhi Mind

Having generated the great mind to realize bodhi, it is necessary to recognize what constitutes the essence of the bodhi mind. Now, as for the substance of the bodhi mind, if one fails to generate it from one's true mind, there is no source through which one might succeed in reaching bodhi. On account of this, it is essential that one differentiate clearly [what it is]. Only then does this result in Dharma practice which corresponds to correct causality.

Moreover, as for that which those in the Great Community have throughout beginningless time always recognized as "my body," it is a body consisting in an artificial conjunction of the earth, water, fire, and air elements. It comes together quickly but then soon disperses. It belongs to the sphere of impermanent dharmas. It does not qualify as "my" body.

As for that which those in the Great Community have recognized as "my mind," it is but an empty and false mind which is concerned with thinking about sense-object phenomena.⁸ It suddenly arises and then swiftly disappears. It belongs to the sphere of impermanent dharmas. It does not qualify as "my" mind.

That genuine body which we possess is the one which is perfect and complete, empty and quiescent. That genuine mind which we possess is the one which is vast in its magnitude and replete with spiritually intelligent awareness.

Interlinear note: As for "perfect and complete," the Dharma body is fundamentally inherently replete with an incalculable number of meritorious qualities. As for "empty and quiescent," the Dharma body transcends all forms or characteristics and is eternally free of any movement or shaking.

As for "vast in its magnitude," the substance of the true mind coincides in its expansiveness with the Dharma realm (*dharmadhātu*). It envelopes and contains [even] empty space.

As for "spiritually intelligent awareness," this refers to an utterly sharp and focused investigative illumination which is both clear and penetrating.

This empty and quiescent spiritually intelligent awareness⁹ is sovereignly independent in its spiritual functions. In its very nature it encompasses the myriad meritorious qualities. In its very essence, it cuts off the hundred sorts of fallacies.¹⁰ It is comparable to that pure disk of the moon which, round and full, is free of any defects. It becomes so obscured by the clouds of delusion that one fails to

be aware of it. Once one's error-freighted delusions have been banished, the true mind manifests its original purity.

The Buddhas of the ten directions, all beings, and this mind of mine—"in these three, there are no distinctions."¹¹ It is this which is identical with the essence of the bodhi mind. One forsakes this and, failing to recognize it, one instead recognizes [only] one's own false thoughts. Consequently one engages in a continual process of dying and being reborn again and thus endures suffering shoulder-to-shoulder with the various species of birds and beasts. How could it be that one who is truly a man would not feel shamed by this?

Having generated the mind resolved on the unsurpassed Path, one should take up the actions of a great man, bring forth the three types of mind, establish the five vows, cultivate all of the bodhi-assisting dharmas, take the Buddhas as one's gurus, take the Bodhisattvas as one's companions, take the beings in the six destinies as one's followers, take cyclic birth-and-death and afflictions as garden and grove, and vow that, to the very end of future time, one will carry on with rescuing, extricating, and liberating. It is this then which qualifies as generating the mind resolved on realization of *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

Explanation of the Three Types of Mind

First, the greatly compassionate mind. Having awakened to the fact that one's own mind is originally free of production and destruction, one consequently feels compassion for those in the six destinies who have wrongly sunken away in them. Although one has not yet realized bodhi oneself,¹² still, one wishes that beings might be liberated.

Interlinear note: Going to the scriptures, it is said, "The bodhi mind is such that, although one has not gained liberation oneself, one nonetheless wishes to liberate those who have not yet gained liberation."¹³ The *Lao-zi* states, "The sage places his own person last and thus his own person becomes foremost."¹⁴ The Confucian tradition states, "One who is endowed with humanity gives liberally to all, rescues the multitudes, places others first, and places himself last." The three teaching traditions are all the same in this respect.

In this [adoption of the compassionate mind], one generates with vast scope the "identical-substance" great compassion. Then, even to the exhaustion of future time, one implements the four means of attraction¹⁵ to draw in those beings and cause them all to take

refuge in what is true, so that they all alike perfect the path to buddhahood. This is precisely what is intended by the mind of great compassion.

Second, the mind of great wisdom. Having let flourish the great compassion,¹⁶ one vows to liberate the many categories of beings. Because the many categories of beings are so numerous, the respective faculties and potentials by which they might become “vessels” [for the retention of Dharma] are not all the same. Thus it becomes essential to undertake extensive service to the Buddhas and to undertake extensive study of the sublime Dharma. One then gains realization and entry into each and every one [of those dharmas] and subsequently turns back again to engage in transforming [the minds of] beings. This is precisely what is intended by the mind of great wisdom.

Third, the mind established in great vows. Since one aspires to engage in liberating beings on a vast scale, one consequently lets flourish compassion and wisdom which are both vast in scope. However, even though the mind is fundamentally pure, it has nonetheless long been obscured by one’s toiling on amid the “dusts” of the sense objects. One’s habitual propensities, by their very nature, are difficult to suddenly melt away. A vessel [for the retention] of Dharma is such that one must refine it through polishing and tempering.¹⁷ One contemplates the prospect of coursing along in the destinies of cyclic existence while not encountering the superior conditions of the Buddha’s Dharma. Consequently he generates great vows while also setting about comprehensively perfecting the cultivation of the myriad practices.¹⁸ The practices and the vows mutually aid each other in just the same way as do [the two wheels of] a chariot or [the two] wings [of a bird]. Thus it is that one progresses along, does not retreat, and proceeds directly on through to the realization of bodhi. This is precisely what is intended by the mind established in great vows.

Interlinear note: The *Floral Adornment Sutra* states: The lamp of the bodhi mind takes the great compassion as its oil, takes great vows as its wick,¹⁹ and takes great wisdom as its illumination.

Now, among these three types of mind, it is the one committed to great vows which is primary. This is because it constantly supports the compassion and wisdom through which one liberates the many beings. Therefore, along with the initial generation of the [bodhi] mind, one must necessarily first bring forth vows.

In the *Floral Adornment Sutra's* "Conduct and Vows" chapter, it states, "When a person approaches the end of life, at that very last *kṣāṇa*, all of one's faculties scatter into ruination. All of one's relatives and retinue abandon one and leave. All of one's power completely recedes and is lost...." As for all of one's wealth and treasures: "None of them ever again accompany one. It is only these kings of vows which do not forsake one and depart. They always continue to lead one along straight on through..." until one reaches bodhi.... "Therefore you who hear of these kings of vows must not generate doubting thoughts about them."²⁰

Interlinear note: This is what is spoken by Samantabhadra at the very end of the *Floral Adornment [Sutra]*. It is certainly not either false or erroneous. One should rely upon this in one's cultivation of the practices.

Explanation of the Five Vows

First, beings are boundlessly many. I vow to liberate them all.

Second, merit and wisdom are boundless. I vow to accumulate them.

Third, the Dharma of the Buddha is boundless. I vow to study it.

Fourth, the Tathāgatas are boundlessly many. I vow to serve them.

Fifth, I vow to realize the unsurpassed, right enlightenment.

One maintains these five vows, implementing them in one's mind in thought after thought such that there is no interval in which they are not active. This constitutes complete implementation of the great mind of bodhi. This is what constitutes the upholding of the precepts of the bodhi mind. The three types of minds and the five vows are layered one upon the other in a way whereby they support each other.

From one buddha to the next, the path is the same. It does not go beyond this. It is precisely this which constitutes perfect generation of the *anuttarasamyakṣambodhi* mind.

Exhortation to Constantly Maintain the Bodhi Resolve

Let it be known throughout the Great Community that, whether Sangha or laity, having generated the great resolve determined to realize bodhi and having begun cultivation of the bodhi-sattva's marvelous path, one then, embued with utmost sincerity, announces this universally to all buddhas. One proceeds then to single-mindedly engage in universally attracting all beings and,

whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, one constantly upholds these vows.

One never lapses into cheating or deceiving those who abide in the six destinies and never fails to uphold the trust of the Tathāgatas. One broadly establishes bridging methods for the protection and maintenance of the instructional Dharma. May it be then that, before Maitreya's [Dharma] throne, we will all be able to realize the unproduced-dharmas patience (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti*). May it be as well that, in the assemblies of the Thousand Buddhas, we will all serve as leaders among their [Dharma] guides.

If one is able to maintain this [bodhi] mind, then one will never retreat from and fail to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

Exhortation to Liberate Beings

Let it be known throughout the Great Community that, whether Sangha or laity, we should now vow that, from the present life on until gaining the buddha body, we shall strive to liberate all beings, causing them all to enter into the knowledge and vision of the Buddhas. We now vow that, along the darkened shores, we will serve as bright lamps, and, out on the sea of cyclic birth-and-death, we will serve as ships and rafts.

Even though our powers have not yet reached this point, nonetheless we shall constantly implement this mind so that it remains continuous in thought-after-thought and is not allowed to be interrupted or cut off. Are you able to maintain this mind, or not? If one is able to maintain this [bodhi] mind, then one will never retreat from and fail to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

Exhortation to Accumulate Merit

Let it be known throughout the Great Community that, whether Sangha or laity, we should now vow that, from the present life on until gaining the buddha body, we shall strive to accumulate merit within the merit-field of compassion and the merit-field of reverence while also relinquishing our inward wealth and outward wealth in perfecting the myriad practices. As it is fundamentally for the sake of beings that we cultivate the Path, it is essential that we avail ourselves of the aid of the superior conditions inherent in this merit. We must not allow a self-serving mind to hold sway whereby we might fall into a desire to take on the karmic rewards of gods or men.

Even though our powers have not yet reached this point, nonetheless we shall constantly implement this mind so that it remains continuous in thought-after-thought and is not allowed to be interrupted or cut off. Are you able to maintain this mind, or not? If one is able to maintain this [bodhi] mind, then one will never retreat from and fail to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

Exhortation to Cultivate Study of the Buddha's Dharma

Let it be known throughout the Great Community that, whether Sangha or laity, we should now vow that, from the present life on until gaining the buddha body, we shall strive to cultivate all of the dharmas of the Buddhas, exhausting all of the instructional gateways. Thus, in order to instruct and lead forth beings, we shall gain a penetrative understanding of the four immeasurable minds,²¹ the six pāramitās,²² the deep and superficial meanings of Dharma, cause and effect, existence and non-existence, the two doctrinal lineages which focus on the "nature" and "dharmic characteristics," and the two teachings of "sudden" and "gradual" [enlightenment].

Even though our powers have not yet reached this point, nonetheless we shall constantly implement this mind so that it remains continuous in thought-after-thought and is not allowed to be interrupted or cut off. Are you able to maintain this mind, or not? If one is able to maintain this [bodhi] mind, then one will never retreat from and fail to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

Exhortation to Serve Buddhas and Good Spiritual Guides

Let it be known throughout the Great Community that, whether Sangha or laity, we should now vow that, from the present life on until gaining the buddha body, we shall strive to serve the Buddhas, all of the great bodhisattvas, and the good spiritual guides (*kalyāṇamitra*).

When we encounter the good spiritual guide, it will be with a disposition of unwearying interest. When we serve the good spiritual guide, it will be with a mind free of fatigue or indolence. When we listen to whatever the good spiritual guide sets forth as teachings, we shall happily accept them and accord with them in our practice, constantly emulating in our study those forms of practice implemented by the splendid youth, Sudhana (*sudhana-śreṣṭhi-dāraka*).²³

Even though our powers have not yet reached this point, nonetheless we shall constantly implement this mind so that it remains

continuous in thought-after-thought and is not allowed to be interrupted or cut off. Are you able to maintain this mind, or not? If one is able to maintain this [bodhi] mind, then one will never retreat from and fail to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

Exhortation to Solely Cultivate the Fruit of Buddhahood

Let it be known throughout the Great Community that, whether Sangha or laity, from the present life on until gaining the buddha body, we must always maintain the aspiration that, in the future, we shall become buddhas. We shall not generate an aspiration to seek the Two Vehicles.²⁴

We shall maintain the aspiration that, as we are all universally of the same substance with all beings, we must all swiftly gain realization of the right enlightenment. Thus we shall transfer [the merit from] each and every act of wholesome karma which we cultivate, dedicating it to *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*. In each and every case, we shall influence those beings whom we encourage towards generation of the intention to realize the unsurpassed path. We shall always cultivate such vast and greatly compassionate vows as exemplified by the Brahmācārin "Jeweled Sea."²⁵

Even though our powers have not yet reached this point, nonetheless we shall constantly implement this mind so that it remains continuous in thought-after-thought and is not allowed to be interrupted or cut off. Are you able to maintain this mind, or not? If one is able to maintain this [bodhi] mind, then one will never retreat from and fail to realize *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

Exhortation to Sustain Ties with Bodhi-Resolved Sangha & Laity

Let it be known throughout the Great Community that, whether Sangha or laity, from the present life on until gaining the buddha body, we shall, in life-after-life, refrain from forsaking and abandoning monastics and laity who have, just the same as us, generated the resolve to realize bodhi. [For the sake of] those of the same vows, the same resolve, the same practice, and the same meritorious qualities, we shall each cultivate meditative absorption and wisdom, and shall separately engage in the transformative teaching of beings, in some cases serving as an older or younger brother, and in other cases serving as a mentor or elder.

We shall take turns in providing mutual encouragement and inspiration and in guarding and supporting one another. When one

person loses the Path, we shall then work together to rescue him and extricate him from difficulty. When one person gains realization of the Path, we shall then immediately take the Refuges with him. We shall remain ever tireless in refraining from forsaking or abandoning one another.

Are you able to maintain this resolve or not? If one is able to maintain this resolve, then one will never retreat from and fail to realize *anuttarasamyak sambodhi*.

Exhortation to Fathom "Perfect-and-Sudden Teaching" Sutras

Let it be known throughout the Great Community that, whether Sangha or laity, although one has already generated the great bodhi mind and has already taken up the great bodhi-related practices, so long as one has failed to penetratingly fathom the very substance of the bodhi mind, one still fails to unite with the very source of the dharma of bodhi. Thus, although one has already generated the mind, still, one is certain to stagnate in the provisional²⁶ and lesser-scope [teachings].²⁷

Therefore, it is essential to first gain an awakening whereby one comprehends that the perfect, bright, and pure enlightenment is originally devoid of any delusive ignorance. The illusional obscurations and "flowers floating in space"²⁸ do not constitute the substance of reality. [This enlightened mind] is distantly separate from any sort of attachment-based grasping and is as uniform in nature as empty space itself. Expansively great compassion and wisdom constantly flow forth from this quiescent and radiant mind.²⁹

When one accords with this, then [one's mind] no longer stagnates in phenomenal characteristics and no longer falls into the two extremes.³⁰ It is at this point that one first develops the correct cause of bodhi. Only then is one able to avoid wrongly undergoing toilsome suffering. [Scriptures] such as the *Vajra [Prajñāpāramitā]* and the *Perfect Enlightenment* are brief and sublimely marvelous [while also communicating] penetrating comprehension. The *Floral Adornment* and *Nirvāṇa* are vast, grand, and complete in their perfection. Where³¹ there are those who harbor the same aspiration as I do, we might all aspire to fathom these scriptures.

Explanation of all Bodhi-Assisting Dharmas

[In the *Flower of Compassion Sutra*³²], the Brahmācārin "Jeweled Sea" encouraged an incalculable number of people to generate the