

# ON GENERATING THE RESOLVE TO BECOME A BUDDHA

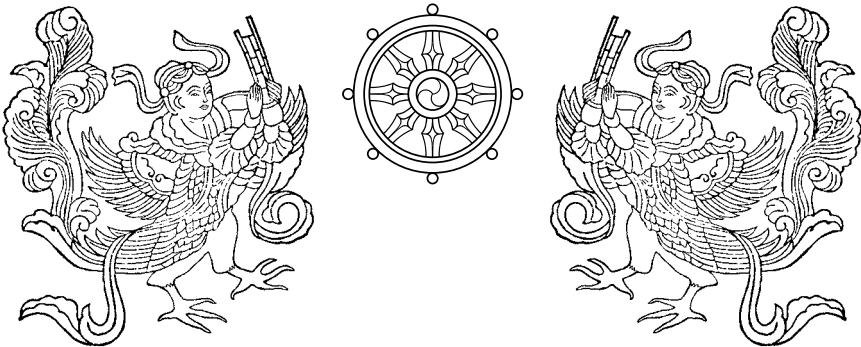
Three Classic Texts on the Bodhisattva Vow:

*On Generating the Resolve to Become a Buddha*  
Ārya Nāgārjuna's *Ten Grounds Vibhāṣā* – Chapter Six

*Exhortation to Resolve on Buddhahood*  
By the Dhyāna Master and Pureland Patriarch, Shixian

*Exhortation to Resolve on Buddhahood*  
By the Tang Dynasty Literatus, Peixiu

Translation by Bhikshu Dharmamitra



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## TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

I present in this volume translations of three classic authoritative works (one by a well-known Indian Buddhist patriarch, and two by famous Chinese Buddhist authors) on the bodhisattva's altruistically-motivated resolve to realize the utmost, right, and perfect enlightenment of a buddha. These three texts are intended as a complement to my translation of Vasubandhu's *Treatise on Generating the Bodhi Resolve* which I am publishing under separate cover. These four works are in turn intended as a complement to a series of works I have translated by Ārya Nāgārjuna and other Mahāyāna eminences on the doctrinal underpinnings and precise practice terrains of the Bodhisattva Path.

My motivation in translating these works devoted to the bodhisattva's vow, the bodhisattva's practice, and the bodhisattva's multi-lifetime path has been to make at least some small contribution to the development of an enhanced understanding of Buddhism on the part of those many people in the West who self-identify as "Buddhist," but who may not possess a clear idea of what Shākyamuni Buddha intended by the path to the cessation of suffering, whether that path is aimed at individual liberation (as in modern Theravada practice) or whether it aspires to universal liberation (as with the Mahāyāna).

It has been my perception for some time now that Westerners of refined spiritual intelligence and aptitude are readily attracted to the Buddhist ideals of giving, moral virtue, patience, vigorous pursuit of goodness, meditative serenity, wisdom, and compassion. That is, of course, all well and good, for pursuing them will certainly create a more spiritually meaningful, happy, and satisfying life. That said, unless such altruism, idealism, and meditative practice are conjoined with a lucid understanding of the path to spiritual liberation, there is not likely to be any enduringly useful result which will ensue in subsequent lifetimes. Hence the need to develop a more refined understanding of the Path. We are fortunate to live in a time when a flood of new scriptural translation and interpretation is becoming available in the West from both within the tradition and without. I hope this small volume may serve as a useful complement to the materials already available.

The author of the first very short text on bodhi resolve should need no introduction. Ārya Nāgārjuna, who probably lived

sometime during the second century of the common era, was one of the most influential monks in the propagation of the Mahāyāna universal-liberation path. The text presented here is the sixth chapter of his commentary on the ten stages of the Bodhisattva Path (*daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā*).

The second work in this book is probably the most popular and deeply moving of all currently extant exhortations to bodhi resolve contained in the Chinese Buddhist canon. Its author, a famous Qing Dynasty monk, pureland patriarch, and meditation master by the name of Sheng'an Shixian (pronounced by many modern Chinese as "Xing'an Shixian") has, through this exhortation, stirred many Buddhists to deep faith in the Bodhisattva Path. My own guru, Master Hsuan Hua, delivered a series of Dharma lectures on this work. His lecture-series commentary, entitled *Exhortation to Resolve Upon Bodhi*, was translated and published by the Buddhist Text Translation Society in 2003.

The third and final work in this book is a stirring bodhi-resolve exhortation by Peixiu, an eminent literatus and Dharma friend of the famous Tang Dynasty patriarch, exegete, and meditation master, Zongmi (whose preface to that work I have included herein). Incidentally, Peixiu, also well-known for his interactions with famous Ch'an masters, eventually rose to become prime minister in the Tang Dynasty capital.

A brief note on the outlining found in these translations: In the case of the chapter from Ārya Nāgārjuna's ten stages commentary, all outlining originates with the English translator. In the case of the Peixiu exhortation, the primary chapter titles originate with the Chinese text. The more detailed outlining was added by the translator. In the case of the Qing Dynasty text by the Venerable Patriarch Sheng'an Shixian, that outlining originates almost entirely from the commentary by the famous and learned early twentieth century mainland monk, the Venerable Yuanying.

It is my hope that reading these translations of bodhi-resolve texts may inspire deeply reflective English Dharma readers to develop, cherish, and sustain the most noble of aspirations.

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Seattle  
November 1, 2008

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