

CHAPTER 27

A Summarizing Discussion of the Bodhisattva Practices

XXVII. CHAPTER 27: A SUMMARIZING DISCUSSION OF BODHISATTVA PRACTICES

A. A BRIEF PRESENTATION INTENDED TO FINISH THE FIRST GROUND DISCUSSION

We have now come to the end of the general explanation
of the bodhisattva's Ground of Joyfulness
The bodhisattva who abides herein
often becomes a monarch who rules over Jambudvīpa.

He is ever distant from the defilements of greed and desire,
and never fails in his recollection of the Three Jewels.
His mind always aspires to become a buddha
and to rescue and protect all beings.

The first ground is known as the Ground of Joyfulness. We have come to the end of its general explanation. All of the measureless and boundless dharmas of all buddhas take this very ground as their foundation. Were one to take up an expansive discussion of it, that too would become measureless and boundless. Hence we speak here of a "summarizing" explanation.

The bodhisattva who abides on this ground will often serve as a powerful wheel-turning monarch reigning over the entire continent of Jambudvīpa. Due to having cultivated the causes and conditions for this ground in previous lives, he has a resolute belief in the practice of giving and is free of the defilement of miserliness. Because he is always gives to the Three Jewels, he never fails in his recollection of the Three Jewels. He always bears in mind his resolve to become a buddha and to rescue and protect all beings. Good thoughts such as these are always in his mind.

Additionally:

If he aspires to leave behind the home life
and then diligently practices vigor,
he is able to acquire several hundred meditative concentrations,
and is able to see several hundred buddhas.

He is able to shake a hundred worlds,
and his ability to travel [to other worlds] is also of this sort.
If he wishes to emanate radiant light,
he is able to illuminate a hundred worlds.

He creates transformation bodies of several hundred kinds of people and can remain for a lifespan of a hundred kalpas.

He is able to selectively investigate several hundred dharmas and is able to manifest a hundred transformation bodies,

He is able to transformationally create a hundred bodhisattvas that manifest as his retinue.

Those of sharp faculties can exceed these numbers through relying on the Buddha's spiritual powers.

Having already explained the first ground's characteristic features, its fruits, its powers, and the dharmas used in its purification,

We shall now also present an explanation of the second ground, the Ground of Stainlessness.

"Fruits" refers to the acquisition of several hundred meditative absorptions, the ability to see several hundred buddhas, and so forth. "Powers" refers to the ability to manifest as several hundred [kinds of] beings, and so forth. The meanings implicit in the rest of the verse have already been explained. Hence we shall not proceed with an explanation of the rest of the verse but rather shall now discuss the second ground, the Ground of Stainlessness.

B. Q: BEFORE FINISHING, PLEASE SUMMARIZE THE BODHISATTVA PATH

Question: You wish to present an expansive discussion of the dharmas practiced by the bodhisattva. There are still many [additional] meanings pertaining to the first ground. It is to be feared that, if the discussion becomes ever more expansive, those attempting to study this will become prone to indolent thoughts that could impair their ability to study and recite this. Therefore, for the sake of those unable to [memorize and] recite a more [extensive explanation], you should now [instead] present a summarizing explanation of the dharmas practiced by the bodhisattva.

C. A: A SERIES OF STATEMENTS SUMMARIZING THE BODHISATTVA PRACTICES

1. PRACTICE ALL BODHISATTVA DHARMAS & ABANDON ALL TRANSGRESSIONS

Response:

All dharmas of the bodhisattva—
these dharmas should all be practiced.

All forms of evil should be relinquished.

This is what constitutes the summarizing explanation.

Dharmas such as those explained in preceding chapters are able to produce and are able to instigate growth in the dharmas pertaining to the [bodhisattva] grounds. Also, if dharmas such as those explained in previous chapters have been explained elsewhere, one should cause

all of those dharmas to arise as well. One should abandon all endeavors involving bodhisattva transgressions. This is what constitutes the summarizing explanation of what the bodhisattva should practice. This is as taught in the *Dharmapada*:

To refrain from doing any manner of evil,
to respectfully perform all varieties of good,
and to carry out the purification of one's own mind—
This is the teaching of all Buddhas.

2. BE SINGLE-MINDED AND NON-NEGLECTFUL IN PRACTICING GOOD DHARMAS

There is one dharma that subsumes the path to buddhahood and that is what the bodhisattva should practice. And what is that singular teaching? It is what is referred to as being single-minded and non-neglectful in the cultivation of good dharmas. As the Buddha told Ānanda: "It is due to not being neglectful that I attained *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*." This is as described here:

It is through non-neglectfulness that one becomes a buddha,
one who is unmatched by anyone anywhere in the world.
If one is simply able to refrain from neglectfulness,
what endeavor could one fail to achieve?

3. TWO DHARMAS THAT SUBSUME THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

There are also two dharmas that are able to subsume the path to buddhahood, namely:

First, non-neglectfulness;
And second, wisdom.

These are as described below:

Non-neglectfulness and wisdom—
The Buddha spoke of these as gateways to benefit.
One does not see instances wherein one avoids neglectfulness,
and yet those endeavors still fail to succeed.

4. THREE DHARMAS THAT SUBSUME THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

There are also three dharmas that are able to subsume the path to buddhahood, namely:

First, training in the supreme moral virtue;
Second, training in the supreme mind;
And third, training in the supreme wisdom.

These are as described below:

Moral virtue produces superior samādhi,
samādhi produces wisdom,
and wisdom scatters the afflictions
just as wind blows away floating clouds.

5. FOUR DHARMAS THAT SUBSUME THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

There are also four dharmas that are able to subsume the path to buddhahood, namely [the four bases of meritorious qualities]:

- First, the truth basis;
- Second, the relinquishment basis;
- Third, the quiescence basis;
- And fourth, the wisdom basis.

These are as described below:

By perfecting truth, relinquishment, and meditative concentration, one acquires the pure benefits of wisdom.
One who vigorously pursues the path to buddhahood should gather together these four dharmas.

6. FIVE DHARMAS THAT SUBSUME THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

There are also five dharmas that are able to subsume the path to buddhahood, namely:

- First, the faculty of faith;
- Second, the faculty of vigor;
- Third, the faculty of mindfulness;
- Fourth, the faculty of meditative concentration;
- And fifth, the faculty of wisdom.

These are as described below:

Through the faculty of faith and the faculty of vigor, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom are solid and durable.
Once these dharmas are joined with the great compassion, one will never retreat from the path to buddhahood.

Just as a person who acquires the five sense faculties is then able to completely comprehend the five sense objects, similarly, if one acquires faith and the rest of the [five] faculties, he is then able to know the [true] character of all dharmas.

7. SIX DHARMAS THAT SUBSUME THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

There are also six dharmas that are able to subsume the path to buddhahood, namely the *pāramitās*:

- Giving;
- Moral virtue;
- Patience;
- Vigor;
- Dhyāna* concentration;
- And wisdom.

These are as described below:

If [one practices] the six perfections as explained,
 one will overcome the afflictions,
 will always bring about the growth of the roots of goodness,
 and, before long, will succeed in attaining buddhahood.

8. SEVEN DHARMAS THAT SUBSUME THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

There are also seven dharmas that are able to subsume the path to buddhahood, namely the so-called “seven right dharmas”:

Faith;
 A sense of shame;
 A dread of blame;
 Extensive learning;
 Vigor;
 Mindfulness;
 And wisdom.

These are as described below:

One who aspires to acquire the seven right dharmas
 should delight in meditative concentration pursued with vigor.
 If one rids himself of the seven wrong dharmas,
 he will be able to know all the meritorious qualities.
 Such a person will be able to rapidly acquire
 the unsurpassable bodhi of the Buddha,
 extricate those sunken in *saṃsāra*,
 and cause them then to reside in the safe and secure abode.

9. EIGHT DHARMAS THAT SUBSUME THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

There are also eight dharmas that are able to subsume the path to buddhahood, namely the so-called “eight types of thought of great men,” namely:

Having but few desires;
 Being easily satisfied;
 Renunciation;
 Vigor;
 Mindfulness;
 Meditative concentration;
 Wisdom;
 And delighting in the avoidance of mere conceptual elaboration.

These are as described below:

If someone forms the definite resolve
 to abide in the eight types of thought of great men, and then,
 in order to pursue the path to buddhahood,
 rids himself of the bad forms of ideation and reflection,

by proceeding in this manner, before long,
 he will swiftly gain the unsurpassable path.
 This is just as when someone practices goodness:
 He is certainly bound to gain the sublime fruits [of the path].

10. NINE DHARMAS THAT SUBSUME THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

There are also nine dharmas that are able to subsume the path to buddhahood, namely:

Great patience;
 Great kindness;
 Great compassion;
 Wisdom;
 Mindfulness;
 Solid resolve;
 Non-greed;
 Non-hatred;
 And non-delusion.

These are as described below:

If one is well equipped with great patience,
 great kindness, and great compassion,
 and is also able to abide in wisdom,
 mindfulness, and solid resolve—

If with resolute intentions one enters the good roots
 of non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion—

If one is able to act in this manner,
 the path to buddhahood will then be in the palm of one's hand.

11. TEN DHARMAS THAT SUBSUME THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

There are also ten dharmas that are able to subsume the path to buddhahood, namely the ten courses of good karmic action. [In the case of the first of them, these include]: not killing any being oneself, not instructing others to kill, not praising any killing that one observes, and not delighting in any killing [carried out by others]. And so the list continues similarly until we come to [the tenth], not holding wrong views. One then dedicates the merit [of adhering to these ten courses of good karmic action] to the attainment of *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*. These are as described below:

One does not harass or harm any living being,
 nor does one engage in any robbery or theft,
 nor does one indulge in sexual transgressions with another's wife.
 These are the three concerned with the karmic actions of the body.

One does not engage in false speech, divisive speech,
harsh speech, or frivolous speech,
nor does one indulge covetousness, ill will, or wrong views.
These are the seven actions of the mouth and the mind.

If one acts in this manner, then one is able to open
the gate to the unsurpassable path to buddhahood.
If one wishes to attain buddhahood,
one should practice in accordance with this initial gateway.

The bodhisattva should bring forth dharmas such as these, and then, having brought them forth, he should guard them. Having guarded them, he should then increase them so that every single good endeavor subsequently brings about an ever-increasing devotion to that form of goodness.

12. FAULTS TO BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE PATH TO BUDDHAHOOD

a. ONE FAULT THAT MUST BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

One should also realize that there is one bad dharma that one who pursues the path to buddhahood should urgently abandon. We refer here to the need to abandon neglectfulness.⁴⁵² This is as described here:

If one is unable to cross beyond
saṃsāra's dangerous wretched destinies,⁴⁵³
this is something worthy of rebuke
and is the worst of all offenses.

Although one delights in wealth's pleasures,
one may still be reborn into a poor and lowly family
in which one is unable to plant any roots of goodness
and in which one becomes a slave or a servant of others.

This is all brought about by the causes and conditions
associated with neglectfulness.

Therefore one who is wise
urgently leaves it behind as if it were a lethal poison.

If one has not yet developed the great compassion
and gained the unproduced-dharmas patience and irreversibility
and yet still indulges in neglectfulness,
this is synonymous with bring on one's own death.⁴⁵⁴

b. TWO FAULTS THAT MUST BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

There are also two faults that one should urgently abandon, namely:

First, longing for the grounds of *śrāvaka* disciples.

And second, longing for the ground of *pratyekabuddhas*.

As the Buddha said:

If one falls down onto the grounds of the *śrāvaka* disciples or onto the ground of the *pratyekabuddhas*, for the bodhisattva, this is synonymous with dying and is also synonymous with complete failure.

Even though one might fall into the hells, one should still not feel any terror. However, if he were to fall into the Two Vehicles, the bodhisattva should then feel immensely fearful.

Although one might fall into the hells, this would not forever block one's path to buddhahood. However, if one were to fall into the Two Vehicles, this would forever block one's path to buddhahood.

The Buddha has stated that one who loves his life, would feel immensely fearful if faced with decapitation. In this very same way, one who wishes to become a buddha should feel immensely fearful of entering the Two Vehicles.⁴⁵⁵

c. THREE FAULTS TO BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

There are also three faults that one should urgently abandon, namely:

- First, hating bodhisattvas;
- Second, hating the bodhisattva practices;
- Third, hating any extremely profound Great Vehicle scripture.

These are as described below:

Those of lesser wisdom may, over but minor conditions, come to hate Bodhisattvas, hate the bodhisattva path, or hate the sutras of the Great Vehicle.

Because they do not understand them, they have no faith in them and then fall down into the great hells.

There, struck with fear, they scream in terror.

This is a situation that one should abandon.

d. FOUR FAULTS TO BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

There are also four faults that one should urgently abandon, namely:

- First, flattery;
- Second, deviousness;
- Third, being quick-tempered;
- And fourth, being bereft of kindness or pity.

These are as described below:

One who describes himself as a bodhisattva who has a mind much given over to flattery and deviousness,

who is quick-tempered and intolerant,
and who does not act with a mind of kindness and pity—
This is to draw near to the Avīci Hells
and depart far from the path to buddhahood.

e. FIVE FAULTS TO BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

There are also five faults that one should urgently abandon, namely:

First, desire;
Second, ill will;
Third, lethargy-and-sleepiness;
Fourth, excitedness-and-regretfulness;⁴⁵⁶
And fifth, doubtfulness.

These are the five hindrances that may cover over a person's mind which are as described below:

If a person falls into neglectfulness,
the hindrances will cover his mind,
making even birth in the heavens difficult to achieve,
how much the less might one then attain the fruits of the path?

If one is diligent in the practice of vigor,
one can then tear through the hindrances.
If one is able to tear through the hindrances,
then, whatever one wishes for, it will all be obtained.

f. SIX FAULTS TO BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

There are also six faults that are opposite to the six *pāramitās* and that one should urgently abandon:

First, miserliness;
Second, breaking the moral precepts;
Third, anger;
Fourth, indolence;
Fifth, excited agitation;
And sixth, delusion.

These are as described below:

Having the stain of miserliness defiling one's mind,
breaking the moral precepts, indulging in indolence,
being as ignorant as a cow or sheep,
being as fond of hatred as a venomous serpent,
or having a mind as scattered as that of a monkey—
If one fails to abandon the hindrances,
then, even gaining a celestial rebirth would be extremely difficult,
how much the less could one succeed in attaining buddhahood?

g. SEVEN FAULTS TO BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

There are also seven faults that one should urgently abandon:

- First, delighting in pursuing many different endeavors;
- Second, delighting in excessive study and recitation;
- Third, delighting in sleep;
- Fourth, delighting in talking;
- Fifth, coveting offerings;
- Sixth, always wanting to make people laugh;
- And seventh, being so confused and befuddled in cultivating the path that one's mind follows the influence of craving.

These are as described below:

Inferior persons may delight in activities
or delight in much recitation of non-Buddhist scriptures.
Ignorant people may delight in sleeping
or delight in much talking amidst groups of people.
Although they aspire to become a buddha,
they are deeply attached to receiving offerings.
These slaves to craving have become confused
with regard to the path to buddhahood.
All such people as these who engage in what is bad
nonetheless claim to be bodhisattvas.

h. EIGHT DHARMAS TO BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

There are also eight dharmas that one should urgently abandon, namely:

- First, wrong views;
- Second, wrong intentional thought;
- Third, wrong speech;
- Fourth wrong [physical] actions;
- Fifth, wrong livelihood;
- Sixth, wrong effort;
- Seventh, wrong mindfulness;
- And eighth, wrong meditative concentration.

These are as described below:

Wherever there are people who are so foolish
that they practice the eight-fold wrong path,
pursue the study of deviant scriptures,
become fond of chasing after deviant spiritual guides,
and abandon the profound and sublime qualities
of the Āryas' eightfold path,
[these are people who] are solidly and deeply attached to afflictions,
and yet still may wish to succeed in realizing bodhi—

People who are so deluded as this
are like those who would wish to cross over a great ocean
by abandoning a fine, solid, and durable ship,
seeking instead to make the crossing by carrying stones.

i. NINE DHARMAS TO BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

There are also nine dharmas that one should urgently abandon, namely:

First, failing to hear [the teachings on the attainment of]
anuttarasamyaksambodhi;

Second, having heard them, failing to have faith in them;

Third, having acquired faith in them, failing to take them on;

Fourth, having taken them on, nonetheless still failing to retain them
through recitation;

Fifth, though one has also begun to retain them through recitation,
one nonetheless still does not understand their meaning;

Sixth, having understood their meaning and significance, one none-
theless fails to explain them [for others];

Seventh, having explained them [for others], one nonetheless fails to
accord with their explanation in one's own practice;

Eighth, having begun to practice in accordance with their explana-
tion, one is still unable to always put them into practice;

And ninth, having become able to always put them into practice, one
is unable to thoroughly practice them.

These are as described below:

Foolish people do not wish to even hear
[teachings on] the unsurpassable, right, and true path,
or, having heard them, they are unable to have faith in them,
or they are unable to retain them through recitation,

or they do not understand their meaning or explain them for others,
or they do not cultivate in accordance with how they were taught,
or they are unable to always or thoroughly put them into practice.
Moreover, they have no mindfulness or stable wisdom.

Such foolish people as these
cannot obtain the fruits of the path.

In this, they are like people who, having committed karmic offenses,
cannot succeed in gaining rebirth in the heavens.

j. TEN DHARMAS TO BE URGENTLY ABANDONED ON THE BUDDHA PATH

There are also ten dharmas that one should urgently abandon, namely
those comprising the ten courses of bad karmic actions. These are as
described below:

Foolish people, when still young,
begin to crave descending into the five desires,
abandoning the ten courses of good karmic action,
and engaging in the ten courses of bad karmic action.

Although the bliss of the heavens is in their own hands,
they still cast it aside and reject it,
just as, due to greedily pursuing the benefit of but little money,
one might somehow abandon a great treasury of jewels.

13. THE 32 DHARMAS OF GENUINE BODHISATTVAS

Question: When you were explaining the characteristic aspects of the unsurpassable path, for many different reasons, you criticized and scolded empty-vow bodhisattvas, self-proclaimed bodhisattvas, and those who are bodhisattvas in name only. If those three types of individuals do not qualify as bodhisattvas, then, through the perfection of which dharmas does one qualify as a genuine bodhisattva?

Response:

It is not merely by making empty vows
by proclaiming oneself to be a bodhisattva,
or by being a bodhisattva only in name.
To state it briefly, it is those who are able to perfect
thirty-two dharmas
who then truly qualify as bodhisattvas.

If one brings forth the resolve by which he seeks to pursue the path to buddhahood and then claims himself to be a bodhisattva, merely emptily assuming the name but not cultivating the meritorious qualities, the mind of kindness and compassion, the *pāramitās*, and the other practices, this sort of person does not actually qualify as a bodhisattva, for he is comparable to some model city made of mud being referred to as "the jeweled city." In this, he only deceives himself, cheats all buddhas, and cheats all of the world's beings as well.

If a person comes to possess thirty-two sublime dharmas while also being able to bring forth the [bodhisattva's] vow, this is someone who qualifies as a genuine bodhisattva. What then are these thirty-two dharmas? They are:

- 1) He strives with resolute intentions to bring about every form of peace and happiness for all beings;
- 2) He is able to enter into the wisdom of all buddhas;
- 3) He knows through his own self-examination whether or not he is capable of becoming a buddha;
- 4) He does not hate or loathe anyone;
- 5) His resolve to succeed in the path is solid;

- 6) He does not form friendships or trusting relationships on false pretenses;
- 7) He always serves as a close friend to beings even up to the point of his entry into nirvāṇa;
- 8) Whether others are personally close or distant from him, his mind remains the same [in the way he treats them];
- 9) He does not retreat from good endeavors to which he has assented;
- 10) He never cuts off his great kindness for all beings;
- 11) He never cuts off his great compassion for all beings;
- 12) He always pursues right Dharma and his mind never becomes weary or prone to laziness;
- 13) He is diligent in bringing forth vigor and he has insatiable resolve;
- 14) He is possessed of extensive learning and comprehension of its meanings;
- 15) He always reflects upon his own faults;
- 16) He does not deride others for their shortcomings;
- 17) In all matters he observes or hears, he always cultivates the resolve to attain bodhi;
- 18) In giving, he seeks no reward;
- 19) His observance of the moral precepts is not motivated by the desire to take rebirth in any particular place;⁴⁵⁷
- 20) He exercises patience in his interactions with all beings and thus remains free of any hatred or obstructiveness toward them;
- 21) He is able to diligently and vigorously cultivate all roots of goodness;
- 22) He does not take on rebirths corresponding to the formless realm meditative absorptions;⁴⁵⁸
- 23) His wisdom is inclusive of appropriate expedient teaching methods;
- 24) His skillful means are those that lie within the four means of attraction;⁴⁵⁹
- 25) His kindness and pity for others do not differ with respect to those who observe the moral precepts versus those who break the moral precepts;
- 26) He is single-mindedly attentive when listening to the Dharma;
- 27) He remains single-mindedly focused when dwelling in a forest hermitage;
- 28) He does not delight in any of the many different sorts of endeavors that are admixed with worldly priorities;
- 29) He does not covet or retain any attachment for the Small Vehicle;

- 30) He perceives that the benefit brought about by the Great Vehicle is immense;
- 31) He stays away from bad spiritual guides;
- 32) He draws close to good spiritual guides.

14. SEVEN ADDITIONAL DHARMAS OF GENUINE BODHISATTVAS

As the bodhisattva abides in these thirty-two dharmas, he is able to perfect seven additional dharmas. Specifically, they are:

The four immeasurable minds;⁴⁶⁰

The ability to roam about, delighting in the use of the five spiritual superknowledges;

Constant reliance on wisdom;

Never forsaking either good or evil beings;

Decisiveness in all pronouncements;

Definite truthfulness in all statements;

Insatiability in the accumulation of all good dharmas.

These constitute the thirty-two dharmas with their seven additional dharmas. Any bodhisattva who perfects these dharmas qualifies as a genuine bodhisattva.