

## Generating the Resolve

### II. CHAPTER 2: GENERATING THE RESOLVE

How does the bodhisattva generate the bodhi resolve? Relying on what sort of causes and conditions does one cultivate and accumulate the bases for realizing bodhi?

#### A. TEN FACTORS CONDUCTING TO GENERATION OF THE BODHI RESOLVE

[Those causal bases are present] in a case where a bodhisattva:

1. Draws close to a good spiritual guide;
2. Makes offerings to the Buddhas;
3. Cultivates and accumulates roots of goodness;
4. Resolves to seek the supreme Dharma;
5. Maintains constant pliancy and harmoniousness of mind;
6. On encountering suffering, remains able to endure it;
7. Possesses pure and abundant kindness and compassion;
8. Maintains a profound mind dedicated to maintaining equal regard for all;
9. Possesses faith and happiness in the Great Vehicle; and
10. Seeks to gain the wisdom of the Buddha.

If a person is able to embody ten dharmas such as these, he will then become able to generate the mind resolved on realizing *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*.

#### B. FOUR ADDITIONAL BASES FOR GENERATION OF THE BODHI RESOLVE

There are four additional conditions which may be involved in generating the resolve to cultivate and accumulate the bases for realization of the unsurpassed bodhi. What are those four?

First, it may be based on contemplation of all buddhas that one generates the bodhi resolve.

Second, it may be based on contemplation of the faults and perilous aspects of the physical body that one generates the bodhi resolve.

Third, it may be that it is based on seeking the most supreme of all fruits [of the Path] that one generates the bodhi resolve.<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, it may be that it is based on kindness and pity for beings that one generates the bodhi resolve.

## 1. CONTEMPLATION OF ALL BUDDHAS

This "contemplation of all buddhas" is itself possessed of five additional circumstantial factors:

First, one may contemplate thus: "When all buddhas of the ten directions of the past, future, and present generated the resolve, they, too, were completely possessed of an afflicted nature in just the very same way that I am now. Still, they finally succeed in realizing the right enlightenment and in becoming those who are unsurpassed in the veneration accorded them." It may be on account of this circumstance that one generates the bodhi resolve.

Second, one may contemplate thus: "All buddhas of the three periods of time bring forth great heroic bravery. Each and every one of them is able to succeed in realizing the unsurpassed bodhi. If this bodhi is in fact a dharma which can be realized, I too ought to realize it myself." It may be on account of this circumstance that one generates the bodhi resolve.

Third, one may contemplate thus: "All buddhas of the three periods of time generate great brilliant wisdom and, even when encased in the shell of ignorance, still establish the supreme resolve, proceed to accumulate the bitter practices, and in every case become able to extricate themselves from the three realms and step entirely beyond them. I, too, should extricate and rescue myself from this situation." It may be on account of this circumstance that one generates the bodhi resolve.

Fourth, one may contemplate thus: "All buddhas of the three periods of time are heroes among men. In every case they have succeeded in crossing beyond the great sea of afflictions arising in the midst of births and deaths. Since I, too, am a real man, I should be able to cross beyond it as well." It may be on account of this circumstance that one generates the bodhi resolve.

Fifth, one may contemplate thus: "All of the buddhas of the three periods of time brought forth the great vigor and relinquished even their physical lives and wealth in the pursuit of all-knowledge. I, too, should follow along in this way, learning from the example of the Buddhas." It may be on account of this circumstance that one generates the bodhi resolve.

## 2. CONTEMPLATION OF THE BODY'S FAULTS AND PERILOUS ASPECTS

"Contemplation of the faults and perilous aspects of the physical body" is itself possessed of five additional circumstantial factors [conducting to generation of the bodhi resolve]:

First, one may contemplate thus: “My body, consisting as it does of the five aggregates and the four great elements, possesses the ability to commit in flourishing fashion an incalculable number of evil karmic deeds.” Hence it may be on account of a desire to abandon this circumstance.

Second, one may contemplate thus: “My body constantly streams forth malodorous filth from nine apertures.” Hence it may be on account of having generated renunciation.

Third, one may contemplate thus: “My body is possessed by covetousness, hatred, delusion, and countless afflictions which burn up the wholesome mind.” Hence it may be out of a desire to be rid of this circumstance.

Fourth, one may contemplate thus: “My body, [in its fragility], is like a water bubble and like sea foam. It is produced and destroyed in each successive thought-moment and, as such, is worthy of being relinquished.” Hence it may be on account of a desire to abandon this circumstance.

Fifth, one may contemplate thus: “My body’s [actions] are so blanketed by ignorance that I constantly create evil karmic deeds and continue on with the cycle of rebirths in the six destinies.” Hence it may be on account of recognizing that there is no benefit in such a circumstance.

### 3. GENERATING RESOLVE BASED ON SEEKING THE PATH’S SUPREME FRUITS

“Generating the bodhi resolve based on seeking the most supreme of all fruits [of the Path]” is itself possessed of five additional circumstantial factors:

First, one may observe that the Tathāgatas are adorned with the major marks and subsidiary characteristics and that those who encounter the clear and penetrating quality of their radiance thereby get rid of afflictions. Hence it may be for the sake of cultivating and accumulating [such qualities].

Second, one may observe that the Dharma body of the Tathāgatas abides eternally in a state of purity free of any defilement. Hence it may be for the sake of cultivating and accumulating [just such qualities for oneself].

Third, one may observe that the Tathāgatas possess the pure dharma collections of moral virtue, meditative concentration, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and vision associated with liberation. Hence it may be for the sake of cultivating and accumulating [such qualities].

Fourth, one may observe that the Tathāgatas possess the ten powers, the four fearlessnesses, the great compassion, and the three stations of mindfulness.<sup>9</sup> Hence it may be for the sake of cultivating and accumulating [such qualities].

Fifth, one may observe that the Tathāgatas possess all-knowledge, that they act out of pity for beings, that their kindness and compassion extend universally to all, and that they are able to serve as guides to the correct path for all who abide in the midst of foolishness and delusion. Hence it may be for the sake of cultivating and accumulating [such qualities].

#### 4. GENERATING THE BODHI RESOLVE BASED ON KINDNESS AND PITY

“Generating the bodhi resolve based on kindness and pity for beings” is itself possessed of five additional circumstantial factors:

First, one may observe that beings are tied up by ignorance.

Second, one may observe that beings are bound up by the manifold sorts of suffering.

Third, one may observe that beings are engaged in the accumulation of bad karma.

Fourth, one may observe that beings are engaged in committing the most extremely grave sorts of evil.

Fifth, one may observe that beings fail to cultivate right Dharma.

##### a. OBSERVING THAT BEINGS ARE TIED UP BY IGNORANCE

“Being tied up by ignorance” is itself possessed of four additional circumstantial factors:

First, one may observe that beings are deceived by delusion and love and consequently undergo extremely intense suffering.

Second, one may observe that beings do not believe in cause and effect and thus commit evil karmic deeds.

Third, one may observe that beings abandon right Dharma while believing in and accepting erroneous paths.

Fourth, one may observe that beings are sunken in the river of afflictions and are swept along by the four currents.<sup>10</sup>

##### b. OBSERVING THAT BEINGS ARE BOUND UP BY MANIFOLD SUFFERINGS

“Being bound up by the manifold sorts of sufferings” is itself possessed of four additional circumstantial factors:

First, one may observe that beings fear birth, aging, sickness, and death, but do not seek liberation from them while still continuing to create [negative] karma.

Second, one may observe that beings are beset by worry, lamentation, affliction, and suffering, and yet continue to constantly and ceaselessly create yet more of it.

Third, one may observe that beings endure the suffering of being separated from those they love and yet do not awaken to the means by which they become subject to defiling attachment.

Fourth, one may observe that beings endure the suffering of close proximity to those whom they detest and yet constantly generate hatefulness and thus continue to create yet more adversaries.

c. OBSERVING THAT BEINGS ARE ENGAGED IN ACCUMULATING BAD KARMA

“Observing that beings are engaged in the accumulation of bad karma” is itself possessed of four additional circumstantial factors:

First, one may observe that beings commit all manner of evil deeds on account of desire.

Second, one may observe that beings realize desire produces suffering and yet still do not forsake desire.

Third, one may observe that, although beings wish to seek out happiness, they still fail to equip themselves with the “feet” of the moral precepts [by which they might proceed thereto].

Fourth, one may observe that, although beings find no pleasure in suffering, they still continue ceaselessly to create suffering.

d. OBSERVING THAT BEINGS ARE ENGAGED IN EXTREMELY GRAVE EVILS

“Observing that beings are engaged in committing the most extremely grave sorts of evil” is itself possessed of four additional circumstantial factors:

First, one may observe that beings break the important precepts and, although they thereby become beset by worry and terror, they nonetheless continue to be negligent.

Second, one may observe that beings commit in flourishing fashion the most extreme sorts of evil deeds, including the five karmic deeds entailing non-intermittent retribution. They bury themselves in fierce and inveterate [evil karmic habits] and do not bring forth either a sense of shame or a sense of blame.

Third, one may observe that beings slander the right Dharma of the Great Vehicle’s Vaipulya teachings. They devote themselves exclusively to foolish involvement in their own attachments and then generate arrogance based on this.

Fourth, one may observe that, even though beings might cherish intelligence and sagacity, they may nonetheless completely sever

their own roots of goodness and, paradoxically, indulge in hypocrisy, never repenting of their errors.

e. OBSERVING THAT BEINGS FAIL TO CULTIVATE RIGHT DHARMA

“Observing that beings fail to cultivate right Dharma” is itself possessed of four additional circumstantial factors:

First, one may observe that beings are born into the midst of the eight difficulties, do not listen to right Dharma, and do not know to cultivate goodness.

Second, one may observe that beings may encounter the Buddha when he comes into the World, may hear the explanation of right Dharma, and yet still may be unable to accept and uphold it.

Third, one may observe that, in their cultivation of karma, beings engage in the defiled practices of non-Buddhist physical asceticism and then abandon forever the essential means of transcendence.

Fourth, one may observe that beings cultivate and gain the neither perception nor non-perception meditative concentration and then hold the opinion that this constitutes nirvāṇa. Then, once this retribution for goodness comes to an end, they are still compelled to fall once again into the three [wretched] rebirth destinies.

The bodhisattva observes that, through ignorance, beings create [negative] karma and then endure suffering throughout the long night [of time]. They abandon right Dharma and then become confused about what constitutes the road of transcendence. On account of this, one may bring forth the great kindness and the great compassion and resolve to seek *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*, striving then to gain it with the same urgency of action pursued by one striving to save himself when his turban has caught fire.

[He thinks], “Among all beings, those who are beset by bitter afflictions are such as I should extricate and rescue, saving all of them without exception.”

C. SUMMATION ON THE CAUSAL BASES FOR GENERATING THE BODHI RESOLVE

Sons of the Buddha, I have now explained in general terms the conditions serving as bases for generation of the [bodhi] mind on the part of the bodhisattva who has only just taken up the practice [of the Path]. Were one to engage in an extensive explanation of the matter, it would become incalculably vast and boundless in its range.