

The Dharma Gateway of Accordance with Reality

X. CHAPTER 10: THE DHARMA GATEWAY OF ACCORDANCE WITH REALITY

A. SEVEN DHARMAS TO BE ABANDONED

If there be sons or daughters of good family who cultivate the six *pāramitās* and thereby seek *anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi*, they should abandon seven dharmas. What are those seven? They are:

First, one abandons the bad spiritual guide. As for the “bad spiritual guide,” this refers to one who instructs people to relinquish superior faith, superior zeal, and superior vigor while instructing them to accumulate many different miscellaneous practices.

Second, one abandons [lust for] the female form, covetous attachment, indulgence in desire, and the improper familiarity with worldly people whereby one pursues involvement with them.

Third, one abandons unwholesome ideation wherein one contemplates one’s physical form and countenance, wherein one indulges covetous cherishing of them, wherein one esteems them with fondness, wherein one retains a defiled attachment for them, seeking to protect them, and wherein one reckons one can preserve them for a long time.

Fourth, one abandons hatred and anger, violence and arrogance, envy and jealousy, this because they promote contentiousness and disputation while corrupting and confusing the mind devoted to goodness.

Fifth, one abandons negligence, arrogance, indolence, and the reliance on minor forms of goodness as a basis for being disdainful toward others.

Sixth, one abandons non-Buddhist texts and treatises, compositions and verses devoted to worldly concerns, and artificially decorous words and phrases. One should not praise or recite anything not taught by the Buddha.

Seventh, one should not allow oneself to draw close to wrong or unwholesome views.

Dharmas such as these seven are such as one should abandon. The Tathāgata has stated, “I do not see any other dharmas aside from these which are more profoundly capable of blocking the path to buddhahood.” Therefore the bodhisattva should distance himself from dharmas such as these seven.

B. SEVEN DHARMAS TO BE CULTIVATED

If one wishes to swiftly realize the unsurpassed bodhi, he should cultivate seven dharmas. What are those seven? They are:

First, the bodhisattva should draw personally close to the good spiritual guide. As for the "good spiritual guide," this refers to the Buddhas as well as the Bodhisattvas. In an instance where a śrāvaka disciple is able to cause a bodhisattva to abide in the treasury of profound dharmas and in the *pāramitās*, he too may serve as the good spiritual guide for a bodhisattva.

Second, the bodhisattva should draw personally close to [the dharma of] leaving behind the householder's life and he should also draw personally close to the dharma of the *araṇya* [hermitage].²¹ He should abandon [lust for] the female form as well as all indulgences of desire while also refraining from participating in endeavors with worldly people.

Third, the bodhisattva should regard his own physical form as being like soil made from manure which is filled only with stinking filth and through which there courses winds, chills, heat, and blood, but which has nothing about it worthy of covetous attachment. [He should regard it as] pursuing a daily progression towards death, as suitable to be contemplated with thoughts of renunciation, and as a cause for the determination to take up intensely diligent cultivation of the Path.

Fourth, the bodhisattva should constantly practice harmonious patience, respectfulness, and gentle accommodation. He should also encourage and teach others in a way whereby they are caused to abide in patience.

Fifth, the bodhisattva should cultivate vigor, should constantly bring forth a sense of shame and a sense of blame, should respectfully serve teachers and elders, should take pity on the poverty-stricken and lowly, and should physically stand in for those he observes to be beset by hardship and suffering.

Sixth, the bodhisattva should cultivate [teachings issuing from] the Vaipulya Great Vehicle's bodhisattva treasury and should accept, uphold, study, and recite dharmas praised by the Buddha.

Seventh, the bodhisattva should draw close to and cultivate the ultimate truth, namely the true character [of dharmas], the singular character [of dharmas], and the absence of any real characteristics [in any dharma].

If bodhisattvas wish to swiftly reach realization of the unsurpassed bodhi, then they should draw close to these seven dharmas.

C. BODHI RESOLVE'S INCOMPATIBILITY WITH "SOMETHING TO BE GAINED"

Additionally, if a person retaining the concept of there being anything to be gained generates the bodhi resolve and then proceeds to cultivate kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, giving, moral virtue, patience, vigor, dhyāna absorption, and wisdom, doing so for an incalculable number of *asaṃkhyeyas* of kalpas, one should realize that, on account of retaining the concept of something to be gained, such a person will not succeed in leaving behind birth and death and will not succeed in progressing towards bodhi.

Why is this? It is on account of his retaining the thought of something to be gained as well as on account of his view conceiving the existence of attainment, his view conceiving the existence of the aggregates, sense realms, and sense bases, his view conceiving the existence of a self, his view conceiving the existence of a person, his view conceiving the existence of a being, his view conceiving the existence of a life, and his view conceiving the existence of kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, equanimity, giving, moral virtue, patience, vigor, meditative absorption, and wisdom.

To sum up what is essential: the view conceiving the existence of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha as well as the view conceiving the existence of nirvāṇa—views such as these which conceive the existence of something to be gained are just strains of thought rooted in attachment. As for "attachment," this is what is referred to as "wrong view." Why? Persons with wrong views are those who circulate about within the three realms remaining eternally separated from the essential means of escape. This person who indulges in attachments is of just this very sort. He remains eternally separated from the essential means of escape and thus, even to the very end, remains unable to realize *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*.

D. GENERATION OF BODHI RESOLVE AND CONTEMPLATION OF EMPTINESS

If a person generates the bodhi resolve, he should contemplate this mind as characterized by emptiness. What is meant by "this mind"? And what is meant by "characterized by emptiness"? "Mind" refers to the mind consciousness. It is just the mind sense base and mind sense realm subsumed within the consciousness aggregate.

As for the mind being "characterized by emptiness," the mind itself is devoid of any "mind characteristic" and is also devoid of any agent of actions. How is this the case? Any "mind characteristics" are themselves empty of any inherent existence. Nothing

exists which serves as an agent of actions. Nor is there any entity which causes the initiation [and carrying out] of actions. If no agent of actions exists, then there are no [inherently existing] characteristics of the actions themselves, either.

E. THE PRACTICE OF THE BODHISATTVA WHO UNDERSTANDS EMPTINESS

If the bodhisattva completely understands dharmas of this sort, then he remains free of any attachment to any dharma. Because he is free of any attachment, he understands that no resulting karmic reward for good or bad karmic actions actually exists, understands that in the kindness which one practices, there is no self which exists at all, understands that in the compassion which one practices, there is no being which exists at all, understands that in the sympathetic joy which one practices, there is no life which exists at all, and understands that in the equanimity which one practices, there is no person which exists at all.

Although he practices giving, he does not perceive the existence of anything which is given. Although he practices the upholding of the moral prohibitions, he does not perceive the existence of a pure mind. Although he practices patience, he does not perceive the existence of any being. Although he practices vigor, no mind exists which engages in abandoning desire. Although he practices the training in dhyāna, no mind exists which engages in eliminating evil. Although he engages in the practice of wisdom, the mind nonetheless remains free of anything which is practiced.

In relation to all objective conditions, in every case he manifests wisdom and yet he does not indulge any attachment to wisdom, does not "gain" any wisdom, and does not perceive the existence of wisdom. The practitioner cultivates wisdom in this manner and yet there is nothing cultivated and nothing not cultivated. For the sake of engaging in the transformative teaching of beings, he manifests the practice of the six perfections and yet still remains inwardly pure.

F. THE FRUITS OF THIS BODHISATTVA PRACTICE

If the practitioner skillfully cultivates his mind in this way, as for those roots of goodness which he plants in just a single mind moment—the resulting rewards from such karmic blessings are incalculable and boundless, so much so that one could not come to the end of them even in a hundred thousand myriads of *koṭīs* of *asamkhyeyas* of kalpas. [Such a practitioner] naturally succeeds in drawing close to *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*.