A COMPOSITION URGING
THE GENERATION OF THE
BODHI MIND

BY
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SHIH-HSIEN HSING-AN

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PREFACE

"Everything returns to Oneness at the source, but there are many expedient methods that lead us there." This is a very popular saying in Buddhism. However, even though there are many expedient methods, we must really practice with diligence; otherwise, we are left with only many expedient methods having no particular benefit for anyone—namely, with nothing at all. Therefore, Master Shih-Hsien Hsing-An (1685-1733) took pity on people and devas, for he could not stand the spectacle of Sangha members and lay Buddhists abandoning the great Tao or wasting time. He also felt that losing their opportunity to progress toward and even to gain Enlightenment was, indeed, a great pity.

So Master Hsing-An wrote this composition, urging people to generate the Bodhi Mind as quickly as possible. He encourages all Sangha members and lay Buddhists to be diligent in their practice and to delay no longer. The Master promotes the ten causes and conditions leading to the state of grace in order to teach people how to generate their own Bodhi Mind. The Bodhi Mind is the Mind of
Enlightenment; and if one has already generated the Bodhi Mind, he then can take the Great Vow to benefit all other sentient beings by enabling all people to generate their own Bodhi Mind and attain Supreme Enlightenment.

Thus, it can be said that the Bodhi Mind is like a fertile field, growing all pure Dharmas in the minds of sentient beings. Also, the Bodhi Mind is like the bright sun, illuminating the whole world. Furthermore, the Bodhi Mind is like a broad way, allowing and encouraging all sentient beings to enter the City of Wisdom. This means that the Bodhi Mind is a peaceful haven to which all sentient beings can ultimately return.

We have, very fortunately, been reborn in this world. Fortunately, also, we have been reborn as human beings and are able, therefore, to learn the Buddha Dharma. If we do not make the most of this good opportunity and are not diligent in generating our own Bodhi Mind, then it would really be a great pity to lose these great causes and conditions that make possible the generation of the Bodhi Mind. This idea is reflected in the sutra, which says:
“Once we have lost the human body, we cannot recover it even in ten thousand kalpas.” If this is truly the case, then wouldn’t the loss of our bodies and the opportunity to generate the Bodhi Mind be unfortunate and, indeed, a great pity?

The Great Master Shih-Hsien Hsing-An, with the deepest compassion for all beings bound to the transmigratory Wheel of Life-and-Death, very kindly took the Great Vow to rescue all sentient beings from the ocean of suffering and convert them by helping them eliminate their defilements and by teaching them how to generate the Bodhi Mind. If people come to be aware of the importance of the Bodhi Mind, they should also be clear about Enlightenment as it relates to the Bodhi Mind. The Bodhi Mind is Enlightenment, and Enlightenment is the Mind of the Great Tao. To benefit people and to help them become more aware of the interrelationship of these concepts, I have appended to this Composition Urging the Generation of the Bodhi Mind a gatha of over one hundred lines, which was taken from The Avatamsaka Sutra, and is entitled “Merits Gained by Generating the Bodhi Mind”; and its purpose is to
promote and strengthen the generation of the Bodhi Mind. In addition, I have added Ch’ an Master Cheh Wuh’s “Ten Articles of Faith”, which alerts people to strive to achieve Enlightenment through their own minds and the practice of the Tao of Bodhi. I sincerely hope that these additions will help all people to integrate the concepts of the Bodhi Mind, Enlightenment, and the Great Tao and that all people will gain great benefit from the Buddha Dharma and be led, through it, to the desired goal.

So I would like to say to all virtuous men and women and to all my friends: We are human beings and have a rare and wonderful opportunity to hear the Buddha Dharma now; so we should feel very happy and should be careful to consider this opportunity to be very precious within this lifetime. We should make absolutely sure that we do not miss this opportunity or let it slip by due to a mindless oversight. After reading this *Composition Urging the Generation of the Bodhi Mind* and if you have thereby generated, concentrated, and embraced your Bodhi Mind, please continue to increase it. On the other hand, if you have not yet generated your Bodhi
Mind, please do so immediately. Then hold it forever, never letting yourself regress!

In this light, *The Avatamsaka Sutra* says:

Though a wheel of fire about your head
Were wildly whirling and flaming,
Just do not abandon your Bodhi Mind,
Even amidst such strong suffering.

This gatha clearly expresses to us the idea that it is extremely important that no person should overlook or neglect generating the Bodhi Mind and, furthermore, that one must be ever vigilant and mindful never to regress.

Dharma Master Lok To
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Bronx, New York
September, 2003
A COMPOSITION
URGING THE GENERATION OF
THE BODHI MIND

My name is Shih-Hsien. I am a foolish and worldly monk. With great respect, I humbly bow to the present assembly. I would like to talk sincerely to all virtuous men and women in the present world, and I can only wish all of you to give me a compassionate ear and take a little time to listen to me and understand what the Dharma is. Sometimes if one hears and learns the major, important Dharma, he might then be able to enter the Tao and achieve the Bodhi Mind; but he must first recognize that it is his pressing and urgent business to practice and, foremost, to take a strong vow to achieve that Bodhi Mind. Only then do the thought and the intention arise to convert all sentient beings and to achieve the Bodhi Mind to attain Enlightenment. If you do not generate the great Bodhi Mind or if you do not establish a firm vow, then, even though you were to pass through kalpas as numberless and infinite as all the dust motes in the infinite universe, you would
still be trapped in the realms of transmigration. You may even have achieved a certain level in your practice; but unless you undergo some suffering, you will have worked, in reality, without achieving anything whatsoever.

Therefore, *The Avatamsaka Sutra* says: “To practice all the virtues but to have forgotten and lost the Bodhi Mind is the karma of a demon.” Still, while forgetting the Bodhi Mind is bad enough, what about those who never even generate the Bodhi Mind? It must be made very clear that if one wants to learn the Vehicle of the Tathagata, he must first take the Great Vow of the Bodhisattva. This must be done now, without delay!

However, there are many different minds and vows and many different ways and methods. If the correct way is not pointed out and if one is not instructed correctly, how can one make correct progress? With this in mind, I would like to explain simply to all of you the correct and the incorrect ways to generate and practice the Bodhi Mind. There are eight different words that describe the modes of thought motivating the generation and
practice of the Bodhi Mind. These eight modes of thought are as follows: The Deflected, the Right, the True, the False, the Great, the Small, the Partial, and the Complete. Just what are the meanings of all these words and classifications?

There exist some people who practice but who really do not understand their own Mind; they only search from the outside or wish to have fame or popularity and to nourish their own selves through grasping and material gain. While this mode of thought and action may achieve some good reward in a future life, it is, nevertheless, incomplete and is called Deflected Thought.

If you do not seek any fame or gain and are not greedy for some reward or pleasure but concentrate only on the idea of birth and death as well as the idea of the Tao of Bodhi and if you seek this Tao of Bodhi thought after thought and try to convert all sentient beings from moment to moment—just this kind of thought is called Right Thought.

If, even though you have heard that it takes a very long time to attain the Buddha stage, you do not fear and never think of regressing or giving up and if,
even though it appears to be almost impossibly
difficult to convert all sentient beings, you never tire,
but, on the contrary, as if climbing the highest
mountain, you must, of necessity, want to arrive at the
peak or, as if ascending a tall tower, you urgently
want to reach the top, continuing tirelessly and with
good faith—just this kind of thought is called True
Thought.

If you are one who does not repent his own
evil and who does not correct his own errors, who is
clear on the outside while remaining turbid within,
who is diligent at the beginning but becomes
negligent at the end, and even if you do some good
action but most of the time it is mixed up with dirty,
impure, defiled perceptions—just this kind of thought
is called False Thought.

Only when the realm of sentient beings comes
to its end, then and only then my Great Vow also
ends; only when all sentient beings achieve Supreme
Enlightenment, then and only then will my vow be
completed—just this kind of thought is called Great
Thought.
To perceive as a prison the Three Realms, to conceive the continuous cycle of birth and death as an enemy, and to think only of converting oneself—just this kind of thought is called Small Thought.

If one thinks there really are sentient beings and Buddhas outside of the mind and then wishes to convert others and to attain Enlightenment, not forgetting the virtues or the goal of any other view—just this kind of thought is called Partial Thought.

If one understands that one’s own nature is all sentient beings and, therefore, takes a vow to convert them, and if he thinks that his own nature is the Way of Buddha and, therefore, takes a vow to attain Compete Enlightenment, and if he never sees any dharma as separate from the mind or as causing a single thought to arise and, furthermore, takes a vow that all actions and even the attainment of Enlightenment are, in reality, all void—just this kind of thought is called Complete Thought.

If one can understand clearly the meanings of these eight different modes of thought and practice, then he should be able, after carefully considering all of them, to make up this own mind about which to
give up and which to follow. One must examine these eight different modes—the Deflected, the Right, the True, the False, the Great, the Small, the Partial, and the Complete. Then, one should ask himself: “Just how can I abandon the incorrect modes of thought and receive and follow the correct ones?” Then, he should realize clearly that just the thought of giving up or abandoning the Deflected, the Small, the False, and the Partial and the subsequent receiving and following of the Right, the True, the Great, and the Complete is called the True Bodhi Mind.
The Bodhi Mind is the foremost of all the virtues. However, the correct causes and conditions must exist to start or generate the Bodhi Mind. The ten different causes that generate the Bodhi Mind are as follows:

1) Thinking about the great grace of Buddha;
2) Thinking about the grace of one’s parents;
3) Thinking about the grace of one’s teachers and masters;
4) Thinking about the grace of almsgivers;
5) Thinking about the grace of all sentient beings;
6) Thinking about the suffering of birth and death;
7) Respecting one’s own Self-Nature;
8) Repenting all one’s evil karma;
9) Wishing to be born in the Pure Land;
10) Wishing the Right Dharma to remain permanently in the world.

What is the great grace of Budhha? Immeasurable numbers of kalpas ago, Sakyamuni Buddha made up his mind to save all of us by practicing the Bodhisattva Tao, during which he would bear all kinds of suffering. Whenever we create any bad or evil karma, the Buddha pities us and expediently teaches us to improve our conduct and actions. However, we are foolish and know
neither how to believe in nor how to receive the Dharma? Whenever we fall into hell-states, Buddha pities us very much and wishes to remove all the suffering from our minds; but our karma is very deep, and we are almost beyond help. Fortunately, however, during this time when we are born as human beings, the Buddha has kindly taught us to do good always in order to avoid falling into hell-states; he always protects us, never forsaking us even for a moment.

Nevertheless, even if the Buddha were now to appear in the world, we would still be sunk in the gloom of the cycle of birth and death; for, at present, we have the bodies of human beings while Buddha has attained the transcendence of Nirvana. Due to our past and present sins, we have been born in this Dharma-Ending Age. Due to our past blessings, we have become Buddhists and have the opportunity to leave home. Due to our past and present obstacles, we cannot see the golden body of the Buddha. However, due to our fortunate circumstances, we can now hear the Buddha Dharma. Please think about this frequently! If we did not have good roots from
our previous lives, then how could we possibly know the great grace of the Buddha? This grace and this virtue, then, are extremely important. If we could only generate our Bodhi Mind and do what the Bodhisattvas do—namely, spread Buddha Dharma and convert all sentient beings even at the cost of their own lives—wouldn’t the result itself be the reward? This, then, is the primary reason why we must generate and embrace the Bodhi Mind.

What is the grace of parents? It is their suffering and toiling that conceive, bear and rear us, take care of our every need, and love us until we are grown up. However, our parents wish us, in return, to bring glory to our own families and ancestors. In order to offer sacrifices to them, we, perhaps, might leave home to hold, without the necessary qualifications or sincerity, the post of monk; but this cannot bring glory to our families, nor is it a proper offering to our parents. While our parents are alive, they cannot offer their bodies; and when they are dead, they cannot save their spirits. This is a great loss to the world, and there is nothing to benefit them in the supramundane realm. Thus, they lose both
sides of any possible benefit—a most serious offence that we should take great care to avoid. Think about it! To avoid such an offence, just vow to practice the Tao of Bodhi for hundreds of thousands of kalpas and to convert all sentient beings in the ten directions in the three time periods. Then, not only our parents in this life but also even all our parents in previous lives will be saved. Then, not only one’s parents but also even everybody else’s parents will be delivered. This is the second reason to generate and embrace the Bodhi Mind.

What is the grace of masters and teachers? Our parents can only give birth to our bodies; but if we did not have masters and teachers, then we would not know what propriety, justice, honesty, and a sense of shame are. If we did not have a teacher of the supramundane, then we would not know the four cardinal virtues and would remain in the ignorant condition of lower beings. If we did not come to understand the Dharma with the help of our teachers and masters, then we would remain ignorant like laymen. However, if we do know something about the four cardinal virtues and understand something
about the Dharma, wear yellow robes and take the complete monastic discipline, then we must realize that we have learned all we know from our teachers and masters. If we seek and study only the Small Vehicle, we benefit only ourselves. Now, however, we are studying the Great Vehicle and wish all teachers and masters—mundane and supramundane—to gain benefit. This is the third reason to generate and embrace the Bodhi Mind.

What is the grace of almsgivers? We monks have expenses every day, but we possess nothing of our own. Our two meals a day, our four-season robes, medicine, and all the other necessaries for our lives are the result of others’ work. Others make money by the sweat of their brows while we live leisurely, year after year, in a big hall and a spacious, secure building. Those others are always working very hard so we can have free time. Knowing this, how can we have any peace of mind? We enjoy easy living conditions even while others stay in straw huts under disturbing, uncomfortable conditions. Others spin and weave very busily so we can have robes. We take others’ benefits to
enrich ourselves. And what is the reason? If we do not have genuine great compassion and wisdom to assist in the salvation of all sentient beings, then not even a grain of rice or an inch of silk will be their reward in the next life; for no one can escape his or her karma. This is the fourth reason to generate and embrace the Bodhi Mind.

What is the grace of all sentient beings? From time without beginning, all sentient beings and I have been each others’ parents or children or have been parents mutually, etc., and, therefore, have some grace in relationship to each other. Theoretically, isn’t this reasonable? Because who knows for certain that flying insects, various verminous creatures, and the higher animals were not my previous relatives? For example, if someone is separated from his parents when he is very young, he forgets his parents’ features as he grows up. How much less then can one remember some relative from a previous life! Is it not, if considered in this light, very difficult to know who Chang was and who Wang was? When beings call for help in Hell and become lost in hungry-ghost conditions, who knows
how much suffering they are undergoing? Where and
to whom can they complain about their suffering and
starvation? Even though we cannot see, hear, or feel
their suffering, the Buddha, nevertheless, has told us
about their agonies many times in the sutras. How
can those who hold heterodox views ever come to
understand these things? Thus, the Bodhisattva saw
that ants were our parents in many previous lives and
even understood that they will all become Buddhas
in the future. Therefore, we should think about the
past benefits that we have received from all sentient
beings and really be grateful to them. This, then, is
the fifth reason to generate and embrace the Bodhi
Mind.

What is the suffering of birth and death?
Since time without beginning, all sentient beings and
I myself have never achieved liberation from the
cycle of birth and death, and so we must continue to
appear and disappear. We must continue to rise and
fall among human beings in this world or in other
worlds. Suddenly, we are in heaven; suddenly again,
we are in the human condition; then suddenly again,
we find ourselves in hell-states, animal-states or
ghost-states. We go out of the door in the morning and return in the evening; we have a short respite from hell but return again quickly. If we climb a hill of swords, we mutilate our bodies. If we climb a tree of swords, we rip open every square inch of our bodies. Eating hot iron cannot satisfy our hunger, and drinking molten copper cannot quench our thirst; rather, such acts only consume our intestines and lives. However, even if one’s body is cut into pieces by a sharp saw to the point of complete dismemberment, it will soon be reassembled. Thus, the dead, blown by the karmic wind, are quickly resurrected. You absolutely could not bear to see or hear those beings with their tragic cries, loud with the suffering and the pain of burning in flames without even a drop of relieving moisture in the city of raging fire. Their bodies either look as blue as lotus flowers or as red as lotus roots. Ten thousand births and deaths in Hell equal one night in the world of mortals. The suffering of one day in Hell is equal to the suffering of one hundred years in the world. Such activity frequently tires even the jailers, who know that this kind of punishment is set and meted out by Yama.
However, it is too late for regret when one is already in the midst of suffering. If you forget about the reality of suffering when you are free, happy, and unburdened, then you will doubtlessly again create, intentionally or unintentionally, bad karma. Who knows whether or not the sad, suffering horse that we are whipping so cruelly was once our mother? Who knows whether or not the terrified, suffering pig we are dragging so mercilessly to the slaughterhouse was once our father? All worldly people, by eating meat, eat their relatives, but they do not realize that it is wrong. Furthermore, some enemy in the present might have been an affectionate friend in a previous life. Members of a family in this life might have been enemies in a previous life. Someone in a previous life was one’s father, but in this life is one’s husband. If one fully comprehends the previous existences of oneself and others, he should feel shame and humiliation. If one could look at everything with heavenly eyes, then it would all be laughable; and one would feel oneself to be just a simple, ordinary person.
Living in excretion and slime, uncomfortably fixed upside down in his mother’s womb as a fetus for nine months, one, as a baby, does not know the difference between east and west. However, his knowledge increases gradually as the child grows up, just as passions also arise. After we are reborn, ailments and suffering once again attack the impermanent elements of the body, which are struck by wind and fire simultaneously, causing great discomfort. Soon, in a condition of disease and old age, the intelligent spirit becomes disordered from within, blood and sweat evaporate, and skin and muscle dry up from the outside. It feels as if needles are jabbing into each and every pore and as if knives are cutting through each and every vital organ. Even if a tortoise wanted to take off its shell, it would be easier for him to do than it would be for the intelligent spirit, in its pain and agony, to separate itself from the body, which is almost impossible. For then the mind would have no permanent host and would be like a merchant traveling and shifting from place to place with no home. Then, the body would have no definite shape and would be like a house that keeps changing form constantly.
Even to try to calculate the number of changes in the elements of the body in any one period of time, short or long, is as impossible as trying to calculate the number of changes in any selected time period or in the elements of a complex of crushed or split atoms. Furthermore, if we saw and comprehended all our previous lives clearly, we would shed an amount of tears that would fill the four oceans, knowing the suffering of those beings whom we have loved, have been loved by, and have been separated from. Bones as numerous as all the blades of grass would be piled higher than the highest mountain. Corpses in number as dense as all the weeds would cover the whole earth.

If you have not heard the Buddha Dharma, how can you possibly know about all these things? If you have not studied the sutras, how can you possibly comprehend anything about your previous lives? One who always hesitates to part with the things he loves will always be confused; and there is the fear that he may remain ignorant for many kalpas because he has not had a chance to hear the Buddha Dharma.
It is very difficult to gain rebirth in the body of a human being, but it is also very easy to lose the human form. Furthermore, having the form of a human being is a good opportunity to move and develop quickly, but is very difficult to trace. Imperceptibly, the life process, even though a sentient being has been separated from it for a very long time, unfolds the evil rewards of the three unhappy ways followed in previous lives, the effects of which one must always bear by oneself. This misery beyond description cannot be borne by any substitute but only by oneself. The reality of this condition is very sad if you just think about it a little. Therefore, we should distance ourselves from the stormy sea of passion and depart from the stream of birth and death as soon as possible; also, we should convert others and fervently hope that all sentient beings may arrive at the other shore very soon. Please understand clearly and remember that this is a very special opportunity that we all have only at this time now that we are human beings. This, then, is the sixth reason to generate, concentrate, and embrace the Bodhi Mind.
What does the phrase *to respect one's own Self-Nature* really mean? We, in our present minds, are not any different from Sakyamuni Buddha. However, why did the World-Honored One attain Enlightenment numberless kalpas ago while we are still confused; and why do we still have inverted worldly views? The Dharma has immeasurable supernatural power, wisdom, and the adornment of inexhaustible virtue; but we have much karma and affliction, being, as we are, still under the bondage of the cycle of birth and death. So, even though Sakyamuni Buddha and we are of the same Mind, there is still a vast difference between our confused state and his Enlightened State.

If we really thought about it morning and evening, wouldn’t we be ashamed to realize that we have allowed our Self-Nature—a priceless, perfect pearl—to sink into the mud of impurity, like trash, to be utterly neglected? Understanding this, we must develop various good and skillful methods and Dharmas to purify our defilement and cure our disease. For example, we should develop virtue though practice, and then the virtue of our Self-
Nature will reveal itself to be as lustrous as a perfect pearl, as clear as a diamond, and as bright and shining as the evening star on a clear night. Thus, we should never be ungrateful for Buddha’s teaching, nor should we ever degrade the spirit of our own Self-Nature. This, then, is the seventh reason to generate and embrace the Bodhi Mind.

What does the phrase *to repent all evil* karmas mean? The sutra says: “Even if one commits one dskrta, he would have to spend time in Hell equivalent to four times five hundred years of the deva kings. The sutra says further: “Even committing one tiny dskrta has this punishment, so how much more must be that for committing grave sins!” Such punishment is beyond description. Now, even as we are living our daily lives, our every movement and every action most of the time violate the monastic discipline. We even commit dskrta during our meals. So, since even the number of dskrta committed in one day is countless, how much more inconceivably countless is the number
committed in a whole lifetime and throughout many kalpas?

Sometimes we talk about the five precepts, which we go against very often; but most of the time we hide rather than confess our violations. Don’t even talk about the discipline of the sramanera, the bhikṣu, and the bodhisattva! Most of us cannot completely observe and fulfill even the five precepts of the upasaka! If one were asked his name and if he were to answer, “I am a bhikṣu”, and then if he were to confess his true spiritual condition, which might well reveal him not to be even as good as an upasaka, wouldn’t the resulting shame be unbearable? Therefore, if you take the discipline you should not break it. If you break it, you will surely fall and regress to the state of lower beings. If you do not commiserate with yourself and others, if you do not sincerely repent before all sentient beings, and if you do not weep sincerely while confessing your sins, then, even though you were to live a thousand lifetimes and ten thousand kalpas, you could not escape the reward of evil. This, then,
is the eighth reason to generate and embrace the Bodhi Mind.

What does the phrase *to seek rebirth in the Pure Land* mean? If one practices in this world, it is very difficult to make progress; however, if one is reborn in the Pure Land, then it is easy to attain Enlightenment. The phrase *easy to attain Enlightenment* means complete attainment in one’s present lifetime. The phrase *difficult to attain Enlightenment* means that even though one may take many kalpas, he still cannot attain complete Enlightenment. Therefore, the ancient sages and masters all sought rebirth in the Pure Land.

Also, many sutras and sastras direct us to rebirth in the Pure Land, for, in this Dharma-Ending Age, there is no better way to attain Enlightenment than to be reborn in the Pure Land, The sutra says: “If one has not enough good karma to be reborn in the Pure Land, he may, nevertheless, have enough good karma to be reborn with more bliss and more good.” This *more bliss* means that there is nothing better than holding the name of Amitabha Buddha firmly in one’s mind. This *more good* means that there is
nothing better than holding the name of Amitabha Buddha firmly in one’s mind. This *more good* also means there is nothing better than generating, concentrating, and embracing the great Bodhi Mind. Therefore, if one can, even temporarily, hold the name of Amitabha Buddha firmly in his mind, he instantly prevails over one hundred years of confusion, ignorance, and suffering. If one, while making a charitable contribution, suddenly generates the Bodhi Mind, he instantly goes beyond many kalpas of practice in his attainment. However, if one repeats the name of Amitabha Buddha and wishes to become a Buddha but does not generate, concentrate, and embrace the Bodhi Mind, then what advantages are there for him even though he were to repeat the name of Buddha ad infinitum?

In contrast to this, if one can sincerely generate and embrace the Bodhi Mind in his practice, then, even though he is not reborn in the Pure Land, it is easy for him to be reborn in the world of suffering to help all sentient beings. Therefore, to repeat the name of Amitabha Buddha is to plow the field and sow the seeds of Bodhi. Then,
naturally, the fruit of the Tao will grow and increase. Just board the great ship of your Vow, enter and set sail on the sea of the Bodhi Mind, and decide to land at and attain rebirth in the port of the Pure Land. This, then, is the ninth reason to generate and embrace the Bodhi Mind.

What assurance is there that the Right Dharma will remain in the world permanently? From many kalpas ago up to the present time, the World-Honored One has practiced the Tao of Bodhi for us, performing very difficult acts and remaining very patient. When all the causes and effects were perfect and complete, he attained perfect, complete Enlightenment. Thereafter, at the end of his Dharma-spreading period, he entered Nirvana. Whenever the Buddha passes into Nirvana and vanishes, then there remains still only a period of decay and termination. Thus, we still have the doctrine even now, but we have no enlightened person to preach it. We neither know what characterizes the heterodox nor what characterizes the Right Dharma. Indeed, we have lost track of what is right and what is wrong! Therefore, in order to satisfy and to complete ourselves and
others, we pursue both fame and wealth; and we seem to be flowing smoothly in the world, but we really do not know clearly anymore what the Buddha, what the Dharma, and what Sangha are. To realize this causes one to become very discouraged and despondent. Whenever I think about this, I shed a tear. What else can I say?!

I am a Buddhist, but I have not yet achieved much grace nor shown much gratitude. I have neither benefited myself nor benefited others. If I have done nothing good during my lifetime, then there will be nothing good after I die; and not even the highest heaven can conceal me, nor will the dense earth be able to hide me, the extreme sinner. The grief of realizing this is very difficult to bear. However, being at the end of one’s rope, one suddenly forgets what is shallow and generates his Bodhi Mind immediately. If one cannot succeed, even with much effort, in turning back the adverse tide of the present time, he must decide, nevertheless, to take the Great Vow to protect the Buddha Dharma in the future.

Therefore, I call on all virtuous friends to come to the Bodhimandala to establish an assembly,
to repent, each one, his own sins, and to take the forty-eight vows. Each vow is to be made for the conversion of all sentient beings and for the cultivation of deep Mind during thousands of kalpas, with each thought being only of the Buddha from today to the end of time and to the end of the karmic body. Also, each vow is to be focused on the simultaneous rebirth of all sentient beings in the Pure Land.

After having achieved the nine grades of the Lotus, then one can return again to the Saha World to enable the light of Buddha to shine everywhere, to spread Dharma, to purify the sea of Sangha, and to convert all the people of the world if the period of good fortune is extended. This, then, is the tenth reason for generating, concentrating and embracing the Bodhi Mind.

If one really understands everything about these ten reasons for generating, concentrating and embracing the Bodhi Mind and if one is also aware of the eight methods for achieving the Bodhi Mind, then he must recognize that he has a genuine aptitude;
and he will, doubtlessly, find a way and a place to
develop his Bodhi Mind.

In order to generate the Bodhi Mind, we
fortunately have the bodies of human beings, live in
the world, and have the ability to keep all our six
sense organs and the four elements in balance. Also,
we must have and maintain always a firm faith in the
Dharma, avoiding any demonic hindrances.
Furthermore, if we have left home (i.e., become
Buddhist monks) to take and practice perfect
discipline, to have a Bodhimandala, to hear the
Buddha Dharma, to admire and worship the relics,
and to practice repentance and meet virtuous friends,
then we have created extraordinary causes and
conditions for the generation and concentration of the
Bodhi Mind. If we do not generate the Bodhi Mind
today, when will we ever do it? What are we waiting
for?!

Therefore, I ask the present assembly to
sympathize with my humble opinion, to commiserate
with my great pain, to take the same vow I have
taken, and to generate and embrace the Bodhi Mind
together with me. If you are one who has not yet
generated the Bodhi Mind, you ought to do it now. If you are one who has already generated the Bodhi Mind, you must start increasing it immediately. If you are one who has already increased the Bodhi Mind, then you ought to continue increasing it forever. Try hard not to regress because of fear or difficulty. You should never, in some shallow, flippant manner, think that developing the Bodhi Mind is easy. You should neither be hasty nor lack persistence. You should neither be neglectful nor be without courage. You should never be dispirited without simultaneously thinking about improvement. You must not, unawares, become dull in mind, and you must never dull your powers to slight yourself. It is like planting a tree—even if you plant it on shallow ground, the roots gradually, with cultivation, grow deep. It is also like sharpening a knife—even though the knife is dull, it will, if you take the proper steps, become sharp. To remain shallow, do not cultivate the plant. Just let it dry up! To remain dull, do not sharpen the knife. Just let it lie useless!

If you think that practice creates much suffering, then you do not yet realize that the
negligence of practice creates even more suffering. Even being temporarily diligent and prudent in one’s practice can lead to permanent happiness. However, being even temporarily negligent in one’s practice during this life can cause even more suffering in future lives; but if you will just use the boat of Pure Land to leave the Saha World, then you need not worry about returning or regressing. To achieve the power of the Patient Endurance of the Increate, do not fret and worry about how difficult it is. You should just understand that even a sinner in Hell also wishes to generate his Bodhi Mind. So how can we, who are both human beings and Buddhists, not take the vow to generate, concentrate and embrace the Bodhi Mind during our present lifetime? Since time without beginning we have been confused and ignorant. But let bygones be bygones! If you can awaken now, it is still possible to do even more in the future.

It is, indeed, a great pity for one to hold on obstinately to his wrong beliefs. If one understands the Dharma but does not practice, that is even more pitiful. If one fears the suffering of Hell, then he
should, without hesitation, dedicate himself to progress. Furthermore, if one is aware that time swiftly passes and that everything is impermanent, then he must make sure that he is never indolent. One also needs the strong encouragement of the Dharma and the constancy and the assistance of a good friend to depend on to the end of this lifetime, someone from whom one is never separated; then one will not have any fear whatsoever of regressing or of getting lost and confused.

You must never think that the generation and concentration of the Bodhi Mind are unimportant. You must never feel that to take a vow is without benefit. Just remember: If your mind is pure, then appearance is Reality! So, without hesitation, take the Great Vow to practice deeply. Just realize: The great void is not vast, but the Bodhi Mind is vast! Just comprehend: A diamond is not firm, but the Great Vow is firm!

If all people, with great constancy, never doubt or forsake my words, then the family of Bodhi will join together in an alliance of the Lotus Sect; and all people will then come to harbor the
determination to be reborn together in the Pure Land in order to see Amitabha Buddha, to convert all sentient beings, and to attain Complete Enlightenment. The adornment of your life with all the virtues and thirty-two laksanas can really begin today if you sincerely generate, concentrate and embrace the Bodhi Mind and take the Great Vow immediately. I strongly and sincerely hope that all people will make a great effort to cooperate in this endeavor.
APPENDIX
MERITS GAINED BY GENERATING THE BODHI MIND

To generate and cultivate one’s own Bodhi Mind is the fundamental principle in learning and practicing the Buddha Dharma, the chief goal of which is to achieve Buddhahood. One can never hope to become a Buddha if one does not generate and embrace his own Bodhi Mind. Moreover, only if one succeeds in becoming a Buddha, will he gain the power to convert all sentient beings. If one lives in the world and does any good whatsoever, he should gain some merit; but if he generates and cultivates his own Bodhi Mind, he will gain great merit. *The Avatamsaka Sutra* shows us that generating and cultivating one’s own Bodhi Mind will gain one many merits, such as those listed in the various categories that follow.
Category I:
The Bodhi Mind, like a seed, produces all Buddha Dharma.
The Bodhi Mind, like a fertile field, grows all pure Dharmas in the minds of sentient beings.
The Bodhi Mind, like a vast pool, holds all the things of the world.
The Bodhi Mind, like pure water, washes away all defilements.
The Bodhi Mind, like the wind, blows without obstacle throughout the world.
The Bodhi Mind, like a conflagration, burns away all wrong views.
The Bodhi Mind, like the bright sun, illuminates the whole world.
The Bodhi Mind, like the full moon, shines on all pure Dharmas in the world.
The Bodhi Mind, like a lamp, illuminates all sorts of dark thoughts.
The Bodhi Mind, like clear eyes, recognizes and discriminates among all dangerous and all safe places in the world.
Category II:
The Bodhi Mind, like a broad way, allows all beings to enter the City of Wisdom.
The Bodhi Mind, like right belief, helps all beings reject wrong thought.
The Bodhi Mind, like a great vehicle, carries all bodhisattvas.
The Bodhi Mind, like a great door, opens and manifests all the actions of bodhisattvas.
The Bodhi Mind, like a great palace, is the appropriate place in which to practice samadhi and holds all Buddha Dharmas in safekeeping.
The Bodhi Mind, like a great garden, is a place where one can play and enjoy Dharma happiness.
The Bodhi, like a great house, gives security and stability to all sentient beings.
The Bodhi Mind, like a haven of return and rest, benefits all sentient beings.
The Bodhi Mind, like a haven of return and rest, is depended on by all bodhisattvas.
Category III:
The Bodhi Mind, like a kindly father, teaches and
guides all bodhisattvas.
The Bodhi Mind, like a kindly mother, begets all
bodhisattvas.
The Bodhi Mind, like a nurse-teacher, rears and
educates all bodhisattvas.
The Bodhi Mind, like a good, wonderful, faithful
friend, completes and benefits all bodhisattvas.
The Bodhi Mind, like a king, surpasses all Two-
Vehicle people.
The Bodhi Mind, like an emperor, has all the
freedom it wishes.
The Bodhi Mind, like the vast oceans, contains all
kinds of merits.
The Bodhi Mind, like great Mount Sumeru, creates
equality in the minds of all sentient beings.
The Bodhi Mind, like the cakravala, contains all the
numberless worlds.
The Bodhi Mind, like a snowy mountain, produces
all kinds of wisdom-medicine.
The Bodhi Mind, like fragrant mountain flowers,
produces all kinds of fragrant merits.
The Bodhi Mind, like vast, infinite space, is
possessed of boundless wonderful merits.
Category IV:
The Bodhi Mind, like a lotus flower, is not defiled by any worldly thing.
The Bodhi Mind, like a wise trained elephant, is gentle and without coarseness.
The Bodhi Mind, like a fine horse, gallops away from all evil influences.
The Bodhi Mind, like a master that tames, controls, and cherishes all his charges, protects all Mahayana Dharma.
The Bodhi Mind, like good medicine, cures all ills and purifies all defilements.
The Bodhi Mind, like a trap, can catch and halt all evil thoughts.
The Bodhi Mind, like a vajra, pierces through all the things of the world.
The Bodhi Mind, like a fragrance-box, contains all the fragrant merits in the world.
The Bodhi Mind, like wonderful flowers, creates joy for all who encounter it.
The Bodhi Mind, like white candana, removes distress so that one’s feelings become clean and clear.
The Bodhi Mind, like black agaru, permeates all the Dharmadhatus.

The Bodhi Mind, like the Medicine King, can cure or eliminate all defilements and disease.

The Bodhi Mind, like an agada, draws out the painful arrow of illusion.
Category V:

The Bodhi Mind, like Sovereign Sakra, surpasses all other lords.
The Bodhi Mind, like Vaisravana, eliminates all the suffering of the poor.
The Bodhi Mind, like the Heaven of Merit, is adorned with all kinds of merits.
The Bodhi Mind, like an intricately decorated robe, adorns all bodhisattvas.
The Bodhi Mind, like the annihilating fire at the end of a kalpa, consumes all the phenomena of the world.
The Bodhi Mind, like the good root of not-being-born, is the medicine that produces all Buddha Dharmas.
The Bodhi Mind, like a dragon-pearl, dissolves all the poisons of defilement.
The Bodhi Mind, like the cintamani, supports all poor beings of the world.
The Bodhi Mind, like a vase of merit, satisfies all sentient beings.
The Bodhi Mind, like a fruitful tree, can, at will, rain down all kinds of adornments.
Category VI:
The Bodhi Mind, like a goose-down coat, repels the
cold defilements of birth and death.
The Bodhi Mind, like a glistening white blanket of
snow, originally has a pure, immaculate nature.
The Bodhi Mind, like a sharpened plough, cuts
through and ploughs up the karmic fields of all
sentient beings.
The Bodhi Mind, like Narayana, destroys all
enemies who grasp the ego-view.
The Bodhi Mind, like a swift arrow, pierces all
suffering.
The Bodhi Mind, like a sharp spear, strikes right
through the armor of defilement.
The Bodhi Mind, like hard armor, protects all
reasonable minds.
The Bodhi Mind, like a sharp sword, cuts away all
major obstacles and defilements.
The Bodhi Mind, like a sharp sword, cuts through the
armor of arrogance.
The Bodhi Mind, like the pennant of a fearless
general, subdues all demonic trouble.
The Bodhi Mind, like a sharp, whirring saw, topples and cuts to bits the whole tree of ignorance.

The Bodhi Mind, like sharp ox-teeth, strips down and chews up the whole tree of suffering.

The Bodhi Mind, like military arms, defends against all kinds of hard, cruel suffering.
Category VII:

The Bodhi Mind, like an inexhaustible treasury, produces and pays out merits endlessly.

The Bodhi Mind, like a fountain, gushes up the water of wisdom without exhaustion.

The Bodhi Mind, like a bright mirror, reveals all Dharma doors.

The Bodhi Mind, like a great lotus, is not at all defiled by any evil or dirty thing.

The Bodhi Mind, like a great river, gushes forth all Dharmas to nourish, receive, and convert all sentient beings.

The Bodhi Mind, like a great dragon-king, rains down all kinds of wonderful Dharmas.

The Bodhi Mind, like the root of life, holds the great Compassion-Body of Bodhi.

The Bodhi Mind, like sweet dew, is safe and abides forever.

The Bodhi Mind, like a vast net, catches and holds all the sentient beings of the world.

The Bodhi Mind, like tight, strong ropes, binds and holds all sentient beings until they are converted.
The Bodhi Mind, like a hook-and-bait, catches and draws up all living beings out of the abyss of ignorance.
Category VIII:
The Bodhi Mind, like a good, strong hand, protects the body.
The Bodhi Mind, like steadfast feet, stands firmly on all merits.
The Bodhi Mind, like medicine for blurry vision, dissolves the screen of ignorance.
The Bodhi Mind, like tongs or a pair of tweezers, pulls out the thorn of the body-view.
The Bodhi Mind, like a comfortable bed, rids us of all the fatigue and suffering of birth and death.
The Bodhi Mind, like a good friend, lasts until all the ties of birth and death are dissolved.
The Bodhi Mind, like a great store of valuables, can erase the poverty of the deluded mind.
The Bodhi Mind, like a great teacher, knows the importance of each and every bodhisattva.
Category IX:
The Bodhi Mind, like the agada, treats and cures all illnesses.
The Bodhi Mind, like a disinfectant, sterilizes the infections and poisons of greed and delusion.
The Bodhi Mind, like holding and chanting a mantra, neutralizes and eliminates all the poisons of perversion.
The Bodhi Mind, like strong wind, turns, blows swiftly and clears away all the fog and obstacles of delusion.
The Bodhi Mind, like a great continent, contains all the precious gems of the Enlightened Mind.
The Bodhi Mind, like the nature of a good seed, produces and sprouts all kinds of Pure Dharma.
The Bodhi Mind, like a great house, contains all the lasting, secure, dependable merits of the Dharma.
The Bodhi Mind, like a busy market, is the place of trade of all bodhisattvas.
The Bodhi Mind, like a medicine of smelted gold, eliminates all dirty defilements and cures all diseases.
The Bodhi Mind, like sweet honey, possesses the taste of all merits.

The Bodhi Mind, like the right path or way, leads all bodhisattvas to the entrance of the City of Wisdom.

The Bodhi Mind, like a strong container, holds all kinds of radiant Pure Dharmas.

The Bodhi Mind, like timely rain, washes away all the dust of defilement.
Category X:
The Bodhi Mind, like a handsome residence, is a place for all bodhisattvas to dwell and abide in.
The Bodhi Mind, like the most brilliant diamond, instantly and radiantly outshines the dull fruit of liberation achieved by a sravaka during a lifetime of practice.
The Bodhi Mind, like a pure vaidurya, has a bright, clean nature with no defilements.
The Bodhi Mind, like a precious green jewel of an emperor, surpasses all the wisdom of sravakas and pratyeka-buddhas.
The Bodhi Mind, like a night watchman’s drum, awakens all sentient beings from their distressful nightmare.
The Bodhi Mind, like clear, pure water, is originally clear, pure, and bright.
The Bodhi Mind, like Jambunada-suvarna, sparkles, reflecting all good actions in the world.
The Bodhi Mind, like the king of a great mountain, surpasses all other kings in the world.
Category XI:

The Bodhi Mind, like a secure, peaceful haven, does not reject anyone who returns.

The Bodhi Mind, like justice, benefits all sentient beings and gets rid of defilement and banishes loneliness.

The Bodhi Mind, like the most wonderful, fortunate condition, lets the mind abide in true happiness always.

The Bodhi Mind, like a great assembly giving alms, fills to overflowing the minds of all sentient beings.

The Bodhi Mind, like an underground treasure house, holds and keeps safe all the Buddha Dharma.

The Bodhi Mind, like the net of Indra, catches and filters out all the defilements of asuras.

The Bodhi Mind, like the World-Honored Victorious One, surpasses the minds of all sentient beings.

The Bodhi Mind, like the wind of Varuna, blows away all obstacles to conversion.

The Bodhi Mind, like the fire of Indra, burns away all delusions and bad habits.

The Bodhi Mind, like Buddha’s caitya, receives all the offerings of the world.
ALL MERITS ARE EQUAL

Good men and good women! The Bodhi Mind, indeed, contains all these aforementioned merits and countless others. However, you should understand that all Dharmas and all merits are, in reality, equal. And why? Just because the Bodhi Mind produces all the actions of all bodhisattva and also because all the Tathagatas of the three periods have issued from the Bodhi Mind. Therefore, good men and good women, if one has the mind of Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi, then he or she will surely attain the Dharma of Superior Merits and hold the key to the Tao of Wisdom.
THE TEN ARTICLES OF FAITH OF CH’AN
MASTER CHEH WUH

[1] Believe that after birth, there must come
death.

[2] Believe that life is impermanent.

[3] Believe that the wheel of transmigration
is a dangerous way.

[4] Believe that suffering is long-term and
constant.

[5] Believe that the Buddha’s words are not
false.


[7] Believe that if one wishes to be born in
the Pure Land, he or she really can be
born there.

[8] Believe that if one is born in the Pure
Land, he or she will never regress.

[9] Believe that it is possible to become
Buddha in this present lifetime.

[10] Believe that all Dharmas are created by
Mind.
GLOSSARY

**Agada:** adj.: healthy; n.: antidote, panacea, universal remedy.

**Agara:** House, dwelling, receptacle; also, used in the sense of a bodily organ—e.g., the ear for sound, etc.

**Agaru:** Sandalwood incense.

**Amitabha Buddha:** The Buddha who is the main object of devotion in the Pure Land School of Chinese Buddhism and also in the Jodo and Shin Schools of Buddhism in Japan.

**Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi:** Unexcelled, complete Enlightenment, an attribute of every Buddha.

**Asura:** Spirits or titanic demons. There are four classes named according to their manner of rebirth: egg-born, womb-born, transformation-born, and spawn- or water-born. Generally, their abode is in the ocean, north of Mount Sumeru.

**Bhiksu:** A religious mendicant who has left home and renounced all possessions in order to follow the way of the Buddha and who has become a fully ordained monk.
**Bodhimandala:** Truth-plot, holy site, place of Enlightenment; the place where the Buddha attained Enlightenment.

**Bodhi Mind:** Thought of Enlightenment, a Bodhisattva’s decision to win the full Enlightenment of a Buddha. Heart of wisdom, inward light, grace, shout of everlastingness; the divine spark of the Buddha-Nature in the heart, the enlightened attitude, the aspiration for Buddhahood, the Great Vow to save all sentient beings and bring them to Buddhahood.

**Bodhisattva:** One moved by compassionate zeal to help his fellow man achieve salvation; hence, one willing to postpone his own entrance into Nirvana to this end. One who aspires to the attainment of Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings; one who has produced the Bodhicitta (enlightened attitude); one who strives for Buddhahood or Enlightenment.

**Caitya:** Tumulus, a mausoleum; a place where the relics of Buddha were collected; hence, it is also a place where the sutras or images are placed.

**Cakravala:** The nine cakravala, or concentric
mountain ranges or continents separated by eight seas, of a universe.

Candana: White candana, or white sandalwood.

Ch’an: A sect of Chinese Buddhism founded by the twenty-eighth Patriarch, Bodhidharma. The aim of the sect is instantaneous Enlightenment and the direct pointing at the mind for the perception of Self-Nature and the attainment of Buddhahood.

Cintamani: The talismanic pearl, a symbol of bestowing fortune and capable of fulfilling every wish.

Dharma: Buddhist doctrine or teachings; that which is true and good. Dharma can also be used to indicate Buddhism as an organized religion. Also used to indicate things, events, becoming, matter, or phenomena.

Dharmadhatu: Dharma-element, -factor, or -realm.
(1) A name for things in general, noumenal or phenomenal, of the physical universe or any portion or phase of it.
(2) The unifying, underlying spiritual reality regarded as the ground or cause of all things; the Absolute, from which all proceeds. It is one of the eighteen dhatus.
**Dharma-Ending Age:** The third and last period of a Buddha kalpa. The first period is the first 500 years of correct doctrine; the second is the 1,000 years of semblance of the law or approximate adherence to the doctrine; the third is the myriad years of the Dharma’s decline and end.

**Dragon-King:** Title for the tutelary deity of a lake, river, sea, etc.

**Duskṛta:** Wrongdoing, evil action, misdeed, sin; external sins of the body and the mouth; a light sin.

**Enlightenment:** The intuitive awareness or cognition of the Dharma-Nature; the realization of ultimate reality. The outcome of this realization is the elimination of passion, desire, and clinging to ego, which is the liberation from the suffering of samsara.

**Five Precepts:** The five basic prohibitions of bad conduct for all Buddhists: no killing, no stealing, no adultery, no lying, and no intoxicating substances.

**Indra:** The most prominent Vedic god of the heavens and guardian of the eastern quarter of the compass; later superseded by Vishnu and Siva, two of the great Hindu gods.
Jambunada-suvarna: Jambu River gold; the golden sand of the Jambu River.

Laksana: A distinctive mark, sign, indication, characteristic or designation. A Buddha is recognized by his thirty-two characteristic physiological marks.

Lotus Sect: A Buddhist sect founded by the great Master Hui Yuan about 300 C.E. at his monastery on Mount Lu in Kiangsi Province in China. The Lotus Sect believes in and honors Amitabha Buddha and declares that, through the chanting of his name and by purifying and finally ridding oneself of desire, one can be reborn in the Pure Land. There, one is born of a lotus, and, depending on one’s degree of purification and practice, one is born into one of the nine grades of the lotus: upper-superior, middle-superior, and lower-superior, etc.

Maharaja: A great or superior king.

Mahayana: The greater vehicle; one of the two major divisions of Buddhism; the great vessel; the doctrines of the Mahayanists. The Mahayana doctrine is set forth in the Sanskrit Buddhist texts. Sometimes, referred to, but not accurately, as northern Buddhism.
Mantra: A syllable, work, or verse that has been revealed to a seer in meditation; embodiment in sound of a deity; spell or incantation.

Narayana: Name of a deva, a strong, manly hero having divine power.

Nirvana: State achieved by the conquest of craving; the spiritual goal of Buddhism.

Pretyeka-Buddha: One who attains his Enlightenment alone, independently of a teacher, with the object of attaining Nirvana and his own salvation rather than that of others, in sharp contrast to a bodhisattva’s altruism.

Pure Land: One of the schools of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, which emphasizes devotion to Amitabha Buddha and which believes that, through the chanting of his name and by purifying and finally ridding oneself of desire, one can be reborn in the Pure Land.

Saha World: Also known as Sahaloka. It is the universe of persons subject to suffering and transmigration; the universe of endurance.

Sakra: God of the sky who fights the demons with his vajra, or thunderbolt.
Sakyamuni Buddha: The sage of the Sakya clan; one of the five surnames of Buddha before he became enlightened.

Sangha: The religious orders of monks and nuns in Buddhism; company or congregation of monks and nuns.


Sramana: Buddhist monks who have left their families and forsaken all the passions, are uncontaminated by outward attractions, are merciful to all and impure to none, are neither elated by joy nor harrowed by distress, and who are able to bear whatever may come.

Sravaka: Disciple; hearer; a disciple not yet capable of independent progress. In Mahayana texts, a technical term for the followers of the Hinayana doctrine.

Sutra: An aphorism; a thread of suggestive words or phrases; compact mnemonic phrases summarizing religious and philosophical instruction. Also, addresses attributed to the Buddha, usually introduced by the phrase Thus have I heard. Also
refers to the *Sutra-Pitaka*, or first portion of the *Tripitaka*, the Buddhist canon; but the term is sometimes applied to the whole canon.

**Tao:** The way, the path; the absolutist philosophy of the Chinese philosopher Lao-Tse; the term *Tao* has a connotation similar to that of Nirvana and *Brahma*.

**Tao of Bodhi:** The way of Enlightenment.

**Three Realms:** The realm of sensuous desire, the realm of form, and the formless realm of pure spirit.

**Upasaka:** A lay Buddhist; one who takes the five precepts.

**Vaidurya:** A precious substance, perhaps lapis lazuli or beryl.

**Vaisravana:** One of the four maharaja-deva guardians of the first, or lowest devaloka, on its four sides. Vaisravana guards the north.

**Vajra:** Thunderbolt, the symbol of the indestructible and irresistible truth; hence, applicable as an epithet for all things symbolizing this truth; by connotation it is masculine and, as such, may be contrasted with the feminine lotus.

**Varuna:** God of the sea and of the waters; guardian of the western quarter of the compass.
**World-Honored One:** An epithet or title of the Buddha.

**Yama:** In the *Vedas*, the god of the dead.
TRANSFER-OF-MERIT VOW

(Parinamana) For All Donors

May all the merit and grace gained from adorning Buddha’s Pure Land, from loving our parents, from serving our country, and from respecting all sentient beings be transformed and transferred for the benefit and salvation of all suffering sentient beings on the three evil paths. Furthermore, may we who read and hear this Buddhadharm and, thereafter, generate our Bodhi Minds be reborn, at the end of our lives, in the Pure Land.
古杭梵天寺沙門實賢撰

不肖愚下凡夫僧實賢，泣血涕顚，哀告現今大眾，及當世淨信男女等，惟願慈悲，少加聽察。若聞入道要門，發心為首；修行急務，立願居先。願立則眾生可度，心發則佛道堪成。若有不發廣大心，立堅固願，則縱經劫數，依然還在輪迴；雖有修行，總是徒勞辛苦。故「華嚴經」云：「忘失菩提心，修諸善法，是名魔業。」忘失尚爾，況未發乎？故知欲學如來乘，必先具發菩提願，不可緩也。

然心願差別，其相乃多。若不指陳，如何趨向？今為大眾，略而言之，相有其八，所謂：邪、正、真、僞、大、小、偏、圓是也。云何名為邪、正、真、僞、大、小、偏、圓耶？

世有行人，一向修行，不究自心，但知外務，或求利養，或好名聞，或貪現世欲樂，或望未來果報：如是發心，名之為邪。

既不求名聞利養，又不貪欲樂果報，惟為生死、為菩提：如是發心，名之為正。

念念上求佛道，心心下化眾生；聞佛道長遠，不生退怯；觀眾生難度，不生厭倦；如登萬仞之山，必窮其頂；如上九層之塔，必造其顚；如是發心，名知為真。

有罪不懌，有過不除，內濁外清，始勤終怠；雖有好心，多為名利所夾雜；雖有善法，復為罪業之所染污；如是發心，名之為僞。

眾生界盡，我願方盡；菩提道成，我願方成：如是發心，名之為大。

觀三界如牢獄，視生死如怨家；但期自度，不欲度人；如是發心，名之為小。

若於心外見有眾生，及以佛道，願度願成，功勵不忘，知見不泯，名之為偏。

若知自性是眾生，故願度脫；自性是佛道，故願成就；不見一法，離心別有；以虛空之心，發虛空之願，行虛空之行，證虛空之果，亦無虛空之相可得；如是發心，名之為圓。

知此八種差別，則知審察；審察，則知去取；知去取，則可發心。

云何審察？謂我所發心，於此八中，為邪？為正？為真？為僞？為大？為小？為偏？為圓？
云何去取？所謂去邪、去僞、去小、去偏；取正、取真、取大、取圓。

如此發心，方得名為真正發菩提心也。

此菩提心，諸善中王，必有因緣，方得發起。今言因緣，略有十種。何等為十？

一者，念佛重恩故。
二者，念父母恩故。
三者，念師長恩故。
四者，念施主恩故。
五者，念眾生恩故。
六者，念生死苦故。
七者，尊重己靈故。
八者，懺悔業障故。
九者，求生淨土故。
十者，為念正法得久住故。

云何念佛重恩？謂我釋迦如來，最初發心，為我等故。行菩薩道，經無量劫，備受諸苦。我造業時，佛則哀懺，方便教化；而我愚痴，不知信受。我墮地獄，佛復慈悲，欲代我苦；而我業重，不能救拔。我生人道，佛以方便，令種善根。生生世世，隨逐於我，心無暫舍。佛初出世，我尚沉淪，今得人身，佛已滅度。何罪而生末法？何福而預出家？何障而不見金身？何幸而躬逢舍利？如是思維，向使不種善根，何以得聞佛法？不聞佛法，焉知常受佛恩？此恩此德，丘山難喻。自非發廣大心，行菩薩道，建立佛法，教度眾生，縱使粉骨碎身，豈能酬答？是為發菩提心第一因緣也。

云何念父母恩？「哀哀父母，生我劬勞。」十月三年，懷胎乳哺，推乾去澇，嘔苦吐甘，才得成人。指望紹繼門風，供承祭祀。今我等既已出家，謹稱釋子，忝號沙門；甘旨不供，祭祀不給，生不能養其口體，死不能導其神靈；於世間則為大損，於出世又無實益。兩途既失，重罪難逃。如是思維，惟有百劫千生，長行佛道，十方三世，普渡眾生；則不惟一生父母，生生父母俱蒙拔濟；不惟一人父母，人人父母，盡可超升。是為發菩提心第二因緣也。

云何念師長恩？父母雖能生育我身，若無世間師長，則不知禮義；若無出世間師長，則不解佛法。不知禮義，則同於異類；不解佛法，則何異於俗人？今我等能知禮義，略解佛法，袈裟披體，戒品沾身，此之重恩，從師長得。若求小果，僅能自利；今為大乘，普願利人，則世、出世間二種師長，俱蒙利益。是為發菩提心第三因緣也。

云何念施主恩？謂我等今者日用所資，並非己有。三時粥飯，四季衣裳，疾病所需，身口所資，此皆出自他力，將歸我用。彼則竭力躬耕，尚難飽口；我則安坐受食，猶不稱心。彼則紡織不已，猶自艱難。我則安服有餘，寧知愛惜？彼則棄門蓬戶，擾攘終身；我則廣宇
聞庭，優遊卒歲。以彼勞而供我逸，於心安乎？將他力而潤己身，於理順乎？自非此慧雙運，福慧兩嚴，樞信沾恩，眾生受賜；則粒米寸絲，酬善有分，惡報難逃。是為發菩提心第四因緣也。

云何念眾生恩？我與眾生，從癡劫來，世世生生，互為父母，彼此有恩。今雖隔世昏迷，互不相識，以理推之，豈無報效？今之披毛戴角，安知非昔為其子乎？今之蠕動蜎飛，安知不曾為我父乎？每見幼離父母，長而容毅都忘，何況宿世親緣？今則張王難記，彼其號呼於地獄之下，宛轉於餓鬼之中，苦痛誰知？饑餓安訴？我雖不見不聞，彼必求拯救，非經不滅此事，非佛不能道此言。彼邪見人，何足以知此？是故，菩薩觀於螻蟻，皆是過去父母、未來諸佛，常思利益，念報其恩。是為發菩提心第五因緣也。

云何念生死苦？謂我與眾生，從癡劫來，常在生死，未得解脫。人間天上，此界他方，出沒萬端，升沉片刻。俄焉在天，俄焉在地，俄焉地獄，畜牲、餓鬼、黑闇執著，鐵窟暫離而又入。登刀山也，則舉體無完膚；躍火海也，則寸絲皆割裂。熱鐵不除錮，吞之則肝腸盡爛。烊銅難療渴，飲之則骨肉糜。利劍解之，則斷而復續。巧風吹之，則死已還生。猛火城中，忍嚥號叫之痛。煎熬盤中，但聞苦痛之聲。冰凍始凝，則凝似青蓮蕊結；血肉既裂，則身如紅藕華開。一夜死生，地下每經萬迴；一朝苦痛，人間已過百年。頻頻獄卒疲勞，誰信聞翁教誨？受時知苦，雖悔恨何以追？脫以還忘，其作業也如故。鞭鉤出血，誰知吾母之悲？牽絆就屠，焉識乃翁之痛？食其子而不知，文王尚爾；啖其親而未識，凡類皆然。當年恩愛，今做冤家；昔日寇仇，今成骨肉。昔為母而今為姦，舊是翁而新作賊。宿命知之，則可羞可恥；天眼視之，則可笑可憐。萬難叢中，十月包藏難過；臍血道裡，一時倒下可憐。少也何知？東西莫辨；長而有識，貪欲便生。須臾老病相尋，迅速無常又至。風火交煎，神識於中潰亂。精血既竭，皮肉自外乾枯，無一毛而不被針鑿，有一竅而皆從刀剝。龜之將烹，其脫殼也脅易；神之欲謝，其去體也倍難。心無常主，類商賈而處處奔馳；身無定形，似房屋而頻頻遷徙。大千塵點，難窮往返之身；四海波濤，孰計別離之類。茫茫積骨，過彼崇山；莽莽横屍，多於大地。向使不聞佛語，此事誰見誰聞？未睹佛經，此理焉知焉覺？其或依前貪戀，仍舊眾毛，祇恐萬劫千生，一錯百錯。人身難得而易失，良時易往而難回。道路冥冥，別離長久，三途惡報，遂自受之。痛不可言，誰當相代？興言及此，能不寒心？是故，宜應斷生死流，出愛欲海，自他兼濟，彼岸同登，眾劫殊勸，在此一舉。是為發菩提心第六因緣也。

云何尊重己靈？謂我現前一心，直下與釋迦如來，無二無別。云何世尊無量劫來，早成正覺，而我等昏迷顛倒，尚做凡夫？又佛世尊，則具有無量神通、智慧、功德莊嚴，而我等則但有無量業縛、煩惱、生死纏縛，心性是一，迷悟天淵。靜言思之，豈不可恥？譬如無價寶珠，沒在淤泥；視同瓦礫，不加愛重。是故，宜應以無量善法興救煩惱。修德有幸，則性德方顯。如珠被濯，懸在高幢，洞達光明，映蔽一切，可謂不孤佛化，不負己靈。是為發菩提心第七因緣也。

云何憫悔業障？經言犯一吉羅，如四天王壽五百歲，墮泥犁中。
吉羅小罪，尚或此報，何況重罪，其報難言！今我等日用之中，一舉一動，恒違戒律；一餐一水，鎮犯尸羅。一日所犯，亦應無量，何況終身歷劫！所起之罪，更不可言矣。且以五戒之一，十人九犯，少壯多藏。五戒名為優婆塞戒，尚不具足，何況沙彌、比丘、菩薩等戒，又不必言矣。問其名，則曰我比丘也。問其其實，則尚不足為優婆塞也，豈不可愧哉？當之佛戒不受則已，受則不可殞犯；不犯則已，凡則終必墮落。若非自懲懲他，自傷傷他，身心並切，聲淚俱下，普與衆生，求哀懟悔，則千生萬劫，惡報難逃。是為發菩提心第十八因緣也。

云何求生淨土？謂在此土修行，其進道也難；彼土往生，其成佛也易。易故一生可致，難故累劫未成。是以往聖前賢，人人趨向；千經萬論，處處指歸。末世修行，無越於此。然經稱少善不生，多福乃致。言多福，則莫若直持名號；言多善，則莫若發廣大心，是以暫持聖號，勝於布施百年；一發大心，超過修行歷劫。蓋念佛本期作佛，大心不發，則難念矣。發心原為修行，淨土不生，則雖發易退。是則下菩薩種，耕以念佛之犁，道果自然增長。成大願船，入於淨土之海，西方決定往生。是為發菩提心第九因緣也。

云何令正法久住？謂我世尊無量劫來，為我等故，修菩提道，難行能行，難忍能忍，因果滿滿，遂致成佛。既成佛以，化緣周訥，入於涅槃。正法、像法、皆已滅盡，僅存末法，有教無人。邪正不分，是非莫辯；競爭人我，盡逐利名；學口滔滔，天下皆是。不知佛是何人？法是何義？僧是何名？衰殞至此，殆不忍言，每一思及，不覺淚下！我為佛子，不能報恩。內無益於己，外無益於人；生無益於時，死無益於後。天雖高，不能覆我；地雖厚，不能載我。極重罪人，非我而誰？由是痛不可忍，計無所出，頓忘鄙陋，忽發大心。雖不能挽回末運於此時，決當護持正法於來世。是故，僧諸善友，同到道場，述爲懺摩，建茲法會。發四十八之大願，願願度生；期千劫之深心，心心作佛。從於今日，盡未臨道，舉此一形，誓歸安養，既登九品，回入娑婆。俾得佛日重輝，法門再闢；僧海澄清於此界，人民被化於東方；劫運为之更延，正法得以久住，此則區區真實苦心。是發菩提心第十因緣也。

如是十現備讃，八法週知，則趨向有門，開發有地。相與得此人身，居於華夏，六根無恙，四大輕安，具有信心，幸無魔障。況我今等，又得出家，又受具戒，又遇道場，又聞佛法，又斷舍利，又修懺法，又值善友，又具勝緣；不於今日，發此大心，更待何日？惟願大眾，愍我愚誠，憐我苦志，同立此願，同發是心。未發者今發，已發者增長，已增長者今令相續。勿畏難而退怯，勿貪易而輕浮，勿欲速而不久長，勿懈怠而無勇猛，勿墮趣而不振起，勿因循而更期待，勿因懈弛而一向無心，勿以退後而自鄙無分。譬諸種樹，種久則根深而日深；又如磨刀，磨久則刀利而成利。豈可因淺勿種，任其自枯？因繩弗繩，繩之無用？又若以修行為苦，則不知慵怠尤苦。修行則勤勞，暫時，安樂永劫；懈怠則偷安一世，受苦多生。況乎以淨土為航，則何愁退轉？有得無生為忍力，則何慮艱難？當知地獄罪人，尚發菩
提心於往劫，豈可人倫佛子，不立大願於今生？無始昏迷，往者既不可諫；而今覺悟，將來猶尚可追。然迷而未悟，故可哀憐；苟知而不行，尤為痛惜。若懸地獄之苦，則精進自生；若念無常之速，則懺悔不起。又需以佛法為鞭策，善友為提攜；造次弗離，終身依頼，則無退失之虞矣。勿謂一念輕微，勿謂虛願無益；心真則事實，願廣則行深，虛空非大，心王為大；金剛非堅，願力最堅。大眾誠能不棄我語，則菩提眷屬，從此聯姻。蓮社宗盟；自今締好。所願同生浄土，同見彌陀，同化眾生，同成正覺；則安知未來三十二相，百福莊嚴，不從今日發心立願而始也。願與大眾共勉之。幸甚！幸甚！
“Wherever the Buddha’s teachings have flourished,

either in cities or countrysides,

people would gain inconceivable benefits.

The land and people would be enveloped in peace.

The sun and moon will shine clear and bright.

Wind and rain would appear accordingly,

and there will be no disasters.

Nations would be prosperous

and there would be no use for soldiers or weapons.

People would abide by morality and accord with laws.

They would be courteous and humble,

and everyone would be content without injustices.

There would be no thefts or violence.

The strong would not dominate the weak

and everyone would get their fair share.”

~THE BUDDHA SPEAKS OF
THE INFINITE LIFE SUTRA OF
ADORNMENT, PURITY, EQUALITY
AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF
THE MAHAYANA SCHOOL~
GREAT VOW

BODHISATTVA EARTH-TREASURY
(BODHISATTVA KSITIGARBHA)

"Unless Hells become empty,
I vow not to attain Buddhahood;
Till all have achieved the Ultimate
Liberation,
I shall then consider my Enlightenment
full!"

Bodhisattva Earth-Treasury is entrusted as the Caretaker of the World until Buddha Maitreya reincarnates on Earth in 5.7 billion years.

Reciting the Holy Name:
NAMO BODHISATTVA
EARTH-TREASURY

Karma-erasing Mantra:
OM BA LA MO LING TO NING SVAHA
With bad advisors forever left behind,
From paths of evil he departs for eternity,
Soon to see the Buddha of Limitless Light
And perfect Samantabhadra's Supreme Vows.

The supreme and endless blessings
of Samantabhadra's deeds,
I now universally transfer.
May every living being, drowning and adrift,
Soon return to the Pure Land of Limitless Light!

* The Vows of Samantabhadra *

I vow that when my life approaches its end,
All obstructions will be swept away;
I will see Amitabha Buddha,
And be born in His Western Pure Land of
Ultimate Bliss and Peace.

When reborn in the Western Pure Land,
I will perfect and completely fulfill
Without exception these Great Vows,
To delight and benefit all beings.

* The Vows of Samantabhadra Avatamsaka Sutra *
DEDICATION OF MERIT

May the merit and virtue
accrued from this work
adorn Amitabha Buddha’s Pure Land,
repay the four great kindnesses above,
and relieve the suffering of
those on the three paths below.

May those who see or hear of these efforts
generate Bodhi-mind,
spend their lives devoted to the Buddha Dharma,
and finally be reborn together in
the Land of Ultimate Bliss.
Homage to Amita Buddha!

NAMO AMITABHA
南無阿彌陀佛

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