THE PRACTICE OF
BODHISATTVA DHARMA

Second Edition

BY
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PREFACE

Buddhadharma is the wisdom of all people and the light of the world. If people possess wisdom, then civilization is able to expand and go forward. If one has light, then even he, as an individual, can help to disperse the darkness of ignorance. Thus, wisdom and civilization are the right way for everyone to follow, and Buddhadharma illuminates the world.

Just what is Buddhadharma? It is a method to enable all beings to become Buddha. Buddha means Enlightened One, but the term can be extended to mean enlightening oneself and others are well as enlightening all people and all sentient beings. Because everybody, in reality, possesses the Original Nature of Enlightenment, everybody can, therefore, become a Buddha. However, people in the world, in their daily lives, are strongly bound by feelings of love and hate, etc., and they are, also, deeply confused by their desire for and grasping at material objects. They, thus, confuse their own Original Wisdom and cloud their own Buddha Nature and are ultimately overcome by all sorts of obstacles and delusions.

Therefore, the great Dharma Master T'ai-Hsu recommended that Buddhism should be promoted and spread everywhere. Thus, all people should be encouraged to understand the Dharma, increase their
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wisdom, purify their own minds, and be directed onto the open, wide and comfortable Path, that from numerous and various beginning points arrives, at last, at the Supreme Bodhi.

For this reason, Dharma Master T'ai-Hsu wrote The Practice of Bodhisattva Dharma, which recommends accepting the Three Refuges to link up with the Triple Jewel, practicing goodness and generosity, observing the Five Precepts and the Ten Virtues, and diligently performing the Six Paramitas and the Four All-Embracing Virtues. So, practitioners, whether following Mahayana or Hinayana, whether monks or layman, of whatever degree—with either shallow or deep understanding and ability—will see, if they practice regularly, responsibly and sincerely, the Fruits of Bodhi gradually increasing day by day.

I fervently hope and desire that all people and friends in the Dharma, after reading this work and following its recommendations, will discover that their blessings and wisdom are constantly on the increase.

Dharma Master Lok To
Young Men's Buddhist Association of America
Bronx, New York
March, 1999
(Buddhist Year : 2543)

Note: To help the reader, a glossary of special Sanskrit terms has been included at the end of the text
THE PRACTICE OF BODHISATTVA DHARMA

In the Buddha’s teaching, the Sutra collection and the Vinaya collection comprise two kinds of Dharma. The Sutras are the collection of the Buddha’s discourses given over a forty-year period in the Ganges valley, in India, nearly 2,600 years ago, and they are concerned with the nature of mind and experience and the reality of the suffering, unsatisfactoriness, and frustration of conditioned existence. The Vinaya is the collection that sets forth the discipline of body and speech that Bhiksus and Bhiksunis (Buddhist monks and nuns) must practice. This monastic code of discipline is undertaken upon ordination, when one formally leaves home life, and Vinaya of this sort is primarily the concern of the Sangha (monastic body). An expanded version of this Buddhist training is the Bodhisattva ordination, wherein one undertakes the practice of the fundamental Bodhisattva Dharma of body and mind. This Bodhisattva Dharma encompasses many levels and degrees of practice, both worldly and transcendent, and it is truly wondrous and inconceivable.

Many people are familiar with the term Bodhisattva, but the genuine meaning of the term could stand some clarification. The average person perhaps considers images made of clay, wood or gold or portraits and
paintings of saintly personalities to be some manner of substitute Bodhisattva. Indeed, through Asian national customs and traditions, we have come to associate religious statuary of this sort with the term Bodhisattva. Needless to say, this is incorrect. We should understand that there are Buddhist images portraying a higher degree of practice than Bodhisattva and also images of lesser sages, patriarchs, and even demons with bodies of oxen and serpents. These images should not be indiscriminately lumped together under the designation Bodhisattva. Actually, men and women cannot look like the representations of Bodhisattvas that artists have created. However, we are human beings with minds; and if we vow to practice Bodhisattva behavior, then we can gradually become Bodhisattvas. The Sanskrit term Bodhisattva is composed of two words: Bodhi, which means enlightenment or awakening, and sattva, which means living being.

The designation Bodhisattva originally meant a living being who had developed or had determined to hold the Bodhicitta. Citta is a Sanskrit word that means mind or heart; in the East, the two words heart and mind are synonymous. To search with great perseverance for the Supreme Bodhi and to develop a compassionate heart in order to effect the liberation of all sentient beings from their states of conditioned suffering—such is the authentic meaning of the life and path of one who has taken the Bodhisattva vows. Therefore, if we can resolve determinedly to develop the Bodhicitta, to search above
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for the Tao of the Buddha and seek below to convert all sentient beings to the right path—not simply in theory but in genuine practice—then we are practicing real Bodhisattva Dharma. Only one who urges all beings to strive upward and penetrate the region of Great Enlightenment can validly be recognized as and be called a Bodhisattva. Thus, it should be clear that images of clay or gold are not the real thing; and only those who have determined the Bodhicitta are genuine Bodhisattvas.

To initiate the Tao of the Bodhisattva, one need not already stand in the highest regions of sanctity. By the same token, when we observe our own natures closely, we see that pure-mind realms are not so very far away. Starting from our worldly state, we march, step by step, toward the highest, holiest region and create purity and freedom. Starting from the shallow and progressing to the deep, we transform inferior into superior beauty. Beginning as worldlings, with the Bodhicitta we shall eventually enter the blessed stage of the Final Diamond Heart. This is the condition of the superlatively enlightened Bodhisattva.

Most people who have confidence in the Buddhadharma and consider themselves Buddhists do not vow to develop the Bodhicitta. Thus, they remain mere worldlings if they do not choose to add to themselves the dimension of Bodhisattva mind. Genuine Buddhists who have determined the Bodhicitta are as rare as the feathers of a phoenix or the horn of a unicorn.
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Another kind of Buddhist are those who, after encountering the Buddhadharma, imagine the accomplishment of Buddhahood to be so lofty as to be virtually unreachable. Because of their inadequate self-confidence, such people fail to realize the real goal and cannot complete the Buddha Tao. They grasp the expedient teaching which was revealed gradually by the Buddha—i.e., wholesome karma in this world and the subsequent reward of heavenly bliss. Learning this very shallow Dharma, they wish only to satisfy their desire for bliss and blessings in the present life. They can be said to have learned some Buddhadharma, but they are still quite far, in reality, from any genuine, profound understanding of the Teaching. In short, they are merely grasping expedient teaching as absolute truth. Buddha was to censure this kind of understanding as icchantika, that state of being unable to make spiritual progress.

Yet another kind of Buddhist is the sort who is personally aware of the suffering of birth and death and so learns the void Dharma of the Middle Way beyond the two extremes of is and is not. Always grasping the extreme of is not and in quest of liberation, he wishes to attain the non-active stage and Nirvana for himself alone. However, in practicing this Middle Way, one should not cling to the extremes of is and is not, and then one can enter the stage of void samadhi. Even though this is considered a superior position and can lead to the practice of Mahayana, it is, however, not the Bodhisattva Tao leading to the Supreme Buddha Fruit.
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Thus, this approach was censured by the Buddha as having the nature of a spoiled seed.

We are concerned here with the promotion of the practice of Bodhisattva Dharma, never allowing aspirants to indulge in the bliss of men and devas or to cling to the attainment of void samadhi. The practice of Bodhisattva Dharma, whether high or low, worldly or transcendental, starts from the human level and proceeds until the complete Tao of Bodhi is won. This characterizes that practice which goes all the way through from top to bottom, and it requires nothing apart from determining the Bodhicitta and vowing to act as a Bodhisattva. This development is analogous, by way of example, to a person beginning kindergarten and proceeding until he eventually reaches the research institute and earns his doctoral degree; at all stages of his academic career he is called a student. Similarly, in developing Bodhisattva practice, one begins by vowing to determine the Bodhicitta and progresses to the Final-Diamond-Heart stage. The beginning stages of practice are still at the worldly level, but eventually one approaches the Buddha Fruit. All stages are termed Bodhisattva, and practice is an ongoing matter. The Bodhisattva stage immediately preceding the Buddha Fruit is termed the Final Diamond Heart. Though it is not easy to carry through, by not letting go of Bodhisattva Mind even for one instant, one will gradually complete the work and achieve the goal.

The Practice of this Bodhisattva Dharma is easily
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initiated by accepting the Three Refuges of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Because it is feared that a person might stray onto wrong paths, one, after accepting the Three Refuges, is encouraged to determine to hold the Four Great Vows. These are:

1. Sentient beings without number I vow to enlighten;
2. Vexations without number I vow to eradicate;
3. Limitless approaches to Dharma I vow to master;
4. Supreme Bodhi I vow to achieve.

The purpose of taking the Three Refuges is to enable people to disentangle themselves from erroneous views; and the Four Great Vows are used to teach people to hold to no desire for the bliss of men and devas or the void samadhi of Dviyana (the two yanas of Sravakas and Pratyekabuddhas). This path can be termed the direct road of the Bodhisattva Tao that leads one to the Supreme Bodhi. After accepting the Three Refuges and thus inaugurating the Bodhisattva-Dharma training, it is very important for one to practice everywhere, continually turning the Wheel of the Dharma and aiding all sentient beings. Relative to this view, The Vimalakirtinirdesa Sutra says: “The Bodhimandala (place of spiritual practice) of the Bodhisattva is everywhere.”
ACCEPTING THE THREE REFUGES TO LINK UP WITH THE TRIPLE JEWEL

In his acceptance of the Three Refuges, the essential point to be stressed is that the aspirant should develop a very fervent desire to behold the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. While maintaining a spirit of self-sacrifice in relationship to the Bodhisattva Dharma, extended to body, mind and even life, one should forge a vow in the following manner:

“I, namely so and so, as a disciple of the Buddha, vow to take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha throughout my entire life.”

While uttering this vow, one should maintain a spirit of great devotion and solace. When one repeats this vow while prostrating to the Buddha, one comes to feel great awe as if a great mountain had exploded in front of him. One may experience great solace just as a nursing child deprived of milk might experience if suddenly he met his lovely mother and had an overwhelming impulse to surrender himself into her arms. These wholesome emotions, coupled with repentance and joy, are kindled in one’s heart. Having experienced skillful mental states such as the above, one states the following:

“I, namely so and so, accept the Three Refuges for the remainder of my life, and, feeling like a bird who
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once had lost its nest and has once again returned to its home forest or like an infant who is dependent upon his loving mother, I vow never to stray away at midday (i.e., before the end of my life) and will always hold these Refuges with great devotion.”

These Refuges are the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, otherwise known as the Three Precious Ones, or the Triple Jewel, precious here meaning valuable and worthy of respect. By taking refuge, as understood here, we are also simultaneously taking refuge in the Triple Jewel within ourselves. This means that our own fundamentally enlightened mind is the Buddha; our speech, used to teach and aid living beings, is the Dharma; and our bodies and behavior are the symbols of the Sangha, the enlightened community of Noble Ones.

We first go for refuge to the Buddha. Buddha means the Enlightened One, who has fully accomplished Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi, the Perfect Complete Awakening. Therefore, the appellation given to enlightened ones is simply Buddha. This title has been used since the original period of the Buddha's teaching in India. The founder of the Buddhist religion was called Sakyamuni, or sage of the Sakya clan; but after he achieved the Supreme Awakening, he was thenceforth called Sakyamuni Buddha. We go for refuge to Sakyamuni Buddha but, simultaneously, take refuge in all Buddhas of the ten directions and in the three periods of time. Because the epithet Buddha denotes the attainment of perfect virtue and wisdom, there is
complete equality between Sakyamuni Buddha and all other Buddhas. So even though we go for refuge to our original teacher, Sakyamuni, it is reasonable that we also, at the same time, take refuge in all the other Buddhas of the ten directions and the three time periods. Taking refuge voluntarily, one should concentrate all the energy of one’s Dharma practice to realize the perfection of blessedness and wisdom; i.e., one should also harbor no pride whatsoever about one’s small storehouse of virtue and wisdom. With feelings of pity and sadness for the unskillful, one should always maintain a sense of reverence within oneself and dwell in delight and peace.

Secondly, we go for refuge to the Dharma. Because all Buddhas depend on the Dharma as their teacher, the Dharma is recognized as the most important refuge. The Buddha was enlightened by and practiced in accordance with the Dharma. After his attainment of Bodhi, the Buddha taught all his disciples to practice Dharma and reap the fruit just as he had. One’s heart and mind should incline naturally toward the Dharma, and one should feel as if his whole body were embraced by the Dharma.

Thirdly, we go for refuge to the Sangha, the present superintendent of the Three Precious Ones. In India, Sangha originally meant harmony. The ability of the assembly to harmonize and stay together is called Sangha. When more than four people live together in harmony, the term Sangha can be applied to describe
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the situation. According to the Buddhadharma, if disciples leave home to practice (i.e., to become Bhiksus or Bhiksunis) and dwell harmoniously together in a vihara, they are called a Sangha. According to the Theravada teaching, those who have practiced and attained the various stages of liberation and the sanctity of the Three Vehicles make up the Sangha of Arahants and Sages. According to the Mahayana teaching, disciples practicing the Bodhisattva Dharma and attaining its fruit make up the Bodhisattva Sangha. When we go for refuge to the Sangha, we should include all the various meanings of the term in our understanding.

However, in the beginning stages of Dharma study, it is more important that we take refuge in the present superintendent Sangha of disciples who have left home. The transmission of the Buddhadharma in this world depends upon this present Sangha to protect and actualize the Teachings. We take refuge with and depend upon them to learn the practice path to Bodhi. Therefore, we take refuge to link up with the tradition of Bodhisattva Dharma practice and initially are not so concerned with which teacher is the wisest and who has developed the highest wisdom and virtue in former lives. We should be primarily concerned with cultivating our own good roots, developing harmony with everyone and universally aiding them to achieve minds concentrated in and focused upon the Buddhadharma.

One who takes refuge should understand that the
Buddha is all-virtuous and worthy of all respect and that the Buddha-Mind represents the incomparable field of bliss and blessings in this world. We should understand that the Dharma is a complete teaching that is full of principles explicitly outlining the path to the Supreme Awakening. The Sangha should be understood to be the pure Dharma teacher, excellent in conduct and expedient methods of instruction. In this manner, regarding the Three Precious Ones with deep admiration, we can successfully go for refuge, even to the end of our lives, with full confidence in the practice path. Thus, without recourse to religious or philosophical views, we shall always remain disciples of the Buddha. This, then, is the beginning of the determination to achieve the Bodhisattva Mind in the practice of Bodhisattva Dharma.
PRACTICING GOODNESS AND GENEROSITY, INCREASING BLISS AND DISPELLING CALAMITIES

Faith or confidence in the Three Precious Ones is extremely wholesome because synonymous with this confidence is the desire to practice loving-kindness and perform acts of goodness. According to the Buddha’s Teaching, to respect, to make offerings towards, and to contribute to the happiness and welfare of all sentient beings are the primary field in which to sow the seeds of bliss in this world. Building temples or creating statues of religious personalities, etc., can lead to bliss and wisdom and is termed the field of reverence. Offering devotion, respect and gratitude to one’s parents and teachers due to the fact that they are one’s benefactors is termed the field of grace. We should do our best for the poverty-stricken, the ill, old, weak and disabled, etc., because they have fallen into a woeful state of existence. Therefore, they are deserving of our compassion. Even if we, ourselves, were to fall into states of woe and calamity, should we be armed with our practice of generosity and purity of heart, we would then be able to transform these situations into more fortunate ones.

Natural disasters and catastrophes arise simply as a response to evil minds and unwholesome activities
on the part of many living beings. If human beings were to determine to use wholesome mind and pure action in all circumstances, then bliss and happiness would follow naturally. All people want a life free from illness and calamity and full of happiness. To expect a life of happiness without performing wholesome and beneficial activities is not a legitimate expectation. If one does not sow the appropriate seeds, one will surely not reap the desired response or result. The novice Bodhisattva should develop a storehouse of skillful activity and virtue in order to increase the happiness of all sentient beings.
TAKING THE REFUGE OF RIGHT FAITH

After accepting the Three Refuges, it is important to take the Refuge of Right Faith. People who have cultivated the Buddhadharmā in their previous lives and have developed strong, deep roots and, thus, have natural confidence in the Teaching can take the Refuge of Right Faith directly. One takes this Refuge of Right Faith in the presence of a teacher and offers one’s unlimited devotion to the Three Precious Ones. When reciting one’s affirmation of the practice path to Bodhi, one should visualize worshipping at the Buddha’s feet and achieving unity with the infinite Dharmadhātu of the Triple Jewel.

As the nature of a drop of water and the ocean is the same, so is the nature of a small space and a large one; similarly, there is and should be non-differentiation and non-discrimination between the worshipper and the worshipped. It follows from this, then, that there is no duality between one’s self-nature and the Buddha-nature; i.e., there is no notion of an ego, personality, being, etc., involved, the only reality being the complete identification of one’s self-nature with the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and their unlimited compassion extended to all sentient beings. This awareness is transcendental to all notions of inside, outside and middle, and it comprehends all the ten
directions. Transcending considerations of time, it has no beginning or end and encompasses the Three Realms.

Now, just at this moment of right faith and concentration, one makes a determination to dedicate oneself to the Dharmadhatu of the Three Precious Ones for all time without beginning or end. This is done in accordance with an adamantine faith in wisdom that is compared to eating a small diamond that one can never digest. This is the manifestation of fundamental faith and is one of the four kinds that are explained in The Sastra of the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana, where it is said: "This faith is the delight of True Dharma." The acknowledgement of this Original Faith is considered to be right faith, and one who possesses this is eligible to undertake the preliminary training of the Bodhisattva Tao.
TO DESTROY ILLUSION, ESTABLISH THE RIGHT FAITH WITH RESPECT FOR THE RIGHT TAO AND DISPEL HETERODOX VIEWS

This is the actual proof of the efficaciousness of right faith. For if one has solid confidence in the Buddhaharma based on wisdom derived from practice, then all doctrinal disputations or the pitting of one religious or philosophical view against another leaves one’s faith unmoved. Moreover, the use of mature wisdom can destroy all absurd statements, evil modes of thought, and erroneous views with which one might come in contact. The Sutras and the Sastras taught by the Buddha and Bodhisattvas contain a complete, universally valid and reasonable teaching for all sentient beings. Also, many different masters made every effort to enhance and glorify these profound doctrines by way of commentary.

Therefore, taking the refuge of right faith in the Bodhisattva Tao means not only to recognize the truth for oneself but also to protect the Buddhaharma against insult and abuse and to profit others by the Teaching. Using skillful eloquence of speech and writing, one should manifest the truth of Buddhaharma to increase the faith of both oneself and others. The Bodhisattva who takes the refuge of
right faith, with his qualifications of self-knowledge, is able, eventually, to arrive at the stage of non-retrogression. Those who have taken merely the Three Refuges in order to link up with the tradition of Bodhisattva practice are not yet prepared for this stage.
THE FIVE PRECEPTS AND THE TEN VIRTUES

The Five Precepts, along with the Three Refuges, are the first step in the practice of Buddhahdharma for both laymen and the Sangha. The Five Precepts are the fundamental discipline in Buddhist training and the necessary moral practice for humankind. Therefore, The Bodhisattva Garland of Precious Gems Sutra states that all sentient beings' ability to enter the ocean of the Triple Jewel is dependent on faith and discipline. Our physical, verbal and mental activity are the basis of our production of wholesome and unwholesome karma. According to the Buddhahdharma, the Five Precepts are of singular importance to enable us to destroy our evil tendencies, the increase the strength of our good tendencies and the purify our minds. They are considered to be the moral standard for human beings; and, indeed, if they are not practiced and maintained, then this human form of life will have its demise.

The first precept is to refrain from killing living beings and, instead, to extend loving-kindness to them. The second precept is to refrain from stealing and, instead, to practice generosity. The third precept is to refrain from adultery and, instead, to practice wholesome family life. The fourth precept is to refrain from lying and, instead, to practice truthfulness in all
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one's dealings. The fifth precept is to refrain from intoxicants—both drugs and liquor—and, instead, to live in good health and practice clarity of mind.

The Buddha explained his ethical principles as follows: The first four precepts are considered to be natural moral principles, whereas the fifth precept is considered to be a conventional moral principle. Natural morality means those ethical principles that all human society should maintain regardless of what religious denomination or philosophy is adhered to. Whether one practices Buddhadharmma or not, one should refrain from killing, stealing, adultery and lying. Conventional morality means to behave in such a way that unwholesome actions cannot have the opportunity to arise. Even though the consumption of intoxicants need not necessarily involve others, the resulting state can lead to transgression of the first four precepts. Furthermore, if one is given to the habitual consumption of liquor or drugs, the obvious result is the steady deterioration of one's physical and mental health.

Whether one practices Buddhadharmma or not, if one cultivates these Five Precepts as the standard for one's behavior, one can then become a person of unwavering morality, worthy of the respect of others. Besides the voluntary agreement to refrain from some negative or destructive activity, these precepts all contain a positive attitude or practice to be cultivated as their counterpart.
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The Five Precepts in Buddhadharma and the Five Constant Virtues in Confucianism are the same.

The practice of non-killing means extending kindness to all living beings. To kill people is a serious matter in the eyes of the world, but to kill smaller living things is not conventionally considered quite so serious. In the Buddha's teaching, however, the taking of life of any kind whatsoever is a grave matter. People and societies that value peace and unity must practice non-killing and its positive counterpart—loving-kindness.

Practicing non-stealing means the adoption of right livelihood by human beings. Clothing, food, housing and transportation are essential requirements of human society and are produced by people's labor. As such, they are to be gotten in such a way that is justifiable and legitimate. If people resort to cheating and stealing or acquiring their property and wealth without the necessary expenditure of labor, then peaceful co-existence is an impossibility. Therefore, the Buddha stated that even a needle or a weed cannot be taken from another without permission.

The practice of refraining from adultery will strengthen moral ties between human beings. The right path to be taken between men and women is wholesome married life with proper responsibility taken for their relationship and whatever children may come as a result of their union. Therefore, the Buddhist tradition allows lay disciples to marry and considers it correct, justifiable and a legitimate source of happiness in the world. To
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enjoy sexual activity without taking responsibility for one's actions only leads to a degenerate social situation and such unfortunate extremes as incest, venereal disease, etc. Moreover, this is an evasion of one's true responsibility to raise and educate children and to inculcate in them proper moral and social values. Children are not equipped emotionally or intellectually to educate themselves and need the guidance and good example of their parents and teachers to lead and point them toward wholesome behavior and healthy physical and mental development.

The practice of non-lying, or truthfulness, means conforming our actions to our words and maintaining the spirit of honesty in all our dealings. Where there is dishonesty, even as small a social unit as that of husband-and-wife cannot live together in love and righteousness,. On an international scale, global unity will remain an impossibility because of the propensity to selfishness, dishonesty and betrayal on the part of nations and societies. The Buddha praised the virtue of words conforming with actions and observed that honesty and sincerity are characteristic of the sage. The commentary to The Prajnaparamita Sutra states that one who habitually lies possesses an ill fame that spreads far and wide, and such a one, at the end of his life, succumbs to rebirth in a hellish realm.

The practice of non-intoxication, or sobriety, is necessary to increase and maintain purity of heart and wisdom. Intoxication can frequently lead to the loss of
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both one’s fortune and honor. The Venerable Hsu Yun has so wisely observed: “Drinking wine and eating meat upset the mind-nature; with clear tea and vegetarian food the mind errs not, enjoying Dharma night and day.” When the consumption of alcoholic beverages or drugs is allowed to become habitual, laziness and shamelessness will certainly develop. Therefore, if one aspires to develop a noble personality and practice the Bodhisattva Dharma, one should refrain from the use of such debilitating substances.

The observation of the Five Precepts is also the basis of discipline for those who leave home to practice the Bodhisattva Tao. Their practice is stricter than that of laypeople, because under extreme conditions the lay-disciple is able to transgress these principles. For example, if a lay-Bodhisattva is a member of the military and is called upon to defend the populace, he can justifiably do so for the greater good of the community. However, the Sangha members cannot, under any circumstances, be involved in this activity. Another example would be the legitimate enjoyment of sexuality between husband and wife. Sangha members are prohibited completely from engaging in sexuality.

Below is a chart outlining the Five Precepts and how they correspond to the Ten Virtues:
The four virtuous modes of verbal activity are here equated to the precept of refraining from untruth. Improper remarks can even be more false than untrue ones, and honeyed words are dishonest. Obscenity and pornography move people’s hearts in an immoral direction.

Two-faced speech serves only to stir up ill will and instigate trouble on both sides of the fence. It can cause people to separate from their own flesh and blood and cause loved ones to become enemies. On a small scale, it can disrupt a family, and, on a larger one, it can lead to global warfare.

The use of ugly speech means to make insulting remarks continually. One uses abusive and intolerable speech to insult others and does not seem to realize the effect of one’s own abrasive language. This manner
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of speech is distorted and unprofitable and, thus, is included in the category of lying.

The three virtuous mental actions are the positive counterparts to the fifth precept of refraining from intoxicants. Grasping and clinging mean excessive craving for those things that one should renounce. One craves continually for more and more, never being satisfied with what one has. Being full of anger means the absence of compassion for sentient beings and their situation. Ignorant and enlightened states of mind and action refer to the ignorance of clinging to heterodox views and the lack of that wisdom which would let one follow the correct path. These ignorant and unwise states also refer to that condition where one is full of uncontrollable desire and is foolishly drowning in the sea of false views about the nature of reality.

Therefore, one who aspires to tread the Bodhisattva Path must develop right thought and shed all heterodox views. Craving, aversion and delusion are everybody’s problem and are referred to in the Buddhadharm as the three poisons or the three roots of unskillfulness. A person who has extinguished these three poisons in himself is called holy. One who aims to practice Bodhisattva Dharma should practice generosity, compassion and wisdom, which are the antidotes for these three roots of unskillfulness. It is said that if the protecting embankment of the precepts is broken, the evil waves of the three poisons will overflow, flooding and destroying the personality.
The Practice Of Bodhisattva Dharma

The observing of the Five Precepts will insure that the relationships and moral practice of human society are perfect. To practice the Bodhisattva Dharma, it is essential that the aspirant have a moderately balanced and wholesome temperament. If the stability of personality and behavior is insufficient, where can the Bodhisattva Dharma make its appearance? The observing of the precepts will lend the necessary stability, balance and wholesomeness to one’s personality.

The cultivation of the Ten Virtues alone will insure one an unobstructed entrance into the realm of the devas. Because craving, aversion and delusion are kept in check, the mind will be calm and full of peace and quite suitable for contemplative practice. If rebirth in heaven-states occurs, the time will not be spent in idle enjoyment of celestial bliss but rather in further practice of the Bodhisattva Tao. Whether in the human or the deva world, the Bodhisattva Path consists in continually practicing virtuous action and developing wisdom. The Bodhisattva extends loving-kindness and compassion to all sentient beings and teaches and illustrates, by example, the Bodhisattva Tao in whatever realm of existence he finds himself.
SRAMANERA AND BHIKSU

According to the Buddha’s Teaching, the Five Precepts and the Ten Virtues constitute what is called the Upasaka or Upasika Dharma. The Upasaka/Upasika is a man or a woman who practices the Buddhadharma in lay life and who protects and serves the Triple Jewel. These two categories of lay-disciples together with the Sramaneras and the Bhiksuś become the four-fold assembly of Buddha’s disciples. Further analysis and classification establishes the four-, seven- or nine-fold assembly as illustrated below:

- The refuge of right faith
- The refuge of connection
- Nine-Fold assembly

The Sramanera is a novice monk, and the Bhiksu is a fully ordained member of the Buddhist Sangha. After taking the complete education and training of a Sramanera, one is eligible to become a Bhiksu. The Sramanera depends upon a Bhiksu master to administer the higher ordination, and it is the
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responsibility of the master to train and educate the Sramanera fully since he will become the guardian of and heir to the Dharma in the future. This education consists of the following: the Vinaya, or essential rules of monastic deportment and behavior; the Buddhist Sutras; the commentaries of later Patriarchs and teachers, called Sastras; and the essentials of meditation practice. Unless the Sramanera is well-grounded in these teachings, the Dharma master should not take the responsibility involved in conferring ordination upon the Bhiksu. A traditional saying states: "A Dharma master must not have any dumb sheep," i.e., a monk who cannot comprehend and spread the Dharma. The term Sramanera possesses several meanings. One meaning is to cease in the sense of achieving a state of mind wherein one's craving, aversion and delusion cease. Another meaning is kindness in the sense of achieving a state of mind wherein one can practice loving-kindness, or Maitri.

One who desires to leave home-life and practice as a Sramanera must be able to observe the Ten Precepts. These are as follows: not killing, not stealing, celibacy (Brahmacarya), not lying, not taking intoxicants, not using garlands of flowers, jewelry, perfumes, etc., not listening to music or attending movies, operas, etc., not sleeping on high or broad beds, not eating food after twelve noon, and refraining from acquiring money jewelry and other valuables.
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The first five precepts are the same as those held by lay disciples, with one notable exception. The third lay precept of refraining from adultery or sex which causes trouble is changed to the observance of complete celibacy for Sangha members.

The sixth precept is to refrain from the use of flower garlands, makeup, perfumes and other manner of personal adornment. To enhance one's personal attractiveness to the opposite sex has no place in the lives of Sangha members, who are trying to attain the knowledge and vision of Reality.

The seventh precept is to refrain from taking part in dancing, singing, musical and theatrical performances, etc. Disciples who have left home should not view or listen to such things, for the places in which they are taking place usually have no connection with spiritual life. The subject matter of popular music and drama only serves to perpetuate illusions about the nature of this world and has little or nothing to do with the practice path to Bodhi.

The eighth precept is to refrain from sleeping on a high or broad bed. One who has renounced the life of luxury and the priorities of personal comfort and sense pleasure has no need for a high or broad bed. For the disciple who has left home, a simple seat and a low bed or mat should be more than sufficient.

The ninth precept is to refrain from eating after midday. One who has left home should try to imitate the great Patriarchs and teachers of the past, who
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usually took only one meal a day, which was in the forenoon. Satisfaction with one full meal before noon has many benefits, one of which is that a disciple has more time to study and practice Dharma. Another benefit is that one is not plagued with tiredness and lethargy due to overeating and can enjoy better health. It is also said that the hungry ghosts, or pretas, seek their nourishment in the evening; and when they hear the sounds of the monk’s bowl, their hunger and suffering increase. Therefore, out of compassion for them the disciple who has left home does not eat in the evening.

The tenth precept is to refrain from acquiring money, jewelry, and other valuables. An increase of greed and desire for fame will surely occur if one acquires these things. Those disciples who have left home should live a tranquil life without the desire for worldly gain, and their needs should be met by the offerings of the lay disciples.

The first five precepts form the Sila, or moral discipline—the basis of the four varga, or groups—of the Buddha’s disciples. The Sramanera must, in addition to the first five precepts, observe and maintain these five additional precepts, the first four of which are concerned with abandoning the lifestyles of laymen. The tenth precept is to abandon the wealth that laypeople depend on. In this way the monk’s life is devoid of personal property, and he truly lives up to the designation—homeless one.
The Bhiksu, then, is the disciple who has taken the higher ordination in the Buddhadharm. The term Bhiksu comes from the Sanskrit root-verb bhiksa, meaning to beg. Bhiksu means one who is without home and property and is dependent on almsfood to support the body. A Bhiksu should enjoy a tranquil life of renunciation, possessing only three robes and a bowl. Like a bird flying anywhere, devoid of property and possessions, so the Bhiksu goes. Travelling anywhere, observing strictly the monastic Vinaya, the Bhiksu spreads the Dharma and maintains the Buddha's Way in this world.

The Bhiksu precepts number 250 and include the Sramanera discipline. They constitute a code of refined conduct and discipline concerning the Bhiksu's deportment while he is walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, talking, silent, etc. If the Bhiksu maintains his Vinaya, his respect-inspiring deportment is complete, and he is competent to maintain the Buddhadharm in this world. The discipline of Bhiksus is complete; that of Sramaneras is partial. However, both have as their basis the Ten Precepts, which are called the perfect discipline of one who leaves home.
THE EIGHT PRECEPTS

The Eight Precepts are the discipline of laypeople engaged in short training periods or in preparation to leave home. Because the world of laypeople, with its work and family obligations, can be fatiguing both mentally and physically, the Buddhist tradition allows and encourages periods of retreat. During these periods, the lay disciples accept the Eight Precepts and experience a bit of the peace of a well-ordered and disciplined life. In this way, they can develop more understanding of the Buddhadharma and enjoy a clarity of mind analogous to the happiness of springtime. The layman’s precepts are the same as the first nine of the Sramanera’s precepts, the sixth and seventh being combined to make a total of eight. It is customary in Buddhist countries to observe these precepts on the new- and full-moon days of the lunar calendar. The precepts close the doors to the realms of woe (apaya-bhumi) and open the doors to the heaven-worlds and the realms of the sage.
MAHAYANA AND HINAYANA

According to one's learning and level of practice, there is a distinction made between Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism. *Hinayana* is a term given by the Mahayana to those schools of Buddhism that practice to attain Sravaka Bodhi, the enlightenment of a Sravaka, or one who listens to and understands a Buddha's Teaching. This enlightenment is termed that of an Arahant, or accomplished one. Mahayana Buddhists, on the other hand, aspire to win the Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi of a Buddha, both for their own liberation and for the liberation of all sentient beings. A traditional contrasting simile characterizing these two Yanas is that of a solitary individual riding a bicycle, which is analogous to the Hinayana path, while riding in a train full of people is comparable to the Mahayana path.

According to the Bodhisattva Dharma, an individual who has determined to practice and seek deliverance for himself only has blockaded himself within and limited himself to the region of Hinayana. In contrast, one who has determined to practice the Bodhicitta, with the aspiration to assist in the liberation of other living beings, has entered the region of Mahayana. The practice of Bodhisattva Dharma is just the promotion of this Mahayana insight, and its basic spirit is the determination of the Bodhicitta.
DETERMINING THE BODHICITTA: THE FOUR GREAT VOWS AND THE FOUR DEFEATS OF THE BODHISATTVA DHARMA

Determining the Bodhicitta is spoken of in the last of the Four Great Vows as follows:

"The Supreme Enlightenment we vow to achieve." Enlightenment is Bodhi; Supreme Enlightenment is the Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi, or the Buddha Fruit. Determining the Bodhicitta means using the faith of our worldly minds to vow to complete this path. However, if one is to complete this vow, one should have the support of the other three Great Vows. To arrive at Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi, one should have the desire to spread the Buddhadharma and effect the liberation of all sentient beings. Therefore, the first vow is as follows:

"Sentient beings without number we vow to enlighten."

For a Bodhisattva, the eradication of one's own suffering is joined with the desire to aid in the eradication of all others' suffering as well. The real Bodhisattva identifies the immeasurable distress of all sentient beings as his own. With this immeasurable compassion (Mahakaruna), one can take the second vow:

"Vexations without number we vow to eradicate."

The desire to win Supreme Bodhi, convert and liberate sentient beings, aid in the eradication of their
distress, etc., should not be an impulse based on idle sentimentality or romantic notions of spiritual life. This noble aspiration can only come to completion provided that there is a strong foundation of wisdom. With wisdom only, and not otherwise, can one spread the Dharma and assist living beings. This wisdom arises from a keen desire to learn and practice the Buddhadharma. Therefore, the Buddha said, “All Buddhas in the three periods arise from learning and practice.” One who is not willing to learn will remain eternally foolish, and what foolish man or woman ever completed the Bodhi Tao, spread Dharma and assisted sentient beings?

As there is immeasurable distress in the lives of sentient beings, there are innumerable methods of Dharma practice. Therefore, the third vow of great compassion is as follows:

“Limitless approaches to the Dharma we vow to master.”

When one perceives the suffering of sentient beings, one vows to enlighten sentient beings without number. When perceiving the distress in one’s life and that of others, one vows to eradicate vexations without end. Perceiving the myriad Dharma doors to enlightenment, one vows to master them all. Perceiving the truth of Nirvana, one vows to attain the Supreme Bodhi. All Bodhisattvas who determine the Bodhicitta hold these Four Vows of Great Compassion.

There are various conditions leading to the deterioration of both the Bodhicitta and the practice of
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Bodhisattva Dharma. These conditions are called parajika (defeats), and they are acts or thoughts that break or defeat the Bodhisattva practice. This same term is used in connection with the monastic Vinaya, where it denotes the first four rules, the transgression of which calls for expulsion from the order of Bhiksus. The elder Tripitaka Master Hsuan Tsang translated this term as “overcoming by specific conditions”. This means that the good roots necessary for the practice of Bodhisattva Dharma are overcome by the specific conditions of unwholesome roots.

The first specific condition which leads to the defeat of the Bodhicitta is the tendency to praise oneself and to slander others. If the Bodhisattva loses his Mahakaruna, he is no longer willing to profit others at his own expense. Being solely concerned with his own name and fame, he loses respect in the eyes of family, friends and society.

The second specific condition leading to defeat is seeing someone in a state of suffering and anxiety and not lifting a finger to help. Losing one’s Mahakaruna, one makes no effort to teach or profit those who may come for assistance but, instead, cultivates miserly tendencies.

The third specific condition leading to defeat is not receiving the repentant or those desirous of following the right path. Losing one’s Mahakaruna, one allows himself to bear anger and grudges in his mind and, as a result, is not willing to teach or assist those who are
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repentant.

The fourth specific condition leading to defeat is the act of foolishly deceiving others with pseudo-dharma. Without wisdom, one manipulates heterodox views, slandering the Buddhadharma and deceiving others with what appears to be Dharma but which is, in fact, not genuine.

If a Bodhisattva falls into any of these categories of defeat, he loses the Bodhicitta and also the qualifications of Bodhisattva practice. Therefore, one should preserve the qualifications, protect the Bodhicitta and increase the vast storehouse of Bodhisattva Dharma.
THE SIX PARAMITAS

The Six Paramitas, or perfections, are the means for realizing the Four Great Vows and completing the Bodhisattva practice. They are as follows:

1. Dana: generosity, or charity;
2. Sila: the precepts, or morality;
3. Ksanti: patience, or forbearance;
4. Virya: energy, or zeal;
5. Dhyana: contemplative practice, or meditation;
6. Prajna: wisdom, or the power to discern reality.

After one has heard the Mahayana Dharma and developed great compassion, the practice of the Six Paramitas is the natural next step on the Bodhisattva Path. The Great Vows, deep as the ocean, should have a mountain of practice to fill them up. This mountain is none other than the practice of the Six Paramitas, and filling (or fulfilling) the Vows means to complete the Supreme Bodhi of Buddha Fruit. The Tao of Bodhisattva Dharma is, then, the practice of the Six Paramitas.

The first Paramita is Dana, or charity and generosity. The highest worldly form of this is to give one’s body, or even one’s very life, for the benefit of others. This is described as internal charity, while the type of generosity regarding property, money, time, etc.,
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is referred to as external charity. Beyond Dana, in this internal and external sense, there is a transcendental form, which is the use of one’s talents, intellect, scholarship, eloquence, etc., to spread the message of Buddhadharma. This is called the almsgiving of the Buddha Truth. The principle of Dana is the spirit of self-sacrifice in order to benefit the multitude.

The second Paramita is Sila, or morality. As stated above, the discipline of the Mahayana Bodhisattva is not only concerned with the negative prohibitions but also with their positive counterparts. Sila means the cessation of evil and the initiation of the good. This Sila is formulated as the 5, 8, 10 or 250 precepts. The main principle of Bodhisattva moral discipline is to attain the state of non-retrogression in one’s moral behavior whereby the observation of Sila becomes automatic.

The third Paramita is Ksanti, or patience and forbearance. Holding onto the objective of doing good—specially in this age of chaos and impurity throughout the six realms of sentient beings—is not an easy task. There are so many adverse circumstances to obstruct the practice of Bodhisattva Dharma. The Bodhisattva, equipped with right view and his practice of the Ksanti Paramita, is able to deal successfully with these situations, effect his own liberation and aid all other living beings. The Bodhisattva should also develop the capacity for forgiveness, which arises from wisdom. Wisdom perceives that all sentient beings are produced by causal conditions without self-nature and are of the
same nature as oneself.

The fourth Paramita is *Virya*, or energy. The term energy is used in the sense of putting forth energy to win those states of wholesomeness as yet unknown and unwon. One puts forth energy in the practice of the Bodhisattva Dharma and energetically maintains the Bodhicitta. Without developing the Virya Paramita, one determines the Bodhicitta only temporarily. When meeting with adverse conditions, one is disillusioned and drops the practice. Virya, then, comes to mean persistence in the face of disillusionment and energetic striving to complete the Bodhi Tao and to win the Supreme Buddha Fruit.

The fifth Paramita is *Dhyana*, or contemplative practice. Dhyana, in Sanskrit, means concentrated practice and is synonymous with Samadhi. Joining the two words, we have the Chinese phrase Ch’an-Ting. The original meaning of *Ch’an-Ting* is *to concentrate the mind on one point*. The effort of contemplation is the tonic of spiritual health. One studying the Bodhisattva Tao who cannot control his confused and disorderly mind must necessarily practice Ch’an-Ting and develop light and power as well as the ability to be unmoved by desire. Ch’an-Ting is the source of all wisdom and equanimity, and it means the completion of the Bodhisattva Tao.

The sixth Paramita is *Prajna*, or Wisdom. Although all worldly knowledge and learning are thought of as wisdom, the Wisdom tradition of the Buddhadharma is
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not quite the same. According to the Buddha, Wisdom is the ability to recognize the truth behind the temporary show of appearances and possess confidence regarding this truth. The method of practice leading to Wisdom, called Ch’an-Ting, encourages us not to seek anything but to unite ourselves with the Truth. This is called Original Wisdom; and it encompasses discriminative wisdom, although its scope and the approach to it are different. Original Wisdom is the apprehension of the truth that all things arise from causal conditions, have no self-nature and are, therefore, void. The very essence of these Six Paramitas is Wisdom, and the Way of Wisdom is the Bodhisattva Tao.

The Sanskrit term Paramita means Gone across to the other shore. The practice of these Paramitas can lead one across the sea of birth, death and distress to the other shore of peace and truth—i.e., Nirvana. The purified mind and wholesome behavior that arise through the practice of the Six Paramitas are praised by all sages, ancient and modern. Perceptively, Chuang T’se observed long ago: “The body as rotten wood, the mind as cold ashes, losing all things, beyond the world.” Another Chinese sage, Lao T’se, also insightfully noted: “Actions like the flow of water, mind calm as a mirror; the sounds of the world appear as an echo.”
THE FOUR ALL-EMBRACING VIRTUES

Another Bodhisattva Dharma tool used to benefit others and oneself is that of the Four All-Embracing Virtues. *Dana*, in this sense, means giving others what they like in order to lead them to become receptive and to lean toward the truth. *Priyavacana* means affectionate and beautiful speech used for the same reasons as Dana. *Arthakrtya* means conduct profitable to others and is used in the same way as Dana and Priyavacana. *Samanarthata* means cooperation with and adaptation to others for the sake of leading them to the truth. As Avalokitesvara appeared in 32 forms, one, similarly, should manifest all kinds of forms to convert and aid all sentient beings skillfully.

Depending on our wisdom, we practice the Six Paramitas and the Four All-Embracing Virtues and complete the Tao of Bodhisattva Dharma. Each individual, according to his position—whether it be farmer, soldier, laborer, educator, politician, businessman, monk or nun, etc.—can determine the Bodhicitta. The unfolding of this Bodhicitta lies in the practice of Bodhisattva conduct, spreading the truth of Buddhadharma, and establishing the practicality of the Teachings as a way of life in a genuinely human society and culture. The principle of this practice is that the spirit is consistent even though the
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circumstances vary. The Bodhisattva Tao should have no restrictions dependent on time and place but should respond freely and spontaneously according to circumstances.

May all sentient beings practice the Bodhi Tao and arrive at the Supreme-Buddha-Fruit stage!
GLOSSARY

Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi: The incomparably complete, perfect Awakening experienced by Buddhas; perfect universal Enlightenment.

Apaya-bhumi: States of woe; the three realms of existence characterized by extreme discomfort and delusion—i.e., hell-states, animal-birth and the hungry ghosts, or pretas.

Arahant: Lit., accomplished one; one who has destroyed the fetters and defilements binding one to the Wheel of Birth-and-Death. One who has extinguished, in himself, craving, aversion and delusion.

Arthakrtya: One of the Four All-Embracing Virtues; performance of conduct profitable to others in order to lead them toward the truth.

Bhiksu: A Buddhist monk who has taken the higher ordination and the 250 precepts.

Bodhi: Enlightenment or awakening.

Bodhicitta: Lit., enlightened mind or heart; the determination or vow to develop and practice the Bodhisattva path to Supreme Awakening.

Bodhisattva: Lit., enlightened being; one who has determined the Bodhicitta and practices the Six Paramitas, the Four Great Vows, the Four All-Embracing Virtues, etc.

Brahmacarya: Lit., Brahma or purified life, usually connoting the practice of celibacy.

Buddha: Lit., the Awakened One; one who through aeons of spiritual development has attained Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi. This epithet usually refers to Sakyamuni Buddha, who lived and taught in India some 2,600 years ago.
**Buddhadharma**: The Teaching of the Buddha.

**Buddharupa**: A statue or image of the Buddha, used for devotional purposes.

**Ch'an-Ting**: Lit., mind still and quiet; the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit terms Dhyana-Samadhi, meaning deep contemplative practice or yogic absorption.

**Citta**: Mind or heart, the two terms being synonymous in Asian religious philosophy.

**Dana**: The practice of generosity or charity; one of the Paramitas as well as one of the All-Embracing Virtues, where it means, in the latter, giving others what they want just to lead them towards the truth.

**Devas**: The inhabitants of the heavenly realms, which are characterized by long life, joyous surroundings and blissful states of mind. In the Buddhist tradition, these states are understood to be impermanent, not eternal.

**Dharma**: Lit., that which upholds. Dharma has no exact equivalent in English. It can mean variously: the Buddha's Teaching, the laws of the universe, the nature of things, any and all phenomena, the real or unreal, etc. When understood as the Perfect Teaching of the Awakened One, it constitutes the second of the Three Precious Jewels and the Three Refuges.

**Dharmadhatu**: Lit., Dharma element or realm, wherever the principles discovered by the Buddha are in operation—i.e., everywhere. Also, all phenomena and noumena and their underlying nature.

**Dhyana**: The practice of concentration—i.e., meditation. Also, more specifically, the four form concentrations and the four formless concentrations.

**Dvityana**: Lit., two vehicles. The two vehicles or practice paths of Sravakayana and Pratyekabuddhayana.

**Four Great Vows**: The four vows held by all Bodhisattvas. These vows are called great because of the wondrous and inconceivable compassion involved in fulfilling them.
They are as follows: Sentient beings without number we vow to enlighten; Vexations without end we vow to eradicate; Limitless approaches to Dharma we vow to master; The Supreme Awakening we vow to achieve.

**Hinayana:** The Lesser Vehicle; a term applied by the Mahayana to those schools of Buddhism that practice to attain the fruits of Sravakayana and Pratyekabuddhayana and do not attempt to attain the Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi of Buddha.

**Icchantika:** One who has no interest in the path to Awakening, or one whose good roots are completely covered.

**Karma:** Volition, volitional or intentional activity. Karma is always followed by its fruit, Vipaka. Karma and Vipaka are oftentimes referred to as the law of causality, a cardinal concern in the Teaching of the Buddha.

**Ksanti:** Patience or forbearance, one of the Six Paramitas.

**Maitri:** Loving-kindness.

**Mahakaruna:** Great compassion.

**Mahayana:** The Great Vehicle, a name held by those schools of Buddhism that advocate the path to the Supreme Awakening of a Buddha and the crossing over of all sentient beings to the shore of peace and truth.

**Nirvana:** The deathless; the cessation of all suffering. The very opposite of the Wheel of Birth-and-Death; it is what those in the Buddhist tradition aspire to experience. The Absolute, which transcends designation and mundane characterization.

**Parajika:** Lit., defeat or the conditions leading to the defeat of the Bodhicitta. Also, the conditions leading to the defeat of the Bhiksu’s life.

**Paramita:** Lit., that which crosses over; the Six Perfections, namely: Dana, or generosity; Sila, or morality; Ksanti, or patience; Virya, or energy; Dhyana, or meditation; and Prajna, or wisdom.
Prajna: Fundamental wisdom or insight; one of the Paramitas.

Pratyekabuddha: A solitary Buddha; one who has achieved Awakening through insight into the dependent origination of mind and body. Pratyekabuddhas lead only solitary lives, and they do not teach the Dharma to others nor do they have any desire to do so.

Pretas: Hungry ghosts, who are tormented by continual and unsatisfied cravings. The preta-realm is one of the three states of woe (apaya-bhumi) and one of the six realms of existence.

Priyavacana: Lit., loving or affectionate speech. This beautiful and affectionate speech is one of the Four All-Embracing Virtues and is used to lead sentient beings toward the truth.

Samadhi: Deep concentration; the state of one-pointedness of mind characterized by peace and imperturbability. Samadhi is also one of the Paramitas and is indispensable on the path to Bodhi.

Samanarthata: Cooperation with and adaptation to others for the sake of leading them towards the truth. Samanarthata is one of the Four All-Embracing Virtues.

Sangha: Lit., harmonious community. In the Buddhadharma, Sangha means the order of Bhiksus, Bhiksunis, Sramaneras and Sramanerikas. Another meaning is the Arya Sangha, made up of those individuals, lay or monastic, who have attained one of the four stages of sanctity. Also, the Bodhisattva Sangha.

Siksamana: A lay-disciple who maintains the eight precepts, either temporarily or as preparation for leaving home.

Sila: Moral precepts. These number 5,8,10,250 or 350. Also, one of the Paramitas.

Sutra: A discourse by the Buddha or one of his major disciples. The Sutra collection is one of the three divisions of the Buddhist scriptures.
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**Sramanera:** A novice monk holding the 10 precepts.

**Sramanerika:** A novice nun holding the 10 precepts.

**Sravaka:** A disciple who hears the Teaching personally from a Buddha and observes the practices on the path to Arahantship.

**Tao:** Path or Way. The Sanskrit equivalent to this Chinese term is marga.

**Ten Virtues:** The virtuous modes of behavior, which are the positive counterparts to the Five Precepts.

**Theravada:** Lit., the Way of the Elders. The Buddhist tradition, the scriptures of which are recorded in the Pali language; this tradition advocates the Arahant path.

**Three Poisons:** Craving, aversion and delusion; also, these are termed the three root-stains, or the three roots of unskillfulness.

**Three Precious Ones:** Buddha, Dharma and Sangha; sometimes referred to as the Teacher, the Teaching and the Taught.

**Three Refuges:** Taking refuge and possessing confidence in the Buddha's Awakening, in his Teaching and in the Sangha of enlightened disciples.

**Three Vehicles:** The yanas of Sravakas, Pratyekabuddhas and Bodhisattvas.

**Upasaka:** A male lay-disciple of the Buddha, characterized by his maintenance of the Five Precepts and the Three Refuges.

**Upasika:** A female lay-disciple of the Buddha, characterized by her maintenance of the Five Precepts and the Three Refuges.

**Vinaya:** Disciplined conduct, referring specifically to the monastic rules for the disciples who have left home; also, one of the three divisions of the Buddhist scriptures.

**Virya:** Energy; the energy necessary to maintain and progress in spiritual development. Also, one of the Paramitas.
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 Buddhadhharma and thereafter generate our Bodhi Minds be reborn, at our lives’ end, in the Pure Land.
“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
Prayer by Tz‘u Yun Ts‘an Chu

Wholeheartedly we take refuge in Amita Buddha of the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.
   May His pure light shine upon us,
   And His kind vows accept us.
We are now mindful, And invoke Tathagata’s name;
Aiming at Bodhi, We seek rebirth into the Pure Land.
The Buddha made his own vow,
That if any sentient being who might wish to be reborn in His Pure Land,
With determination and faith or with even only ten invocations,
   Should yet fail to be reborn there,
He would not have attained Supreme Enlightenment.
   By virtue of this mindfulness of Buddha,
we may enter Tathagata’s Great ocean of vows.
   By the Buddha’s mercy.
May all iniquities be eradicated, And good roots increased.
At the approach of life’s end, May we know that time is up.
   May the body suffer no ills,
And the mind harbor no attachments,
And the senses yield no confusions, As in Dhyana serenity.
Buddha and the holy ones, Carrying the platform of gold,
   Come to meet us, That we may, in a split second.
Be reborn in the Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.
   We, as the lotus unfolds, see Buddha,
At once hear the Buddha Vehicle,
   Suddenly penetrate Buddha’s wisdom,
And deliver all sentient beings, In fulfillment of Bodhi vows .
Buddhas in all places at all times.
   Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
   Mahaprajnaparamita.

   Namo Amitabha!
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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