

CHAPTER 7

On Training the Mind

VII. CHAPTER SEVEN: ON TRAINING THE MIND

A. Q: WHAT ARE THE BASES OF SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF ONE'S BODHI RESOLVE?

Question: According to the explanation in the previous chapter, there are three cases where production of the resolve [to attain buddhahood] will definitely result in success whereas, in the remaining four cases, it is not necessarily the case that they will result in success. Why is it that some of these result in success and why is it that some of these do not result in success?

B. A: PRACTICING DHARMAS RESULTING IN FAILURE ENTAILS LOSS

Response: If a bodhisattva has brought forth the bodhi resolve yet practices dharmas conducing to loss of the bodhi resolve, this will not meet with success. If he practices the dharmas not conducing to losing bodhi resolve, this will certainly bring success. Hence this verse says:

The bodhisattva should abandon
any dharmas conducing to loss of the bodhi resolve
and should single-mindedly cultivate
those dharmas that prevent loss of bodhi.

By "abandonment," it is meant that one entirely extinguishes those dharmas that are bad and thus prevents them from entering one's mind. If they do enter, one swiftly extinguishes them. "Loss" refers to the forgetting, either in the present life or the future life, of one's resolve to realize bodhi whereupon one would no longer pursue it through cultivation of the practices. One must leave such dharmas far behind. If one is to succeed in avoiding losing those dharmas facilitating the realization of bodhi, and if one is to avoid forgetting the resolve to realize bodhi, then one should always pursue single-minded and diligent practice.

1. Q: WHICH DHARMAS RESULT IN LOSS

Question: Which sorts of dharmas result in loss of the bodhi resolve?

2. A: THERE ARE FOUR SUCH DHARMAS (VERSE)

Response:

The first is failing to revere and esteem the Dharma.

The second is possessing an arrogant mind.

The third is false speech or being untruthful.

The fourth is failing to revere spiritual guides.

Those possessed of any of these four dharmas—whether it be at the time of death in this present lifetime or whether it be in a subsequent lifetime—they will forget and lose their bodhi resolve. Thus they will become unable to realize, “I am a bodhisattva,” and so they will no longer bring forth the vow. Thus the dharmas of bodhisattva practice will no longer manifest before them.

As for “failing to revere and esteem the Dharma,” “Dharma” refers to the superior, middling, and lesser vehicles set forth by all buddhas. To take up what is essential here, it refers to all of those dharmas that all buddhas, all *tathāgatas*, have used in providing instruction. If, with respect to these dharmas, one does not revere them, does not make offerings to them, does not honor and esteem them, does not praise them, does not produce thoughts regarding them as rare, does not think of them as difficult to encounter, does not think of them as precious objects, or does not think of them as the means for the fulfillment of one’s aspirations, these very dharmas [of disesteem] can bring about the loss of one’s bodhi resolve.

As for an “arrogant mind,” this refers to elevating the status of one’s own mind and then claiming to have gained what one has not yet gained and claiming to have realized what one has not yet realized, claiming for instance that one has realized emptiness, signlessness, or wishlessness or the unproduced-dharmas patience, the six *pāramitās*, the ten bodhisattva grounds or any of the other dharmas that arise through cultivation. With regard to these dharmas, even though one has not yet attained them, one nonetheless claims to have attained them.

As for “false speech,” there are instances that constitute *duṣkṛta* offenses, those that constitute *pāyantika* offenses, those that constitute *sthūlātyaya* offenses, those that constitute *saṃghāvaśeṣa* offenses, and those that constitute *pārājika* offenses.¹¹¹ There may be others who claim that there exists a sixth category of false speech. This refers to when one brings forth repentance with a mind that itself involves an instance of false speech.

Among the above five categories of false speech, the first is the lightest form of offense whereas the last is the most severe form of offense. The sixth category is the lightest of them all.

In the case of the *pārājika* offense, this is an instance where one does not in fact possess any of the superhuman dharmas but nonetheless tends to use various means to create the impression that he possesses such qualities, whether this impression be created through what is spoken by the mouth or what is signaled by the body.

As for the *saṃghāvaśeṣa* offense, this refers to an instance where, with respect to any one of those four circumstances [constituting *pārājika* offenses] for a bhikṣu, whether through spoken words or physical signs, [a fully-ordained bhikṣu or bhikṣuni] commits a slander [of another bhikṣu or bhikṣuni] by [testifying to the existence of] any one of the bases [for a *pārājika* offense] when in fact there was no such basis [for such an accusation].

As for the *sthūlātyaya* offense, this refers to an instance where, wishing to slander someone, one brings forth either a plausible or baseless allegation, but that allegation is then not established [as truthful].¹¹²

As for the *pāyantika* offense, this refers to when one commits a slander in a circumstance involving a baseless *saṃghāvaśeṣa* allegation.

As for the *duṣkṛta* offense, this refers to any instance of false speech not subsumed among the other four categories of false speech.

As for those instances [of abandonment] where one is able to extinguish [bad dharmas] from one's own mind,¹¹³ this refers to when, at the time when the precepts are being recited [each half month], one realizes that one has committed a minor offense but cannot bring oneself to declare it to anyone else, yet one nonetheless immediately repents of it in one's own mind.

Question: These types of “false speech” are exclusive to bhikṣus and irrelevant to laity and yet this treatise is ostensibly intended to address both laity and monastics.

Response: Whenever anyone knows that some circumstance is actually this particular way and yet speaks of it in a manner that differs from what one knows to be the case, that is what we refer to in this treatise as generally constituting a lie. Due to distinctions in types of beings, distinctions in circumstances, distinctions in the time of commission, distinctions in five classes of transgressions, and distinctions in dwelling place, the transgression may be either minor or grave.

Also, although a given transgression may be relatively minor, when it is repeated for a long time, then it qualifies as grave and may cause one to lose the resolve to attain bodhi.

“Distinctions in types of beings” refers to instances involving lying transgressions committed by those with wrong views who have severed their roots of goodness or lying transgressions committed by others who are beset with heavy afflictions. These are grave transgressions.

“Distinctions in circumstances” refers for instance to untruthful claims to possess superhuman attainments and to those that create a schism in the monastic saṅgha.

As for “distinctions in the time of commission” if someone tells a lie when they are monastic, this is a grave transgression.

“Distinctions in five classes of transgressions,” if one commits either a *pārājika* or a *saṃghāvaśeṣa* offense, these are grave transgressions.¹¹⁴

Distinctions according to the location: Lies committed by monastics at times of certification are grave transgressions.¹¹⁵

“Failing to revere good spiritual guides” refers to failing to have thoughts of reverence and awe toward them.

If one often engages in these four [behavioral] dharmas, then one is bound to lose the resolve to attain bodhi.

3. Q: ARE THERE ONLY THESE FOUR OR ARE THERE MORE?

Question: Are there only these four dharmas by which one is able to lose the bodhi resolve or are there additional dharmas leading to the same outcome?

4. A: THERE ARE NUMEROUS ADDITIONAL CASES (A SERIES OF VERSES)

Response:

If one is stingy with the most essential dharmas,
if one covets and delights in the Small Vehicle,
if one slanders bodhisattvas,
or if one slights those who practice *dhyāna* meditation—

“If one is stingy with the most essential dharmas,” refers to circumstances where a teacher [of Dharma] understands an extremely profound and rare principle beneficial to many, yet, because he covets offerings and fears others might equal him [in his understanding of Dharma], he keeps that teaching secret, cherishes it as his own, and refrains from explaining it to others.

“If one covets and delights in the Small Vehicle” refers to circumstances in which, because one fails to realize and appreciate the flavor of the Great Vehicle, one instead covets and delights in [the paths taught by followers of] the Two Vehicles.¹¹⁶

In “if one slanders bodhisattvas,” “slander” refers to [maliciously] ascribing an offense to one who has not committed an offense. The meaning of “bodhisattva” has already been explained. This refers to an instance where there has been no offense at all and yet this person falsely claims [that a particular bodhisattva] has committed an offense.

If [some bodhisattva practitioner] truly *has* committed a transgression and one then discusses the matter with others, although this itself constitutes a transgression, it is relatively light compared to the former case. What is the basis for this? The scriptures state that, whether or

not any bodhisattva has committed a karmic offense, one should not discuss the matter in any case.

As for “If one slights those who practice *dhyāna* meditation,” this refers to a case where, for the sake of cutting off afflictions, someone, either a layperson or a monastic, practices [*dhyāna* meditation] with diligence and vigor in order to block off the arising of any of the afflictions and in order to assemble dharmas supporting progress on the path to buddhahood. Such people may not be skillful in doctrinal discourse, may be lacking in eloquence, or may have no esteem for the awe-inspiring deportment. Still, if some unwise person therefore slights or disparages them, he thereby commits a grave offense.

Next we have the following:

If one harbors enmity
toward a good spiritual guide
and also if one is possessed of flattering, devious thoughts
covetous of obtaining offerings and such,¹¹⁷

The meaning of “good spiritual guide” has already been explained. If one has thoughts of enmity toward this person when he is engaged in teaching and speaking on the Dharma, one thereby commits a grave karmic offense comparable to that of cherishing enmity toward one’s own father or mother.

“Flattering” refers to the intention to ingratiate oneself with others. “Devious” refers to instances where one displays physical and verbal actions that create the [false] impression of having accomplished something. “Covetous of obtaining offerings and such” refers to seeking for and being attached to gaining benefit, pleasures, praise, or a fine reputation. It is because such dharmas damage one’s straightforwardness of character, one becomes unable to develop deeply anchored roots of goodness. This is just as when a robe that has been dyed an ugly color cannot then be dyed a fine color.

Next, we have the following:

If one fails to become aware of the works of *māras*,
if one’s bodhi resolve is inferior and weak,
or if one encounters karmic obstacles or Dharma obstacles,
then, too, one is bound to lose the resolve to attain bodhi.

As for “if one fails to become aware of the works of *māras*,” if one remains unaware of the various works of *māras*, then one cannot control and overcome them. If one fails to control and overcome then, then one is bound to lose the resolve to attain bodhi.

a. Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY “THE WORKS OF MĀRAS”?

Question: What all is meant by “the works of *māras*”?

b. A: THERE ARE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES, AS FOLLOWS: (LIST)

Response: [These are illustrated by the following examples]:

When, in explaining how one ought to take up the *pāramitās* of giving, moral virtue, patience, vigor, *dhyāna*, and wisdom or when explaining profound ideas included within the Great Vehicle, one does not readily delight in speaking about them or delights in speaking of them, but then becomes scattered and confused in discussing peripheral topics.

Whether one is involved in writing out, studying, setting forth explanations, discussing points of doctrine, or listening to and absorbing teachings, one becomes haughty, full of oneself, and one's mind becomes so scattered and disordered that one focuses one's thoughts on peripheral topics.

One mistakenly brings to mind frivolous or joking topics or becomes involved in mutually ridiculing dialogue resulting in the two people involved become disharmonious and unable to penetrate through to the actual meaning of the topic at issue.

One gets up from his seat and departs, thinking to himself, "There is no way that my capacities would be acknowledged here. Their minds are not pure and, what's more, they will not deign to engage in any discussion concerning my city, village, clan, or birthplace." Consequently one does not wish to listen to the Dharma, fails to realize its flavor, gets up from his seat, and then leaves.

One may relinquish the *pāramitās* discussed in the Great Vehicle and may even then seek all-knowledge through the scriptures of *śrāvaka* disciples and *pratyekabuddhas* that promote individual training and liberation.

When one is involved in writing out, studying, setting forth explanations, listening to absorbing teachings, and so forth, one may wish instead to delight in speaking of various other sorts of topics, thereby demolishing and scattering [discussions focused on] *prajñāpāramitā*, doing so through turning the discussion toward topics related to the country, one's village or city, parks and forests, matters to do with military commanders, matters to do with bandits, military armor or weaponry, hate and love, pain and pleasure, parents, siblings, men and women, wives and children, apparel, food and drink, bedding and cushions, medicines, or other things serving as supplementary aspects of one's life. Thus one's mind then becomes so scattered and disordered that one loses [the focus on] *prajñāpāramitā*.

It might also be that one speaks of matters involving greed, hatred, stupidity, adversaries, close relationships, when times were good, when times were bad, singing, dancing, performances, music,

- worrisome topics, playful joking and laughter, the classics, literature, poetry, ancient times, traditional stories, rulers of the state, emperors and kings, earth, water, fire, and wind, the five objects of desire, wealth and aristocratic birth, and also offerings and other such worldly matters that tend to delight one's mind.
- Or it could be that a *māra* transforms himself into the appearance of a bhikshu or bhikshuni, causes one to encounter scriptures of the *śrāvaka* disciples or the *pratyekabuddhas*, and says, "You should study these scriptures and set aside what you were originally practicing."
- Or it may be that those listening to explanations of Dharma do not delight in listening to or accepting the teachings. Alternatively, the Dharma teacher's mind may fall prey to indolence, or then again, each of the parties may have other conditions [to which they are drawn].
- It may be that, although those who come to listen have a need to hear the Dharma, the teacher explaining it prefers instead to move on to some other place.
- It might also be that, although the teacher delights in providing explanations, those listening desire to go somewhere else instead.
- It may happen that someone explaining Dharma has an inordinate desire to receive offerings or that those listening do not feel any motivation to give.
- Then again, it may be that those listening have faith-filled minds, delight in the Dharma, and wish to hear teachings on Dharma whereas the one who explains it does not enjoy speaking it for them. Alternatively, it may be that someone explaining Dharma delights in discussing it but those listening do not wish to hear it.
- There may be times when discussions turn to the sufferings in the hells, whereupon [the Dharma teacher] may claim that nothing would be quite so fine as putting an utter end to suffering in this very life. He may then recommend that the most beneficial option would be to choose an early entry into nirvāṇa.
- Or else, when the discussion turns to the measureless suffering and torments of the animal realm or turns to the many different sorts of faults associated with [rebirth in the realms of] the hungry ghosts and *asuras*, [the Dharma teacher] may explain that that all realms of *saṃsāra* are beset by misery. He may then recommend, "It would be most beneficial for you to choose, in this very life, an early entry into nirvāṇa."
- Or else he may praise the wealth and happiness of the world's aristocrats.

Or he may instead praise the meritorious qualities, bliss, and excellence of life in the form realm and formless realm [heavens], claiming then that great benefit can be realized by pursuing rebirth in those places.

Then again, he may praise the benefits associated with the qualities of the fruits of the path acquired by stream enterers and the others up to and including the arhats. He may then claim, "It would be most beneficial for you to gain these realizations in this very life."

It might be that the teacher delights in having a retinue of followers, but those who listen to Dharma do not wish to follow him. It might also be that the speaker of Dharma decides he wishes to go to some unsafe country afflicted with famine and civil disorder, telling those who listen to his teachings, "What use would there be in your following me to such countries?" Consequently they become disenchanted with the idea and decline to follow along with him.

It could also be that the speaker of Dharma esteems benefactors and repeatedly goes off to pay his respects to them, thereby causing those who listen to Dharma teachings to no longer be able to hear and absorb them.

Then again, he may cause listeners to produce doubts regarding the most profound Dharma, saying such things as, "That is not the Dharma proclaimed by the Buddhas in the sutras. However, the Dharma as I explain it corresponds to the Dharma set forth by the Buddha in the sutras. If a bodhisattva is able to practice this version of the Dharma, he will attain the realization of ultimate reality."

For all sorts of reasons such as these, the two parties may fail to abide in harmony. One should realize that any circumstances such as these are the work of *māras*. To sum it up, all situations in which obstacles arise to the prevalence of good dharmas—these are all the work of *māras*.

As for "if one's bodhi resolve is inferior and weak," this refers to circumstances wherein, due to the power of the afflictions, one's resolve to pursue the path becomes so weak and devoid of strength that the vow to attain *anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi* becomes cut off forever.

As for "karmic obstacles," although¹¹⁸ there are many different types of karmic obstacles, this refers to those capable of causing a person in quest of the Great Vehicle to turn back from that resolve.

"Dharma obstacles" here refers to delight in the practice of unwholesome dharmas and to dislike of emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, and the other profound and sublime dharmas associated with the *pāramitās* and other such teachings.

Dharmas of the same sort as the above four¹¹⁹ are able to bring about loss of the resolve to attain bodhi.

Next, we have the following:

If one pledges a gift to a teacher, but deceives him,
the karmic offense incurred is extremely grave.

If someone is free of doubts

but one then forcefully causes him to develop doubts and regrets—

If one directs an extreme degree of intense hatred and anger
toward someone who has resolute faith in the Great Vehicle,
vilifying him and speaking in a way that gives him a bad reputation,
spreading such talk broadly about in place after place—

Or if, when participating in joint endeavors,
one's mind is much given to flattery and deviousness—

If one's actions resemble any of these four black dharmas,
then one is bound to lose the resolve to attain bodhi.

As for “pledging a gift to a teacher” but then not giving it, this refers to something that, whether or not one has already pledged it, one should nonetheless bestow it on one's teacher and yet, even so, one ends up not giving it. Also, if in giving, one gives at the wrong time, gives at the wrong place, or gives in a manner not according with the Dharma, these are methods typical of the world's non-Buddhist traditions.

Within the Buddha's Dharma, it is from one's teacher that one obtains the Dharma of the sutras. If one is possessed of some measure of wealth, then, in order to make offerings to the Dharma, one gives to one's teacher. If one has nothing to give, then there is no fault in that.

As for “if someone is free of doubts, but one then forcefully causes him to develop doubts and regrets—,” this refers to an instance where someone has not actually broken any precept but merely appears to have committed some minor transgression and yet one claims he has committed a major offense against the moral code. Whether someone has departed from standard deportment in regard to right livelihood or has committed some infraction with regard to right doctrinal views, one then causes him to give birth to doubts and regrets.

“Hatred toward someone [with firm belief] in the Great Vehicle” refers to directing hatred toward those who have taken up the practice of the Great Vehicle, the unsurpassable vehicle, the vehicle of the Tathāgata, the vehicle of the great men, the vehicle of those possessed of omniscience, doing so even with regard to those who have only just brought forth the initial resolve to pursue that path. One feels intense hatred toward these people, rebuking and ridiculing them,

and spreading claims about them that give them a bad reputation that is then caused to circulate widely.

“Flattery and deviousness in the midst of joint endeavors” refers to failing to use a straightforward mind, resorting instead to devious means to establish close relations with monastic preceptors, monastic Dharma teachers,¹²⁰ and good spiritual guides, even going so far as to use flattery and deviousness to curry favor with those one has never met.

In “the four black dharmas,” “black” refers here to something dirty and impure that is capable of causing one to lose one’s resolve to attain bodhi. This is as described here:

If one turns away from these five sets of four dharmas
and cultivates wholesome actions in life after life,
one will thereby prevent the loss
of one’s resolve to attain the unsurpassable bodhi.

Five sets of four dharmas make twenty dharmas. It is because of these that one loses one’s bodhi resolve. If one turns away from these dharmas in one’s cultivation of the practices, then, even across the course of lifetimes, one will not forget one’s resolve to attain *anuttarasamyaksambodhi*.

“Turning away from” refers to turning away from the above five sets of four dharmas, doing so as follows:

By revering and esteeming the Dharma,
by doing away with arrogance,
by abandoning false speech,
and by deeply revering and esteeming good spiritual guides.

As for the rest, one should understand them in this same manner.

C. Q: WHICH DHARMAS CAUSE ONE TO MAKE THE VOWS AGAIN IN EACH LIFE?

Question: Through which dharmas might one cause increase and growth in one’s vow to attain bodhi, doing so across the course of lifetimes while also additionally causing one later on to be able to bring forth the great vows yet again?

D. A: THEY ARE AS FOLLOWS: (VERSE)

Response:

Even at the cost of losing one’s life
or of losing the throne of a wheel-turning king—
even in such instances as these—one still should not
commit false speech or engage in flattery or deviousness.

One is able through this to cause the entire world,
including all the beings within it,
to develop thoughts of reverence
toward the community of bodhisattvas.

If there is anyone able to practice
such good dharmas as these,
in each successive lifetime, he will succeed in increasing
[the strength of] his vows to realize the unsurpassable bodhi.

Employing these dharmas, the bodhisattva increases [the strength of] his vows to attain bodhi and also becomes able yet again to bring forth these pure and great vows. If, due to telling the truth, one thereby dies or loses the position of the wheel-turning king or even loses a position as one of the deva kings, even then, he should speak the truth and should not engage in false speech. How much the less might one fail to tell the truth in matters of only minor consequence.

In addition, one abandons flattery and deviousness in interactions with one's own retinue and with outsiders as well.

Furthermore, one brings forth thoughts of reverence toward all bodhisattvas from the very moment they bring forth their initial resolve, honoring, esteeming, and praising them no differently than if they were buddhas.

One should also do whatever is in one's powers to influence others to abide in the Great Vehicle.