



What is a bodhi mind? It is our mind intent upon awakening ourselves and awakening others; benefitting ourselves and benefitting others. Such a mind is clear. It turns from confusion and returns to enlightenment. It renounces what is deviant and embodies what is proper. Such a mind discerns right from wrong. It harbors no inversions. Such a mind is absolutely straight.

Exhortation to Resolve Upon Bodhi

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The Ultimate Commitment of a Buddhist



An Essay by Great Master Sying An
With commentary by Venerable Master Hsuan Hua

勸發菩提心文
quàn fā pú tí xīn wén

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省庵大師(1686-1734)著述
佛經翻譯委員會譯英文(2013)

不肖、愚下、凡夫僧實賢。泣血稽顙，哀告現前
大眾，及當世淨信男女等。唯願慈悲，少加聽察。

嘗聞入道要門，發心為首。修行急務，立願居先。

願立則眾生可度。心發則佛道堪成。苟不發廣大

心，立堅固願，則縱經塵劫，依然還在輪回。雖

有修行，總是徒勞辛苦。故華嚴經云：忘失菩提

心，修諸善法，是名魔業。忘失尚爾，況未發乎？

故知欲學如來乘，必先具發菩薩願，不可緩也。

然心願差別，其相乃多。若不指陳，如何趣向。

今為大眾，略而言之。相有其八：所謂邪正、真

偽、大小、偏圓是也。

Exhortation To Resolve Upon Bodhi

Written by Great Master Xǐng Ān (1686-1734)
English translation by the Buddhist Text Translation Society (2013)

I, the unworthy Shr Syan, a lowly, ordinary Sanghan, weeping blood and bowing to the ground, exhort the great assembly and present-day men and women of pure faith: please listen and consider what I am about to say.

We have heard that resolving the mind is foremost among the essential doors for entering the Path, and that making vows is first among the crucial matters in cultivation.

By making vows, we can save living beings. By resolving our minds, we can realize the Buddhas' Path. If we do not make our resolve great and our vows firm, we will remain on the turning wheel throughout as many *kalpas* as there are particles of dust. Any cultivation will be only bitter toil done in vain.

As the Flower Adornment Sutra says, "If you forget your resolve upon Bodhi, your cultivation of even wholesome practices becomes the karma of demons." From this it is clear that forgetting our resolve upon Bodhi is even worse than having never made the resolve. Thus we know that anyone wishing to study the vehicle of the Thus Come Ones must first make the vows of a Bodhisattva without delay.

But resolves and vows are various and they have many aspects. If they are not pointed out, how can we know what direction to take? I will now explain them in general for the great assembly.

There are eight aspects of a resolve: deviant, proper, true, false, great, small, partial, and complete.

云何名為邪正、真偽、大小、偏圓邪 (= 耶) ?
yún hé míng wéi xié zhèng zhēn wěi dà xiǎo piān yuán yé

世有行人，一向修行，不究自心，但知外務。或
shì yǒu xíng rén yí xiàng xiū xíng bú jiū zì xīn dàn zhī wài wù huò

求利養、或好名聞、或貪現世欲樂、或望未來果
qiú lì yàng huò hào míng wén huò tān xiàn shì yù lè huò wàng wèi lái guǒ

報。如是發心，名之為邪。
bào rú shì fā xīn míng zhī wéi xié

既不求利養名聞，又不貪欲樂果報。唯為生死、
jì bù qiú lì yàng míng wén yòu bù tān yù lè guǒ bào wéi wèi shēng sǐ

為菩提，如是發心，名之為正。
wéi pú tí rú shì fā xīn míng zhī wéi zhèng

念念上求佛道，心心下化眾生。聞佛道長遠，不
niàn niàn shàng qiú fó dào xīn xīn xià huà zhòng shēng wén fó dào cháng yuǎn bù

生退怯。觀眾生難度，不生厭倦。如登萬仞之山，
shēng tuì qiè guān zhòng shēng nán dù bù shēng yàn juàn rú dēng wàn rèn zhī shān

必窮其頂。如上九層之塔，必造其顛。如是發心，
bì qióng qí dǐng rú shàng jiǔ céng zhī tǎ bì zào qí diān rú shì fā xīn

名之為真。
míng zhī wéi zhēn

有罪不懺、有過不除、內濁外清、始勤終怠。雖
yǒu zuì bú chàn yǒu guò bù chú nèi zhuó wài qīng shǐ qín zhōng dài suī

有好心，多為名利之所夾雜。雖有善法，復為罪
yǒu hǎo xīn duō wéi míng lì zhī suǒ jiā zá suī yǒu shàn fǎ fù wéi zuì

業之所染污。如是發心，名之為偽。
yè zhī suǒ rǎn wū rú shì fā xīn míng zhī wéi wěi

What is meant by deviant, proper, true, false, great, small, partial, and complete?

A cultivator's resolve is deviant if in his practice he does not investigate his own mind but knows only about external matters. Perhaps he seeks benefit and offerings, likes fame and a good reputation, is greedy for objects of pleasure in the present, or he may hope for reward in the future. A resolve such as this is deviant.

When a cultivator seeks neither gain nor fame and has no greed either for pleasure or for rewards, but wishes only to settle the matter of birth and death, and to attain Bodhi, then his resolve is proper.

If, in moment after moment, he seeks the path of the Buddhas above; in thought after thought, he transforms living beings below; if he hears that the road to Buddhahood is long and far, yet does not retreat in fear; if he observes that beings are hard to transform, yet does not become weary; if he proceeds as though climbing a ten-thousand-foot mountain, determined to reach the summit or proceeds as though ascending a nine-storied stupa, fixed upon advancing to the top, then his resolve is true.

If he commits offenses but does not repent of them; if he has faults but does not change them; if he is turbid inside but makes a show of purity; if he is diligent at the start but lax later on; if he has good intentions but mixes them with a quest for name and gain; if he does wholesome practices, but defiles them with the karma created by committing offenses, then his resolve is false.

眾生界盡，我願方盡。菩提道成，我願方成。如
 zhòng shēng jiè jìn wǒ yuàn fāng jìn pú tí dào chéng wǒ yuàn fāng chéng rú

是發心，名之為大。
 shì fā xīn míng zhī wéi dà

觀三界如牢獄，視生死如冤家，但期自度，不欲
 guān sān jiè rú láo yù shì shēng sǐ rú yuān jiā dàn qī zì dù bú yù

度人，如是發心，名之為小。
 dù rén rú shì fā xīn míng zhī wéi xiǎo

若於心外，見有眾生，及以佛道，願度願成。功
 ruò yú xīn wài jiàn yǒu zhòng shēng jí yǐ fó dào yuàn dù yuàn chéng gōng

勛不忘，知見不泯。如是發心，名之為偏。
 xūn bú wàng zhī jiàn bù mǐn rú shì fā xīn míng zhī wéi piān

若知自性是眾生，故願度脫。自性是佛道，故願
 ruò zhī zì xìng shì zhòng shēng gù yuàn dù tuō zì xìng shì fó dào gù yuàn

成就。不見一法離心別有。以虛空之心，發虛空
 chéng jiù bú jiàn yī fǎ lí xīn bié yǒu yǐ xū kōng zhī xīn fā xū kōng

之願，行虛空之行，證虛空之果，亦無虛空之相
 zhī yuàn xíng xū kōng zhī hòng zhéng xū kōng zhī guǒ yì wú xū kōng zhī xiàng

可得。如是發心，名之為圓。
 kě dé rú shì fā xīn míng zhī wéi yuán

知此八種差別，則知審察。知審察，則知去取。
 zhī cǐ bā zhǒng cāi bié zé zhī shěn chá zhī shěn chá zé zhī qù qǔ

知去取，則可發心。
 zhī qù qǔ zé kě fā xīn

云何審察？謂我所發心，於此八中，為邪？為正？
 yún hé shěn chá wèi wǒ suǒ fā xīn yú cǐ bā zhōng wéi xié wéi zhèng

“When the realm of living beings has come to an end, then my vows will end. When the Bodhi Way is realized, then my vows will be fulfilled.” Such a resolve is great.

If he views the Triple Realm as a prison; if he treats birth and death as an enemy; if he intends to save only himself and has no wish to save others, then his resolve is small.

If he sees living beings as existing outside of his mind; if he does wish to save others and to realize Buddhahood, but does not forget his own accumulation of merit and does not get rid of his worldly knowledge and views, then his resolve is partial.

If he knows that his own nature is the same as living beings and, therefore, vows to save them; if he knows that his own nature is the same as the Buddha Path and, therefore, vows to realize it; if he does not see even one thing as existing apart from the mind; if his mind is like empty space; if he makes vows that are like empty space; if he cultivates practices that are like empty space; if he attains a fruition like empty space, and yet does not grasp at the characteristic of empty space, then his resolve is complete.

Having understood these eight different aspects of a resolve, we should know how to investigate and contemplate them. Knowing how to investigate and contemplate them, we know which to keep and which to discard. Knowing which to keep and which to discard, we can then resolve our minds.

What does it mean to “investigate and contemplate them?” We must ask ourselves, “Which of these eight aspects does my resolve have?”

為真？為偽？為大？為小？為偏？為圓？
wéi zhēn wéi wěi wéi dà wéi xiǎo wéi piān wéi yuán

云何去取？所謂去邪、去偽、去小、去偏。取正、
yún hé qù qǔ suǒ wèi qù xié qù wěi qù xiǎo qù piān qǔ zhèng

取真、取大、取圓。
qǔ zhēn qǔ dà qǔ yuán

如此發心，方得名為真正發菩提心也。
rú cǐ fā xīn fāng dé míng wéi zhēn zhèng fā pú tí xīn yě

此菩提心，諸善中王。必有因緣，方得發起。今
cǐ pú tí xīn zhū shàn zhōng wáng bì yǒu yīn yuán fāng dé fā qǐ jīn

言因緣，略有十種。何等為十？
yán yīn yuán lüè yǒu shí zhǒng hé děng wéi shí

一者，念佛重恩故。二者，念父母恩故。三者，
yī zhě niàn fó zhòng ēn gù èr zhě niàn fù mǔ ēn gù sān zhě

念師長恩故。四者，念施主恩故。五者，念眾生
niàn shī zhǎng ēn gù sì zhě niàn shī zhǔ ēn gù wǔ zhě niàn zhòng shēng

恩故。六者，念死生苦故。七者，尊重己靈故。
ēn gù liù zhě niàn sǐ shēng kǔ gù qī zhě zūn zhòng jǐ líng gù

八者，懺悔業障故。九者，求生淨土故。十者，
bā zhě chàn huǐ yè zhàng gù jiǔ zhě qiú shēng jìng dù gù shí zhě

為念正法得久住故。
wéi niàn zhèng fǎ dé jiǔ zhù gù

云何念佛重恩？謂我釋迦如來，最初發心，為我
yún hé niàn fó zhòng ēn wèi wǒ shì jiā rú lái zuì chū fā xīn wéi wǒ

等故，行菩薩道，經無量劫，備受諸苦。
děng gù xíng pú sà dào jīng wú liàng jié bèi shòu zhū kǔ

Is my resolve deviant or proper, true or false, great or small, partial or complete?"

What does it mean to "keep or discard?" It means that we discard the deviant, the false, the small, and the partial, and that we keep the proper, the true, the great, and the complete.

To make a resolve in this way is truly and properly to resolve upon Bodhi.

[Ten Causes and Conditions]

The resolve upon Bodhi is the foremost among all good things. It can arise only due to certain causes and conditions. In general, there are ten causes and conditions, which will now be discussed. What are the ten?

The first is mindfulness of the Buddhas' deep kindness.

The second is mindfulness of our parents' kindness. The third is mindfulness of our teachers' and elders' kindness.

The fourth is mindfulness of donors' kindness.

The fifth is mindfulness of living beings' kindness.

The sixth is mindfulness of the suffering in birth and death.

The seventh is reverence for our own spiritual nature.

The eighth is repenting of karmic obstacles and reforming.

The ninth is the wish for rebirth in the Pure Land.

The tenth is the wish to cause the Proper Dharma to remain in the world for a long time.

[1. The Buddha's Deep Kindness]

What is mindfulness of the Buddha's deep kindness? After our Thus Come One Shakyamuni first made his resolve, he walked the Bodhisattva Path for our sakes and passed through an infinite number of kalpas, enduring all manner of suffering.

我造業時，佛則哀憐，方便教化。而我愚癡，不

知信受。

我墮地獄，佛復悲痛，欲代我苦。而我業重，不

能救拔。

我生人道，佛以方便，令種善根，世世生生，隨

逐於我，心無暫捨。

佛初出世，我尚沉淪。今得人身，佛已滅度。

何罪而生末法？何福而預出家？何障而不見金身？

何幸而躬逢舍利？如是思惟。

向使不種善根，何以得聞佛法。不聞佛法，焉知

常受佛恩。

此恩此德，邱山難喻。自非發廣大心，行菩薩道，

建立佛法，救度眾生，縱使粉骨碎身，豈能酬答。

是為發菩提心第一因緣也。

When I create bad karma, the Buddha pities me and with expedient means teaches and transforms me. I, however, remain ignorant and do not know how to accept the teaching with faith.

When I fall into the hells, the Buddha again compassionately feels the pain and wishes to undergo suffering on my behalf. But my karma is heavy, and I cannot be pulled out.

When I am reborn as a human, the Buddha uses expedient means to cause me to plant roots of goodness. In life after life, he follows me and does not forsake me in his thoughts for an instant.

When the Buddha first appeared in the world, I was still sunk in the lower realms. Now that I have a human body, the Buddha has already passed into still quietude.

What are my offenses that have caused me to be born in the Dharma Ending Age? What are my blessings that have made it possible for me to leave the home and family life? What are my obstacles that have prevented me from seeing his golden body? What good fortune has made it possible for me to encounter his sharira? I contemplate in that way.

If I did not plant good roots in the past, how else could I be able to hear the Buddhadharma? And if I had never heard the Buddhadharma, how could I know that the Buddha is always kind to me?

His kindness and his virtue are greater than the highest mountain. If I fail to make a vast and great resolve to cultivate the Bodhisattva Path and to establish the Buddhadharma in order to save living beings, even to the point that in making this effort my bones wear away and my body is wrecked, then how can I possibly hope to repay his kindness? This is the first cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

云何念父母恩？哀哀父母，生我劬勞。十月三年，
yún hé niàn fù mǔ ēn āi āi fù mǔ shēng wǒ qú láo shí yuè sān nián

懷胎乳哺。推乾去濕，嚙苦吐甘，才得成人。
huái tāi rǔ bǔ tuī gān qù shī yàn kǔ tǔ gān cái dé chéng rén

指望紹繼門風，供奉祭祀。
zhǐ wàng shào jì mén fēng gòng chéng jì sì

今我等既已出家，濫稱釋子，忝號沙門。甘旨不
jīn wǒ děng jì yǐ chū jiā làn chēng shì zǐ tiǎn hào shā mén gān zhī bú

供，祭掃不給。生不能養其口體，死不能導其神
gòng jì sǎo bù jǐ shēng bù néng yàng qí kǒu tǐ sǐ bù néng dǎo qí shén

靈。於世間則為大損。於出世又無實益。兩途既
líng yú shì jiān zé wéi dà sǔn yú chū shì yòu wú shí yì liǎng tú jì

失，重罪難逃。
shī zhòng zuì nán táo

如是思惟，唯有百劫千生，常行佛道。十方三世
rú shì sī wéi wéi yǒu bǎi jié qiān shēng cháng xíng fó dào shí fāng sān shì

普度眾生。則不唯一生父母，生生父母俱蒙拔濟。
pǔ dù zhòng shēng zé bù wéi yī shēng fù mǔ shēng shēng fù mǔ jù méng bá jì

不唯一人父母，人人父母盡可超昇。
bù wéi yī rén fù mǔ rén rén fù mǔ jìn kě chāo shēng

是為發菩提心第二因緣也。
shì wéi fā pú tí xīn dì èr yīn yuán yě

[2. Our Parents' Kindness]

What is mindfulness of our parents' kindness? Alas for my parents! I was born through much toil. I was nurtured nine months in the womb and was suckled three years at the breast. My bottom was dried and my diapers were changed. I was fed delicacies while my parents toiled bitterly. Only then was I able to grow up. They hoped only that I might glorify and carry on the family name and continue the ritual offerings to our ancestors.

But now I have left the home and family, and am gratuitously called a disciple of Shakyamuni and have dared to assume the title of Shramana. I neither offer delicacies to my parents nor sweep the ancestral graves. While they live, I cannot take care of their physical needs; after they depart, I cannot guide their souls. In this world, I have thereby hurt them greatly, and as they leave this world, I am of no real help. To cause them such a double loss is a serious offense. How can I possibly avoid the consequences!

I contemplate in this way: I must always cultivate the Buddhas' Path through hundreds of kalpas and in thousands of lives and save living beings everywhere throughout the ten directions and three periods of time. I will rescue not only my parents of this life but will do the same for my parents of every life. I will save not only one person's parents but everyone's parents.

This is the second cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

云何念師長恩？父母雖能生育我身，若無世間師
 yún hé niàn shī zhǎng ēn fù mǔ suī néng shēng yù wǒ shēn ruò wú shì jiān shī
 長，則不知禮義。若無出世師長，則不解佛法。
 zhǎng zé bù zhī lǐ yì ruò wú chū shì shī zhǎng zé bù jiě fó fǎ
 不知禮義，則同於異類。不解佛法，則何異俗人。
 bù zhī lǐ yì zé tóng yú yì lèi bù jiě fó fǎ zé hé yì sù rén

今我等粗知禮義，略解佛法，袈裟被體，戒品沾
 jīn wǒ děng cū zhī lǐ yì lüè jiě fó fǎ jiā shā pī tǐ jiè pǐn zhān
 身。此之重恩，從師長得。若求小果，僅能自利。
 shēn cǐ zhī zhòng ēn cóng shī zhǎng dé ruò qiú xiǎo guǒ jǐn néng zì lì
 今為大乘，普願利人。則世出世間二種師長，俱
 jīn wéi dà shèng pǔ yuàn lì rén zé shì chū shì jiān èr zhǒng shī zhǎng jù
 蒙利益。
 měng lì yì
 是為發菩提心第三因緣也。
 shì wéi fā pú tí xīn dì sān yīn yuán yě

云何念施主恩？謂我等今者，日用所資，並非己
 yún hé niàn shī zhǔ ēn wèi wǒ děng jīn zhě rì yòng suǒ zī bìng fēi jǐ
 有。三時粥飯，四季衣裳。疾病所須，身口所費，
 yǒu sān shí zhōu fàn sì jì yī shang jí bìng suǒ xū shēn kǒu suǒ fèi
 此皆出自他力，將為我用。
 cǐ jiē chū zì tā lì jiāng wéi wǒ yòng
 彼則竭力躬耕，尚難餬口。我則安坐受食，猶不
 bǐ zé jié lì gōng gēng shàng nán hú kǒu wǒ zé ān zuò shòu shí yóu bù
 稱心。
 chēng xīn

[3. Our Teachers' and Elders' Kindness]

What is mindfulness of our teachers' and elders' kindness? My parents bore me and raised me, but if not for educators and elders, I would know nothing of propriety or righteousness. If not for spiritual teachers and elders, I would understand nothing of the Buddhadharma. One who knows nothing of propriety or righteousness may be considered a mere animal. One who understands nothing of the Buddhadharma is no different than an ordinary person.

Now we know the rudiments of propriety and righteousness and have a rough understanding of the Buddhadharma. The *kashaya* sash covers our bodies; the various precepts permeate our being. We have obtained these through the deep kindness of our teachers and elders. If we seek a small accomplishment, we can benefit only ourselves. Within the Great Vehicle our wish is to benefit all people. In that way, we can benefit both secular and world-transcending teachers and elders.

This is the third cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

[4. The Donors' Kindness]

What is mindfulness of donors' kindness? None of the materials we use in our daily lives belongs to us. Porridge and rice for our two meals, clothing for the four seasons, medicines for our illnesses – all the expenses for our physical needs – come through the strength of others.

In order to provide for us, they work hard to plow the fields, yet can barely provide for themselves, while we sit comfortably to receive our food and still feel dissatisfied.

彼則紡織不已，猶自艱難。我於安服有餘，寧知

愛惜。

彼則華門蓬戶，擾攘終身。我則廣宇閒庭，優悠

卒歲。

以彼勞而供我逸，於心安乎？將他利而潤己身，

於理順乎？自非悲智雙運，福慧二嚴，檀信沾恩，

眾生受賜。則粒米寸絲，酬償有分，惡報難逃。

是為發菩提心第四因緣也。

云何念眾生恩？謂我與眾生，從曠劫來，世生

生，互為父母，彼此有恩。今雖隔世昏迷，互不

相識。以理推之，豈無報効。

今之披毛帶角，安知非昔為其子乎？

今之蠕動蜎飛，安知不曾為我父乎？

Our donors spin and weave without cease and still suffer hardship, while we are comfortable, with more clothes than we can wear. We are even unaware that we should cherish what we have.

They live to the ends of their days in poor and humble dwellings amid nerve-wracking clamor, while we dwell among vast courtyards and in vacant halls amid refinement and ease throughout the year.

They offer the fruits of their labors to supply our idleness; how can our hearts be at peace? Is it reasonable to use others' goods to nourish our own bodies? If we fail to be both compassionate and wise and to adorn ourselves with both blessings and wisdom, so that the faithful donors are blessed with kindness and living beings receive bounty, then even one grain of rice or one inch of thread will incur a debt. It will be hard to escape an evil retribution.

This is the fourth cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

[5. Living Beings' Kindness]

What is mindfulness of living beings' kindness? In life after life, from distant kalpas onwards, every living being and I have been each other's father and mother. We have been kind to one another.

Now although the passage of time has separated us, and in our confusion we do not recognize each other, it is only logical that we repay them for their toil.

How do we know that we were not sons in lives past of those who are now fur-bearing and capped with horns?

How do we know that those who now crawl on the ground and fly in the air were not our fathers in lives past?

每見幼離父母，長而容貌都忘，何況宿世親緣，
měi jiàn yòu lí fù mǔ zhǎng ér róng mào dōu wàng hé kuàng sù shì qīn yuán

今則張王難記。
jīn zé zhāng wáng nán jì

彼其號呼於地獄之下、宛轉於餓鬼之中，苦痛誰
bǐ qí háo hū yú dì yù zhī xià wǎn zhuǎn yú è guǐ zhī zhōng kǔ tòng shuí

知，飢虛安訴？我雖不見不聞，彼必求拯求濟。
zhī jī xū ān sù wǒ suī bú jiàn bù wén bǐ bì qiú zhěng qiú jì

非經不能陳此事，非佛不能道此言。彼邪見人，
fēi jīng bù néng chén cǐ shì fēi fó bù néng dào cǐ yán bǐ xié jiàn rén

何足以知此。
hé zú yǐ zhī cǐ

是故菩薩觀於螻蟻，皆是過去父母，未來諸佛。
shì gù pú sà guān yú lóu yǐ jiē shì guò qù fù mǔ wèi lái zhū fó

常思利益，念報其恩。
cháng sī lì yì niàn bào qí ēn

是為發菩提心第五因緣也
shì wéi fā pú tí xīn dì wǔ yīn yuán yě

云何念生死苦？謂我與眾生，從曠劫來，常在生
yún hé niàn shēng sǐ kǔ wèi wǒ yǔ zhòng shēng cóng kuàng jié lái cháng zài shēng

死，未得解脫。人間天上，此界他方，出沒萬端，
sǐ wèi dé jiě tuō rén jiān tiān shàng cǐ jiè tā fāng chū mò wàn duān

昇沈片刻。俄焉而天，俄焉而人，俄焉而地獄、
shēng chén piàn kè é yān ér tiān é yān ér rén é yān ér dì yù

畜生、餓鬼。
chù shēng è guǐ

Our parents constantly looked after us, but we left them when we were young; we have grown up and have forgotten their faces. Even less do we remember our family and friends of lives past, and now it is difficult to remember if we were once named Smith or Jones.

As our ancestors wail and cry out in the hells, or are born over and over again as hungry ghosts, who can know of their suffering and pain? They are starving; to whom can they appeal?

I cannot see or hear them, but they must be seeking rescue and release. The sutras reveal this situation with exceptional clarity. Only the Buddhas could have spoken these words. How could people with deviant views know of this?

For these reasons, Bodhisattvas observe that even grubs and ants were their parents in lives past and have the potential to be Buddhas in the future. They always think of benefiting them and remember to return their kindness.

This is the fifth cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

[6. The Suffering in Birth and Death]

What is mindfulness of the suffering of birth and death? From distant kalpas onwards, living beings and I have always been involved in birth and death and have not attained liberation. Whether we have been among people or in the heavens, in this world or in another, we have risen and fallen uncountable times. We ascend or fall in an instant – suddenly a god, suddenly a human, suddenly an animal, a hungry ghost, or a denizen of the hells.

黑門朝出而暮還，鑊窟暫離而又入。
hēi mén zhāo chū ér mù huán yí kū zàn lí ér yòu rù

登刀山也，則舉體無完膚。攀劍樹也，則方寸皆
dēng dāo shān yě zé jǔ tǐ wú wán fū pān jiàn shù yě zé fāng cùn jiē

割裂。
gē liè

熱鑊不除飢，吞之則肝腸盡爛。洋銅難療渴，飲
rè yí bù chú jī tūn zhī zé gān cháng jìn làn yáng tóng nán liáo kě yǐn

之則骨肉都糜。
zhī zé gǔ ròu dōu mí

利鋸解之，則斷而復續。巧風吹之，則死已還生。
lì jù jiě zhī zé duàn ér fù xù qiǎo fēng chuī zhī zé sǐ yǐ huán shēng

猛火城中，忍聽叫嗥之慘。煎熬盤裏，但聞苦痛
měng huǒ chéng zhōng rěn tīng jiào háo zhī cǎn jiān áo pán lǐ dàn wén kǔ tòng

之聲。
zhī shēng

冰凍始凝，則狀似青蓮藥結。血肉既裂，則身如
bīng dòng shǐ níng zé zhuàng sì qīng lián yǎo jié xuè ròu jì liè zé shēn rú

紅藕華開。
hóng ǒu huā kāi

一夜死生，地下每經萬徧。一朝苦痛，人間已過
yí yè sǐ shēng dì xià měi jīng wàn biàn yī zhāo kǔ tòng rén jiān yǐ guò

百年。頻煩獄卒疲勞，誰信閻翁教誡。受時知苦
bǎi nián pín fán yù zú pí láo shuí xìn yán wēng jiào jiè shòu shí zhī kǔ

雖悔恨，以何追脫已還忘。其作業也如故。
suī huǐ hèn yǐ hé zhuī tuō yǐ hái wàng qí zuò yè yě rú gù

We leave the black gate at dawn but return at night. We climb out of the pit of iron briefly but then fall back in again.

As we ascend the mountain of knives, our bodies are slashed until not a bit of flesh remains. As we climb the tree of swords, our hearts are slit open.

The hot iron does not cure hunger; swallowing it roasts the liver and intestines. The broth of boiling copper does not quench thirst; drinking it dissolves the flesh and bones.

Sharp saws dismember the body; once cut, it comes back together again. Clever breezes fan the body; it dies but quickly returns to life.

In the city of raging fire, we endure the sounds of blood curdling screams and wails. In the pot of boiling oil, we hear only cries of excruciating pain.

The body begins to freeze and harden and resembles a blue lotus forming a bud. Then the flesh and veins crack open and the body looks like a red lotus in bloom.

In a single night, the denizens of the hells pass through ten thousand births and deaths. In a single morning, the sufferings in the hells are what humans would go through in a hundred years.

The harried wardens of the hells become weary. Who believes that King Yama is not teaching us with this warning?

Yet only while actually experiencing suffering do we know its bitterness, but our regrets come too late. Once free, we forget again, and then we create the same karma as before.

鞭驢出血，誰知吾母之悲？牽豕就屠，焉識乃翁

之痛？

食其子而不知，文王尚爾。噉其親而未識，凡類

皆然。

當年恩愛，今作冤家。昔日寇讐，今成骨肉。

昔為母而今為婦，舊是翁而新作夫。宿命知之，

則可羞可恥。天眼視之，則可笑可憐。

糞穢叢中，十月包藏難過。膿血道裏，一時倒下

可憐。少也何知，東西莫辨。長而有識，貪欲便

生。須臾而老病相尋，迅速而無常又至。

風火交煎，神識於中潰亂。精血既竭，皮肉自外

乾枯。無一毛而不被針鑽，有一竅而皆從刀割。

龜之將烹，其脫殼也猶易。神之欲謝，其去體也

倍難。

We whip the mule until it bleeds; who could know that it is our mother in anguish?

We lead the pig to slaughter; who could know that it is our father in agony?

We eat our own sons without being aware, just like King Wen.
And we gulp down our own relatives without recognizing them.
This is the way of all ordinary people.

The loved ones of yesteryear are now sworn enemies.
Rivals of days past are now our blood relatives.
Our mothers of past lives are our wives of the present.
Our fathers-in-law of old are now our husbands.

Those with knowledge of past lives recognize these changes; they feel shame and embarrassment. Those with the Heavenly Eye see these situations; they find them ridiculous and pathetic.

Amid excrement and filth we pass **nine** difficult months. We emerge from the path of pus and blood in a pitiable state.

When young, we know nothing and cannot tell east from west.
As adults, we become more aware, but our greed and desire arises.
In an instant, old age and illness overtake us; suddenly death arrives.

Amid the blaze of wind and fire, our spirit becomes disordered;
our vital energies and blood are exhausted. Our flesh and skin wither and dry up.
We feel as if iron needles are piercing our every pore and as if knives are hacking our every orifice.

When the spirit leaves the body at death, it feels more pain than does a live turtle having its shell ripped off before it is thrown in the pot.

心無常主，類商賈而處處奔馳。身無定形，似房

屋而頻頻遷徙。

大千塵點，難窮往返之身。四海波濤，孰計別離。

之淚。

峩峩積骨，過彼崇山。莽莽橫尸，多於大地。

向使不聞佛語，此事誰見誰聞。未覩佛經，此理

焉知焉覺。其或依前貪戀，仍舊癡迷。祇恐萬劫

千生，一錯百錯。人身難得而易失，良時易往而

難追。道路冥冥，別離長久。三途惡報，還自受

之。痛不可言，誰當相代。興言及此，能不寒心

是故宜應斷生死流，出愛欲海。自他兼濟，彼岸

同登。曠劫殊勛，在此一舉。

是為發菩提心第六因緣也。

The mind has no fixed purpose. It flits hurriedly from place to place like a traveling peddler.

Our bodies have no fixed shapes. We continually exchange them as if we were moving from room to room in a house.

We have had and lost more bodies than there are particles of dust in a billion worlds.

We have cried more tears at parting than all the water in the billows of the four seas.

The stacks of bones rise higher than mountain peaks.
The heaps of corpses are vaster than the earth.

If the Buddha had not spoken of this, who would have recognized or even imagined these things?

If we do not read the Buddha's sutras, how can we know and be aware of these truths?

If we continue our hankering for love and pleasure, we will forever remain stupid and confused.

Then the grave concern is that one mistake has led to another for ten thousand kalpas, through thousands of lives.

A human body is hard to obtain and easy to lose.

Good times soon pass and cannot be brought back.

The road is dark and gloomy, and separations last a long time. I must endure evil retribution in the Three Paths alone. The pain is unspeakable; who would stand in for me? Even discussing this subject chills my heart.

We, therefore, must halt the flow of birth and death, get out of the ocean of love and desire, save ourselves and save others, and together reach the other shore. Of all things from the beginning of time onward, this is the most extraordinary achievement, yet one only needs to begin.

This is the sixth cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

云何尊重己靈？謂我現前一心，直下與釋迦如來
yún hé zūn zhòng jǐ líng wèi wǒ xiàn qián yī xīn zhí xià yǔ shì jiā rú lái

無二無別。云何世尊無量劫來，早成正覺，而我
wú èr wú bié yún hé shì zūn wú liàng jié lái zǎo chéng zhèng jué ér wǒ

等昏迷顛倒，尚做凡夫？
děng hūn mí diān dǎo shàng zuò fán fū

又佛世尊，則具有無量神通智慧，功德莊嚴。而
yòu fó shì zūn zé jù yǒu wú liàng shén tōng zhì huì gōng dé zhuāng yán ér

我等，則但有無量業繫煩惱，生死纏縛。
wǒ děng zé dàn yǒu wú liàng yè xì fán nǎo shēng sǐ chán fú

心性是一，迷悟天淵。靜言思之，豈不可恥？
xīn xìng shì yī mí wù tiān yuān jìng yán sī zhī qǐ bù kě chǐ

譬如無價寶珠，沒在淤泥，視同瓦礫，不加愛重
pì rú wú jià bǎo zhū mò zài yū ní shì tóng wǎ lì bù jiā ài zhòng

是故宜應，以無量善法，對治煩惱。修德有功，
shì gù yí yīng yǐ wú liàng shàn fǎ duì zhì fán nǎo xiū dé yǒu gōng

則性德方顯。如珠被濯，懸在高幢，洞達光明，
zé xìng dé fāng xiǎn rú zhū bèi zhuó xuán zài gāo zhuàng dòng dá guāng míng

映蔽一切。可謂不孤佛化，不負己靈。
yǐng bì yī qiè kě wèi bù gū fó huà bú fù jǐ líng

是為發菩提心第七因緣也。
shì wéi fā pú tí xīn dì qī yīn yuán yě

[7. Reverence of the Spiritual Nature]

What is reverence for our own spiritual nature? It is that in the present, single thought, I can immediately be one with the Thus Come One, Shakyamuni, without any difference at all. Why is it, then, that the World Honored One realized proper enlightenment an infinite number of *kalpas* ago, yet we are still muddled, confused, and upside down? Why are we still only ordinary people?

The Buddha, the World Honored One, has also perfected infinite spiritual penetrations, wisdom, and the adornments of merit and virtue, while we only have an infinite number of karmic ties and afflictions and are bound to birth and death. Our minds and natures and his are one, but our confusion and his enlightenment are as far apart as the sky and the abysmal deeps. In stillness, contemplate this matter: how can we not be ashamed?

It is as if we had dropped a priceless pearl into a mud puddle, considering it as worthless as a broken tile, neither cherishing nor esteeming it.

We should, therefore, use an infinite number of wholesome methods to serve as antidotes to our afflictions. By cultivating virtue, we gain merit, and the virtue of our nature can then appear. Thus we wash the pearl and set it up high, where it releases a penetrating radiance that outshines everything. Then we can say that we have not been ungrateful to the Buddha's teaching and have not failed to uncover our own spiritual nature.

This is the seventh cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

云何懺悔業障？經言，犯一吉羅，如四天王壽五
yún hé chàn huǐ yè zhàng jīng yán fàn yī jí luó rú sì tiān wáng shòu wǔ

百歲，墮泥犁中。吉羅小罪，尚獲此報，何況重
bǎi suì duò ní lí zhōng jí luó xiǎo zuì shàng huò cǐ bào hé kuàng zhòng

罪，其報難言。今我等，日用之中，一舉一動，
zuì qí bào nán yán jīn wǒ děng rì yòng zhī zhōng yī jǔ yí dòng

恒違戒律。一飧一水，頻犯尸羅。一日所犯，亦
héng wéi jiè lǜ yī cān yī shuǐ pín fàn shī luó yī rì suǒ fàn yì

應無量，何況終身歷劫，所起之罪，更不可言矣。
yīng wú liàng hé kuàng zhōng shēn lì jié suǒ qǐ zhī zuì gèng bù kě yán yǐ

且以五戒言之，十人九犯，少露多藏。五戒名為
qiě yǐ wǔ jiè yán zhī shí rén jiǔ fàn shǎo lù duō cáng wǔ jiè míng wéi

優婆塞戒，尚不具足，何況沙彌、比丘、菩薩等
yōu pó sài jiè shàng bù jù zú hé kuàng shā mí bì qiū pú sà děng

戒，又不必言矣。問其名，則曰我比丘也。問其
jiè yòu bú bì yán yǐ wèn qí míng zé yuē wǒ bì qiū yě wèn qí

實，則尚不足為優婆塞也。豈不可愧哉？
shí zé shàng bù zú wéi yōu pó sài yě qǐ bù kě kuì zāi

當知佛戒不受則已，受則不可毀犯。不犯則已，
dāng zhī fó jiè bú shòu zé yǐ shòu zé bù kě huǐ fàn bù fàn zé yǐ

犯則終必墮落。若非自慙慙他，自傷傷他，身口
fàn zé zhōng bì duò luò ruò fēi zì mǐn mǐn tā zì shāng shāng tā shēn kǒu

併切，聲淚俱下，普與眾生，求哀懺悔，則千生
bìng qiè shēng lèi jù xià pǔ yǔ zhòng shēng qiú āi chàn huǐ zé qiān shēng

萬劫，惡報難逃。是為發菩提心第八因緣也。
wàn jié è bào nán táo shì wéi fā pú tí xīn dì bā yīn yuán yě

[8. Repenting of Karmic Obstacles]

What is repenting of karmic obstacles and reforming? The sutras say that a precept holder who commits one duskrita will fall into the Nirtaka Hell for a period equal to a five-hundred-year lifespan in the Heaven of Four Kings. Duskrita are small offenses, yet precept holders who commit them will receive such retribution. Serious offenses evoke even more suffering; the retribution they bring is indescribable.

We constantly break the precepts by everything we do in our daily lives. With each meal we take and with each drop we drink, we transgress the sila. A single day's transgressions are beyond reckoning. How much more numerous are the transgressions committed during kalpa after kalpa! They are indescribably many.

Moreover, it is said, "Of ten people who receive the Five Precepts nine will transgress them." Few admit their errors; most conceal them. The Five Precepts are the Upasaka Precepts; yet we fail to perfectly uphold even these, not to mention the Shramanera, Bhikshu, and Bodhisattva Precepts. If you ask our titles, we will reply, "We are Bhikshus." But in fact, we do not even come up to being Upasakas. How can we fail to be ashamed?

We should know that receiving the precepts set forth by the Buddhas is the choice of the individual. If we have received them, we must not transgress them. If we do not transgress them, we have no need for concern. Transgress them, and in the end we will certainly fall.

If we fail to have pity on ourselves and others, if we fail to have compassion for ourselves and for others, if we fail to be harmonious and sincere in word and deed, if we fail to sigh and weep, if we fail to painfully seek repentance and reform together with all living beings everywhere, then our evil retributions due from thousands of lifetimes throughout tens of thousands of kalpas will be difficult to escape.

This is the eighth cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

云何求生淨土？謂在此土修行，其進道也難。彼
yún hé qiú shēng jìng dù wèi zài cǐ dù xiū xíng qí jìn dào yě nán bǐ

土往生，其成佛也易。易故一生可致。難故累劫
dù wǎng shēng qí chéng fó yě yì yì gù yī shēng kě zhì nán gù lěi jié

未成。是以往聖前賢，人人趣向。千經萬論，處
wèi chéng shì yǐ wǎng shèng qián xián rén rén qù xiàng qiān jīng wàn lùn chù

處指歸。末世修行，無越於此。
chù zhǐ guī mò shì xiū xíng wú yuè yú cǐ

然經稱少善不生，多福乃致。言多福，則莫若執
rán jīng chēng shǎo shàn bù shēng duō fú nǎi zhì yán duō fú zé mò ruò zhí

持名號。言多善，則莫若發廣大心。是以暫持聖
chí míng hào yán duō shàn zé mò ruò fā guǎng dà xīn shì yǐ zàn chí shèng

號，勝於布施百年。一發大心，超過修行歷劫。
hào shèng yú bù shī bǎi nián yī fā dà xīn chāo guò xiū xíng lì jié

蓋念佛本期作佛。大心不發，則雖念奚為。發心
gài niàn fó běn qī zuò fó dà xīn bù fā zé suī niàn xī wéi fā xīn

原為修行，淨土不生，則雖發易退。是則下菩提
yuán wéi xiū xíng jìng dù bù shēng zé suī fā yì tuì shì zé xià pú tí

種，畊以念佛之犁，道果自然增長。乘大願船，
zhǒng gēng yǐ niàn fó zhī lí dào guǒ zì rán zēng zhǎng chéng dà yuàn chuán

入於淨土之海，西方決定往生。
rù yú jìng dù zhī hǎi xī fāng jué dìng wǎng shēng

是為發菩提心第九因緣也。
shì wéi fā pú tí xīn dì jiǔ yīn yuán yě

[9. Rebirth in the Pure Land]

What is the wish for rebirth in the Pure Land? Progress on the spiritual Path is difficult when we cultivate in this world. But once we have been reborn in that land, becoming a Buddha is easy. Because cultivating is easy there, we can be successful in a single lifetime. Because it is difficult here, many kalpas have passed and we still have not accomplished our goal. Therefore, each and every sage and worthy of the past has taken the path that leads to that land. And passage after passage in all the thousands of sutras and myriads of shastras points in this direction. For cultivators in the Dharma Ending Age, nothing surpasses this method.

The sutra says, however, that we cannot be reborn there if our good deeds are few. Only through many acts deserving of blessings can we be successful. They say that none of the many acts deserving of blessings equals maintaining mindfulness of Amitabha Buddha's name. They say that none of the many good deeds equals a great resolution of the mind. Therefore, reciting the Sage's name even briefly is superior to practicing giving for a hundred years. And by simply making the great resolve, we transcend kalpa after kalpa of cultivation.

Thus, we may practice mindfulness of the Buddha with the hope of becoming Buddhas, but if we fail to make the great resolve, our mindfulness will not be sincere. We may be determined to cultivate, but retreat is easy, despite our resolve, unless we are reborn in the Pure Land. Therefore, plant a Bodhi seed. Till with the plow of mindfulness of the Buddha, and the fruits of the Path will naturally grow. Sail the ship of great vows to enter the ocean of the Pure Land. Then we will certainly be reborn in the West.

This is the ninth cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

云何令正法久住？謂我世尊無量劫來，為我等故，
yún hé lìng zhèng fǎ jiǔ zhù wèi wǒ shì zūn wú liàng jié lái wèi wǒ děng gù

修菩提道。難行能行，難忍能忍，因圓果滿，遂
xiū pú tí dào nán xíng néng xíng nán rěn néng rěn yīn yuán guǒ mǎn suì

致成佛。既成佛已，化緣周訖，入於涅槃。
zhì chéng fó jì chéng fó yǐ huà yuán zhōu qì rù yú niè pán

正法像法，皆已滅盡，僅存末法。有教無人，邪
zhèng fǎ xiàng fǎ jiē yǐ miè jìn jǐn cún mò fǎ yǒu jiào wú rén xié

正不分，是非莫辨。競爭人我，盡逐利名，舉目
zhèng bù fēn shì fēi mò biàn jìng zhēng rén wǒ jìn zhú lì míng jǔ mù

滔滔，天下皆是。不知佛是何人，法是何義，僧
tāo tāo tiān xià jiē shì bù zhī fó shì hé rén fǎ shì hé yì sēng

是何名。衰殘至此，殆不忍言。每一思及，不覺
shì hé míng shuāi cán zhì cǐ dài bù rěn yán měi yī sī jí bù jué

淚下。
lèi xià

我為佛子，不能報恩。內無益於己，外無益於人。
wǒ wéi fó zǐ bù néng bào ēn nèi wú yì yú jǐ wài wú yì yú rén

生無益於時，死無益於後。天雖高不能覆我，地
shēng wú yì yú shí sǐ wú yì yú hòu tiān suī gāo bù néng fù wǒ dì

雖厚不能載我。極重罪人，非我而誰。
suī hòu bù néng zài wǒ jí zhòng zuì rén fēi wǒ ér shuí

由是痛不可忍，計無所出，頓忘鄙陋，忽發大心。
yóu shì tòng bù kě rěn jì wú suǒ chū dùn wàng bǐ lòu hū fā dà xīn

[10. The Proper Dharma]

What is the wish to cause the Proper Dharma to remain long in the world? Our World Honored One, for our sakes, cultivated the Bodhi Path for an infinite number of kalpas. He could practice what was difficult to practice and could endure what was difficult to endure. His causes were perfect, his results were complete; thus, he became a Buddha. After becoming a Buddha, he finished teaching those with whom he had affinities, and then he entered Nirvana.

The Proper Dharma Age and Dharma Semblance Age have already ended. Now we are in the Dharma Ending Age; there are teachings but no adherents. No one can distinguish the deviant from the proper; no one can tell right from wrong. We compete and struggle with each other. We pursue fame and fortune. Look around: the deluge has spread throughout the world.

No one knows who the Buddha is, what the Dharma means, or what constitutes the Sangha. The decay has reached such a perilous point that one can scarcely bear to speak of it. Every time I consider it, my tears fall without my realizing it.

I am a disciple of the Buddha, yet I am unable to return the kindness that has been done for me. I do not benefit myself; I cannot benefit others. While alive, I am of no benefit to my time. After death, I will be of no benefit to posterity. Although the heavens are high, they cannot cover me. Although the earth is thick, it cannot bear me. If my own offenses are not extremely grave, then whose are?

My pain is, therefore, unbearable. I have no recourse but to immediately forget my baseness and quickly make the great resolve.

雖不能挽回末運於此時，
suī bù néng wǎn huí mò yùn yú cǐ shí

決當圖護持正法於來世。
jué dāng tú hù chí zhèng fǎ yú lái shì

是故偕諸善友，同到道場。述為懺摩，建茲法會。
shì gù xié zhū shàn yǒu tóng dào dào chǎng shù wéi chàn mó jiàn zī fǎ huì

發四十八之大願，願願度生。期百千劫之深心，
fā sì shí bā zhī dà yuàn yuàn yuàn dù shēng qī bǎi qiān jié zhī shēn xīn

心心作佛。
xīn xīn zuò fó

從於今日，盡未來際，畢此一形，誓歸安養。既
cóng yú jīn rì jìn wèi lái jì bì cǐ yī xíng shì guī ān yǎng jì

登九品，回入娑婆。俾得佛日重輝，法門再闡。
dēng jiǔ pǐn huí rù suō pó bì dé fó rì chóng huī fǎ mén zài chǎn s

僧海澄清於此界，人民被化於東方。劫運為之更
ēng hǎi chéng qīng yú cǐ jiè rén mín pī huà yú dōng fāng jié yùn wéi zhī gēng

延，正法得以久住。此則區區真實苦心。
yán zhèng fǎ dé yǐ jiǔ zhù cǐ zé qū qū zhēn shí kǔ xīn

是為發菩提心第十因緣也。
shì wéi fā pú tí xīn dì shí yīn yuán yě

如是十緣備識，八法周知，則趣向有門，開發有
rú shì shí yuán bèi shì bā fǎ zhōu zhī zé qù xiàng yǒu mén kāi fā yǒu

地。相與得此人身，居於華夏。六根無恙，四大
dì xiāng yǔ dé cǐ rén shēn jū yú huá xià liù gēn wú yàng sì dà

輕安。具有信心，幸無魔障。
qīng ān jù yǒu xìn xīn xìng wú mó zhàng

Although I cannot reverse the fate of the Dharma's end in the present, I certainly must plan to protect and uphold the Proper Dharma in the future.

Therefore good friends, gather together at the Way Place, perform the Karmavachana, and establish Dharma assemblies. Make the forty-eight vows; make vow after vow to save living beings. Make a deep resolve that will last for hundreds of thousands of kalpas; in thought after thought, resolve to be a Buddha.

From this day to the end of future time, vow to return to the peace of the Pure Land at the end of every life, to ascend to the nine grades of lotuses, and to then come back to the Saha World. Make the Buddhas' sun gloriously shine once more. Open the gate of the Dharma again. Let the ocean of the Sangha be clear and pure in this world. The people of the east will be taught and the kalpa will be prolonged. The Proper Dharma will long continue. Such is the meager but genuine resolve I strive to fulfill.

This is the tenth cause and condition for making the resolve to attain Bodhi.

[Exhortation]

Thus we know the ten conditions and are fully aware of the eight aspects. We consequently have a gateway through which to progress and a basis for our development.

We have a human body and live in a favorable country. Our six sense organs are intact and our bodies are healthy. We have complete faith, and fortunately we are without demonic obstacles.

況今我等又得出家，又受具戒，又遇道場，又聞
 kuàng jīn wǒ děng yòu dé chū jiā yòu shòu jù jiè yòu yù dào chǎng yòu wén
 佛法，又瞻舍利，又修懺法。又值善友，又具勝
 fó fǎ yòu zhān shè lì yòu xiū chàn fǎ yòu zhí shàn yǒu yòu jù shèng
 緣。不於今日發此大心，更待何日。
 yuán bù yú jīn rì fā cǐ dà xīn gèng dài hé rì

唯願大眾，愍我愚誠，憐我苦志。同立此願，同
 wéi yuàn dà zhòng mǐn wǒ yú chéng lián wǒ kǔ zhì tóng lì cǐ yuàn tóng
 發是心。未發者今發，已發者增長，已增長者今
 fā shì xīn wèi fā zhě jīn fā yǐ fā zhě zēng zhǎng yǐ zēng zhǎng zhě jīn
 令相續。
 lìng xiāng xù

勿畏難而退怯。勿視易而輕浮。
 wù wèi nán ér tuì què wù shì yì ér qīng fú

勿欲速而不久長。勿懈怠而無勇猛。
 wù yù sù ér bù jiǔ cháng wù xiè dài ér wú yǒng měng

勿委靡而不振起。勿因循而更期待。
 wù wěi mí ér bú zhèn qǐ wù yīn xún ér gèng qī dài

勿因愚鈍而一向無心。勿以根淺而自鄙無分。
 wù yīn yú dùn ér yí xiàng wú xīn wù yǐ gēn qiǎn ér zì bǐ wú fèn

譬諸種樹，種久則根淺而日深。又如磨刀，磨久
 pì zhū zhòng shù zhòng jiǔ zé gēn qiǎn ér rì shēn yòu rú mó dāo mó jiǔ

則刀鈍而成利。豈可因淺勿種，任其自枯。因鈍
 zé dāo dùn ér chéng lì qǐ kě yīn qiǎn wù zhòng rén qí zì kū yīn dùn

弗磨，置之無用。
 fú mó zhì zhī wú yòng

Furthermore, we Sanghans have been able to leave the home-life and to receive the complete precepts. We have found a Way Place and have heard the Buddhadharmā. We have looked reverently upon the Buddha's sharira and we practice repentance; we have met good friends and are replete with superior conditions. If we fail to make the great resolve today, what are we waiting for?

I hope only that the great assembly will sympathize with my simple-minded sincerity and share my earnest intent. Let us take these vows together. Let us make this resolve together. Whoever has not yet made the resolve should do so now. Whoever has already made the resolve should bolster it. Those who have already bolstered it should continue to advance.

Do not fear difficulty and make a cowardly retreat.

Do not consider this matter easy and frivolously waste time.

Do not wish for quick results and fail to persevere.

Do not become lax and fail in your courage.

Do not become dispirited and fail to rouse yourself.

Do not let procrastination cause you to delay.

Do not let stupidity and dullness keep you from making the resolve.

Do not assume that you have shallow roots and are, therefore, unworthy of taking part.

For example, after a tree is planted, the once-shallow roots deepen every day. Similarly, as a knife is sharpened, the blade which was once dull becomes sharp.

Because the roots are shallow, would we choose not to plant the tree and allow it to wither away? That the knife is dull is no reason not to sharpen it and to set it aside as useless.

又若以修行為苦，則不知懈怠尤苦。修行則勤勞
yòu ruò yǐ xiū xíng wéi kǔ zé bù zhī xiè dài yóu kǔ xiū xíng zé qín láo

暫時，安樂永劫。懈怠則偷安一世，受苦多生。
zàn shí ān lè yǒng jié xiè dài zé tōu ān yí shì shòu kǔ duō shēng

況乎以淨土為舟航，則何愁退轉。又得無生為忍
kuàng hū yǐ jìng dù wéi zhōu háng zé hé chóu tuì zhuǎn yòu dé wú shēng wéi rěn

力，則何慮艱難。當知地獄罪人，尚發菩提於往
lì zé hé lǜ jiān nán dāng zhī dì yù zuì rén shàng fā pú tí yú wǎng

劫。豈可人倫佛子，不立大願於今生。
jié qǐ kě rén lún fó zǐ bú lì dà yuàn yú jīn shēng

無始昏迷，往者既不可諫。而今覺悟，將來猶尚
wú shǐ hūn mí wǎng zhě jì bù kě jiàn ér jīn jué wù jiāng lái yóu shàng

可追。然迷而未悟，固可哀憐。苟知而不行，尤
kě zhuī rán mí ér wèi wù gù kě āi lián gǒu zhī ér bù xíng yóu

為痛惜。若懼地獄之苦，則精進自生。若念無常
wéi tòng xī ruò jù dì yù zhī kǔ zé jīng jìn zì shēng ruò niàn wú cháng

之速，則懈怠不起。
zhī sù zé xiè dài bù qǐ

又須以佛法為鞭，善友為提。造次弗離，終身
yòu xū yǐ fó fǎ wéi biān shàn yǒu wéi tí zào cì fú lí zhōng shēn

依賴，則無退失之虞矣。勿言一念輕微，勿謂虛
yī lài zé wú tuì shī zhī yú yǐ wù yán yí niàn qīng wéi wù wèi xū

願無益。心真則事實，願廣則行深。虛空非大，
yuàn wú yì xīn zhēn zé shì shí yuàn guǎng zé xíng shēn xū kōng fēi dà

心王為大。金剛非堅，願力最堅。
xīn wáng wéi dà jīn gāng fēi jiān yuàn lì zuì jiān

[Conclusion]

Moreover, if we feel that cultivation makes us suffer, it is because we do not know that laxity will make us suffer even more. Cultivation entails a brief period of diligent toil, but it yields peace and joy for kalpas without end. One lifetime of laxity and of shirking work results in suffering for many lifetimes to come.

Furthermore, with the Pure Land as our ship, what fear is there that we will retreat? Once we attain the power of patience with the non-existence of beings and phenomena, what difficulty can trouble us? When we know that in past kalpas there were even offenders in the hells who were able to resolve themselves upon Bodhi, how can we human disciples of the Buddha fail to make great vows in this life?

Since time without beginning, we have been muddled and confused. It is useless to remonstrate with ourselves about the past, but we can wake up now, and begin immediately to make amends.

Since we are confused and not yet enlightened, we are certainly to be pitied. But if we know that we should cultivate yet we fail to practice, we are especially pathetic. If we fear the suffering in the hells, we will naturally be vigorous. If we remember the imminence of death, we will not become lazy.

Moreover, we must take the Buddhadharma as our whip and find good friends to urge us on. For this short time, do not leave them. Rely on them to the end of your life. Then you need not fear retreat.

Do not say that one thought is a small matter. Do not feel that vows are empty and useless. If our resolves are true, then we can realize our goals. When our vows are vast in scope, then our practice will go deep. Empty space is not big, but the ultimate resolve is gigantic. Vajra is not durable, but vowpower is supremely durable.

大眾誠能不棄我語，則菩提眷屬，從而聯姻。蓮
 dà zhòng chéng néng bú qì wǒ yǔ zé pú tí juàn shǔ cóng ér lián yīn lián

社宗盟，自今締好。所願同生淨土，同見彌陀，
 shè zōng méng zì jīn dì hǎo suǒ yuàn tóng shēng jìng tǔ tóng jiàn mí tuó

同化眾生，同成正覺。則安知未來三十二相，百
 tóng huà zhòng shēng tóng chéng zhèng jué zé ān zhī wèi lái sān shí èr xiàng bǎi

福莊嚴，不從今日發心立願而始也。
 fú zhuāng yán bù cóng jīn rì fā xīn lì yuàn ér shǐ yě

願與大眾共勉之。幸甚！幸甚！
 yuàn yǔ dà zhòng gòng miǎn zhī xìng shèn xìng shèn

Great assembly! If indeed you can accept my words, then from now on, all pledge fraternity in the retinue of Bodhi and sign a compact of kinship in a lotus society. We vow to be reborn together in the Pure Land, to see Amitabha Buddha together, to transform living beings together, and to attain Right Enlightenment together.

How do we know that our future perfection of the thirty-two hallmarks and the hundred blessings' adornments does not begin on this day that we make this resolve and set our vows?

I hope that the members of the great assembly will urge each other on. What good fortune! How lucky we are!