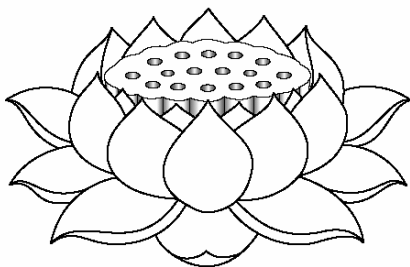


**THE SUTRA OF
FORTY-TWO
CHAPTERS**

佛說四十二章經



Translated by the Chung Tai Translation Committee
January 2009
From the Chinese translation by
Masters Kashyapa-matanga and Gobharana, 1st Century

Sutra annotations: January 2009

Prior English translations of the sutra by the Buddha Text Translation Society,
D. T. Suzuki, John Blofeld, and others were used as references.

The Chung Tai Translation Committee comprises of Dharma Masters and lay disciples and convenes regularly. To view or download other sutra translations by CTTC, visit “Dharma Gems” on <http://sunnyvale.ctzen.org>. Comments and suggestions may be sent to translation@ctzen.org

Namo Fundamental Teacher Shakyamuni Buddha

南 無 本 師 釋 迦 牟 尼 佛

SUTRA OPENING GATHA

開 經 偈

The Dharma, infinitely profound and subtle,
Is rarely encountered even in a million kalpas.
Now we are able to hear, study, and follow it,
May we fully realize the Tathagata's true meaning.

無 上 甚 深 微 妙 法
百 千 萬 劫 難 遭 遇
我 今 見 聞 得 受 持
願 解 如 來 真 實 義

Introduction

In the year of 67 C.E., at the special invitation by Emperor Ming of the Later Han Dynasty, two Indian Buddhist masters from India, Kashyapa-matanga and Gobharana, arrived at Luoyang (洛陽), China. Five years before their arrival, in 62 C.E., Emperor Ming had dreamed that a golden man flew into his palace. The next day he consulted his advisor who told the emperor that must be the sage Buddha. In 64 C.E. a delegation was sent to India to seek the Buddhadharma.

Kashyapa-matanga and Gobharana came with white horses, bearing precious sutras, Buddha statues, and relics. The emperor built them a monastery - the very first Buddhist monastery in all of China, aptly named The White Horse Monastery (白馬寺). There they undertook the great task of translating The Sutra of Forty-Two Chapters - the first Buddhist text translated into the Chinese language.

In the Sutra there are aspects of Theravada and Mahayana; expedient means and ultimate reality; gradual cultivation and sudden enlightenment. Even more importantly, all of the various teachings in the Sutra of Forty-Two Chapters are ultimately one single vehicle pointing to one single goal – enlightenment.

Today one can go on a pilgrimage to the graves of these two great Buddhist masters in the ancient White Horse Monastery in Luoyang, China. Generations of Buddhists are forever indebted to Venerable Kashyapa-matanga and Venerable Gobharana for this monumental scripture.

THE SUTRA OF FORTY-TWO CHAPTERS

(THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA OF FORTY-TWO CHAPTERS)

Translated into Chinese by Kashyapa-matanga and Gobharana
of the Later Han Dynasty

Prologue

Having attained Buddhahood, the World Honored One reflected: To abandon desire and be immersed in stillness is the supreme Way. Abiding in profound samadhi, one subdues all evil. The Buddha turned the Dharma Wheel of the Four Noble Truths at Deer Park, and led Kaundinya and four others to attain the fruit of the Way. There were also bhiksus who had various questions and implored the Buddha for guidance. The World Honored One taught and directed each one to enlightenment. Joining their palms with reverence and promise, they complied with the Buddha's noble instructions.

Chapter 1: Renounce the Secular Life and Attain the Fruit of Arhatship

The Buddha said, “Those who take leave of their families, and renounce the secular life, who know their mind, penetrate to its origin, and understand the unconditioned Dharma, are called shramanas. By always observing the 250 precepts, being pure and unblemished in their conduct, and practicing the Path of the Four Truths, they then become arhats. Arhats possess the powers of levitation and transformation. Their lives may span many kalpas, and they can move heaven and earth. Prior to arhats are the non-returners. At the end of their lives, conscious spirits of the non-returners will ascend above the nineteenth heaven, where they will attain arhatship. Prior to non-returners are the once-returners, who ascend to the heavens and return to earth at most once before they become arhats. Prior to once-returners are

the stream-enterers, who go through birth and death at most seven times before attaining arhatship. Once desire and lust are eradicated like severed limbs, one will never use them again.”

Chapter 2: No-mind Is the Way

The Buddha said, “Those who renounce the secular life to become shramanas eradicate desire and lust, recognize the source of their own mind, penetrate the profound doctrine of the Buddha, and awaken to the unconditioned Dharma. With nothing to gain from within and nothing to seek from without, their minds are not attached to the Way, nor do they accumulate karma. With no thought, no action, no cultivation, and no attainment, they transcend the successive stages and reach the loftiest state of all. This is called the Way.”

Chapter 3: Desire Makes People Foolish

The Buddha said, “Those who shave their head and beard to become shramanas and cultivate the Dharma of the Way should renounce worldly possessions, be content to beg for alms, and take only what is needed. Eat one meal a day before noon, pass the nights beneath trees, and be vigilant not to desire more, for desire and lust are what make people foolish and deluded.”

Chapter 4: The Ten Evils and Ten Virtues

The Buddha said, “In sentient beings, ten actions are virtuous and ten are evil. What are they? Three pertain to the body, four to the mouth, and three to the mind. Killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct pertain to the body. Malicious, abusive, false, and frivolous speech pertain to the mouth. Envy, anger, and ignorance pertain to the mind. These ten deeds, known as the ten evils, are not in accord with the Noble Way. To renounce the ten evils is to practice the ten virtues.”

Chapter 5: Reducing the Severity of Offenses

The Buddha said, “If a person with many faults fails to repent and cease immediately the thoughts that cause harm, his offenses will consume him, just as waters return to the sea which becomes ever deeper and wider. If a person with faults realizes his errors, corrects his actions and cultivates virtue, his offenses will naturally dissolve, just as sweating enables a sick person to recover gradually.”

Chapter 6: Tolerance without Resentment

The Buddha said, “When a malicious person hears about goodness and intentionally comes to provoke trouble, you should restrain yourself; do not be angry or reprimand him. Evil deeds will fall back upon the evil-doer.”

Chapter 7: Evil Deeds Return to the Doer

The Buddha said, “Someone came to insult me upon hearing that I uphold the Way and practice great benevolence. But I kept silent and did not respond. After he had stopped, I asked him, ‘If you bring someone a gift and he does not accept it, does the gift remain with you?’ ‘It does,’ he replied. The Buddha said, ‘Now you insult me, but I do not accept it; this insult will only bring yourself harm. Just as echo follows sound and shadow trails form, there is no escape. Be vigilant to do no evil.’”

Chapter 8: To Fling Dust into the Wind

The Buddha said, “An evil person who harms a sage is like one who spits toward the sky. The spit does not reach the sky, but falls back on himself. When one flings dust into the wind, the dust does not hit others but is blown back on himself. The sage cannot be harmed; evil actions will inevitably destroy the doer.”

Chapter 9: Knowledge and Practice

The Buddha said, “For those who accrue extensive knowledge of the Way, becoming enamored with it, the Way is difficult to attain. For those with unwavering resolve in following the Way, the Way is great indeed.”

Chapter 10: Joyfully Aid Others in Giving

The Buddha said, “When you see others practicing dana and joyfully aid in their efforts, you gain great blessings.” A shramana asked, “Will these blessings ever be exhausted?” The Buddha said, “It is like thousands of people who light their torches from the flame of a single torch, to cook food and dispel darkness, yet the original flame is undiminished. So it is with these blessings.”

Chapter 11: Fields of Blessings

The Buddha said:

“It is better to offer food to a single virtuous person than to one hundred evil people.

“It is better to offer food to one who observes the Five Precepts than to one thousand virtuous people.

“It is better to offer food to one stream-enterer than to ten thousand who observe the Five Precepts.

“It is better to offer food to one once-returner than to one million stream-enterers.

“It is better to offer food to one non-returner than to ten million once-returners.

“It is better to offer food to one arhat than to one hundred million non-returners.

“It is better to offer food to one pratyekabuddha than to one billion arhats.

“It is better to offer food to one of the Buddhas of the three periods of time than to ten billion pratyekabuddhas.

“It is better to offer food to one of ‘no thought’, ‘no abidance’, ‘no cultivation’, and ‘no attainment’ than to a hundred billion Buddhas of the three periods of time.”

Chapter 12: Twenty Difficulties in Cultivation

The Buddha said, “People have twenty kinds of difficulties:

“It is difficult for the poor to practice dana.

“It is difficult for the rich and eminent to practice the Way.

“It is difficult to renounce life when facing death.

“It is difficult to encounter the Buddhist sutras.

“It is difficult to be born in the age of a Buddha.

“It is difficult to subdue desire and lust.

“It is difficult not to covet what one likes.

“It is difficult to face humiliation without anger.

“It is difficult to have power and not abuse it.

“It is difficult to face situations with a detached mind.

“It is difficult to master vast areas of knowledge.

“It is difficult to extinguish self-conceit.

“It is difficult not to belittle those who are unlearned.

“It is difficult for the mind to act with impartiality.

“It is difficult not to gossip or be judgmental.

“It is difficult to meet the right, learned teacher.

“It is difficult to see one’s original nature and practice the Way.

“It is difficult to guide beings appropriately to liberation.

“It is difficult to be unperturbed by circumstances.

“It is difficult to master the expedient means of the Way.”

Chapter 13: Questions about the Way and Past Lives

A shramana asked the Buddha, “What enables one to know past lives and to attain the supreme Way?” The Buddha said, “By purifying your mind with unwavering resolve, you will attain the supreme Way. It is like polishing a mirror; when you remove the impurities, brightness is revealed. By eradicating desires and seeking nothing, you will gain knowledge of past lives.”

Chapter 14: Virtue and Greatness

A shramana asked the Buddha, “What is virtue? What is greatness?” The Buddha said, “To practice the Way and abide by the truth is virtue. When your will is one with the Way, that is greatness.”

Chapter 15: Tolerance and Purification

A shramana asked the Buddha, “What is great power? What is the brightest light?” The Buddha said, “Tolerance under insult is great power, because it harbors not hatred but peace and fortitude. Those who are tolerant are free from evil and will be honored by others. When the mind is utterly purged of defilements, it is pure without blemish or filth; that is the brightest light. From before the formation of heaven and earth, and through the present, there is nothing in the ten directions that one does not see, hear, or know—this all inclusive wisdom is indeed brightness.”

Chapter 16: Renounce Desire to Attain the Way

The Buddha said, “Those who harbor desire and lust cannot see the Way. When our hands disturb clear water, none who gather beside it can see their reflections. Similarly, when people are aroused by desires, their minds are so muddled they cannot see the Way. You shramanas should renounce desire. When desire and lust are purged, the Way will manifest itself.”

Chapter 17: Light Dispels Darkness

The Buddha said, “Seeing the Way is like entering a dark room holding a torch; darkness dissipates and light alone remains. When you follow the Way and see the truth, ignorance vanishes and enlightenment always remains.”

Chapter 18: The No-mind Doctrine

The Buddha said, “My doctrine is to be mindful of no-mind, to act with non-action, to speak the inexpressible, and to cultivate non-cultivation. Those who understand this are close to the Way; those who are confused are far from it. The Way is beyond speech and conception, and nothing can constrain it. To miss this point by a hair’s breadth is to lose the Way instantly.”

Chapter 19: Meditate on the Illusive and the Real

The Buddha said, “Observe heaven and earth and contemplate impermanence. Observe the world and contemplate impermanence. Seeing one’s awareness is bodhi. With this understanding one swiftly attains the Way.”

Chapter 20: The Self Is Empty

The Buddha said, “One should be mindful of the four great elements of the body. Each of them has a name, but an intrinsic self cannot be found. Since the self is empty, it is illusory.”

Chapter 21: Seeking Fame Consumes the Person

The Buddha said, “People follow their desires to seek fame. By the time fame is achieved, the body has fallen apart. Craving for lasting worldly fame instead of learning the Way, we wear out the body with futile efforts. Like a burning incense, its body is turning to ashes as people smell its scent—be aware, the imminent fire will consume you.”

Chapter 22: Wealth and Lust Bring Suffering

The Buddha said, “People are reluctant to renounce wealth and sex. These are like honey on a knife’s blade, which is not enough to appease one’s hunger, yet a child who licks this honey is in danger of cutting his tongue.”

Chapter 23: The Family Is Like Prison

The Buddha said, “Men are bound to their wives and homes more than the confinement of a prison. One may be released from prison, but a wife has no desire to let go. How dare one be reckless and indulge in passion and lust! Although they are as dangerous as the tiger’s jaws, people yield willingly, throwing themselves into the mire and drown. That is why they are called ordinary beings. Those who break free from this prison can transcend all defilements to become arhats.”

Chapter 24: Sexual Desire Hinders the Way

The Buddha said, “There is no desire more powerful than sex; sex as a desire has no equal. Fortunately, there is no other like it. If there were, no one in the world would be able to cultivate the Way.”

Chapter 25: The Fire of Lust Consumes the Body

The Buddha said, “People who succumb to lust are like those who walk against the wind holding a torch; they will surely burn their hands.”

Chapter 26: Deva Tempts the Buddha

A deva offered the Buddha beautiful maidens, wishing to corrupt him. The Buddha told the maidens, “Skin-bags filled with filth, why are you here? Begone! I have no use for you.” The deva was filled with respect and asked the Buddha the meaning of the Way. The Buddha instructed him whereupon he attained the fruit of stream-enterer.

Chapter 27: Logs in the Stream

The Buddha said, “Those who cultivate the Way are like logs in a stream, following the current. If they are not grounded on either shore, gathered by men, intercepted by demons or spirits, caught in whirlpools, and they do not decay, then I guarantee that these logs will reach the ocean. If those who follow the Way are not blinded by sensual desires, led astray by evil influences, and are diligent yet empty of effort, then I guarantee that they will attain the Way.”

Chapter 28: Be Wary of the Unbridled Mind

The Buddha said, “Be wary of trusting your own mind, for it is deceptive. Be wary of situations that may incite lust, for those will lead to disaster. Once you have attained arhatship, you can trust your own mind.”

Chapter 29: The Right Way to Counter Lust

The Buddha said, “Be wary and refrain from looking at women or speaking with them. If you do, be righteous in thought and contemplate: ‘I am now a shramana living in an impure world. I should be like the lotus flower, unsullied by mud.’ You should regard elderly women as your mothers, those older than you as your elder sisters, those younger than you as your younger sisters, and the little ones as your children. Resolve to liberate them all, thereby extinguishing impure thoughts.”

Chapter 30: Avoid the Fire of Desire

The Buddha said, “People who cultivate the Way are like those who carry hay; they should avoid fire. Cultivators of the Way must keep their distance from desires.”

Chapter 31: A Still Mind Extinguishes Lust

A man plagued with incessant lust wished to castrate himself. The Buddha told him, “Rather than castrate yourself, you should curb your mind. The mind is like a commander; when the commander halts, so will his subordinates. If you cannot cut off lascivious thoughts, what is the use of castrating yourself?” The Buddha recited the following verse:

Desire arises from thinking,
Thinking arises from conception and discernment.
When both aspects of the mind are still,
There is neither form nor action.

The Buddha said, “This verse was spoken by Kashyapa Buddha.”

Chapter 32: Desire Leads to Fear

The Buddha said, “Fear arises from worry, and worry arises from craving and desire. If you abandon desire, what fear or worry could you have?”

Chapter 33: Perseverance in Spiritual Battle

The Buddha said, “One who practices the Way is like a single person battling against ten thousand. Donning his armor and leaving home, his will may weaken, he may retreat halfway, he may be killed in combat, or he may return victorious. When shramanas follow the Way, they should be resolute, diligent, and valiant; not fearing what challenges lie ahead, they destroy all demons and attain the Way.

Chapter 34: Dharma of the Middle Way

One night a shramana was reciting the Sutra Bequeathed by Kashyapa Buddha. His tone was woeful and tense. Plagued by doubts, he thought of abandoning the monastic life. The Buddha asked him, “What did you do when you were a householder?” He

said, “I was fond of playing the lute.” The Buddha asked, “What happens when the strings are too loose?” He replied, “There is no sound.” “What happens when the strings are too taut?” He replied, “The sound is discordant.” “What happens when the strings are neither too loose nor too taut?” He replied, “All the sounds are in harmony.”

The Buddha said, “It is the same when a shramana is practicing the Way. If his mind is properly tuned, he will attain the Way. If he pursues the Way too impetuously, his body will be weary. If his body is weary, his mind will be vexed. If vexations arise, his practice will regress. If his practice regresses, his faults will increase. However, if he remains pure, serene, and joyful, he will not lose the Way.”

Chapter 35: Expel Defilements and the Mind Becomes Pure

The Buddha said, “When a man forges iron, he removes impurities to make tools of the finest quality. When those who follow the Way expel defilements from their minds, their deeds will be pure.”

Chapter 36: Stages to Non-Attainment

The Buddha said:

“It is difficult to ascend from the three wretched destinies and be born as a human being.

“Even as a human being, it is difficult to be born as a man rather than a woman.

“Even as a man, it is difficult to have all six senses complete.

“Even without physical or mental impairment, it is difficult to be born in the middle country.

“Even in the middle country, it is difficult to be born at the time of a Buddha.

“Even at the time of a Buddha, it is difficult to encounter the Way. Even having encountered the Way, it is difficult for one to generate sufficient faith.

“Even with faith, it is difficult to bring forth the bodhi mind.

“Even with the bodhi mind, it is difficult to realize non-cultivation and non-attainment.”

Chapter 37: Be Mindful of the Precepts

The Buddha said, “If disciples thousands of miles away from me are mindful of my precepts, they will surely attain the fruit of the Way. If those who are by my side and see me constantly do not uphold my precepts, they will never attain the Way.

Chapter 38: The Impermanence of Life

The Buddha asked a shramana, “How long can one be sure of staying alive?” “A few days,” was the reply. The Buddha said, “You do not know about life.” He asked another shramana, “How long can one be sure of staying alive?” “The length of a meal,” was the reply. The Buddha said, “You do not know about life.” He then asked another shramana, “How long can one be sure of staying alive?” The reply was “A single breath.” The Buddha said, “Well said, you know about life!”

Chapter 39: The Dharma Is Like Honey

The Buddha said, “Students of the Buddha’s Way should have faith in and comply with all that the Buddha says. It is like honey, sweet from the surface to the middle. So it is with my sutras.”

Chapter 40: Ox Turning a Millstone

The Buddha said, “Shramanas who practice the Way should not be like oxen turning millstones; although their bodies follow the path, their minds do not. If the mind follows the Way, what need is there to labor on the path?”

Chapter 41: A Steadfast Mind Frees One from Desire

The Buddha said, “One who practices the Way is like an ox that carries a burden through a mire. Although very tired, the ox dares not look to the right or to the left; he cannot rest until he gets out. You shramanas must look upon sensual desires as worse than a filthy mire. Being steadfast and mindful of the Way, one can avert suffering.”

Chapter 42: Seeing the Illusions of the World

The Buddha said:

“I look upon positions of nobility as dust drifting through a crevice.

“I look upon treasures of gold and jade as mere rubble.

“I look upon garments of fine silk as worn-out rags.

“I look upon the universe as a small haritaki fruit.

“I look upon the water of the Anavatapta Lake as oil applied to the feet.

“I look upon expedient means as a cluster of imaginary jewels.

“I look upon the supreme vehicle as a dream of gold and silk.

“I look upon the Buddha Way as a flower in the air.

“I look upon samadhi as the great pillar Mount Sumeru.

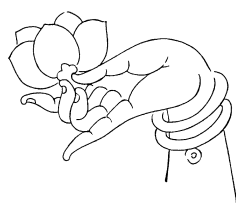
“I look upon nirvana as being awake both day and night.

“I look upon deviancy and orthodoxy as six dancing dragons.

“I look upon the doctrine of impartiality as the absolute ground of reality.

“I look upon the flourishing of the teaching as a tree in four seasons.”

Having heard the Buddha’s discourses, the great bhiksus joyfully accepted and followed the teaching.



THE SUTRA OF FORTY-TWO CHAPTERS

(THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA¹ OF FORTY-TWO CHAPTERS)

Translated into Chinese by Kashyapa-matanga and Gobharana
of the Later Han Dynasty²

佛說四十二章經

後漢迦葉摩、竺法蘭 合譯

Prologue

Having attained Buddhahood, the World Honored One³ reflected: To abandon desire⁴ and be immersed in stillness⁵ is the supreme Way. Abiding in profound samadhi⁶, one subdues all evil⁷. The Buddha turned the Dharma Wheel⁸ of the Four Noble Truths⁹ at Deer Park¹⁰, and led Kaundinya¹¹ and four others to attain the fruit of the Way¹². There were also bhiksus¹³ who had various questions and implored the Buddha for guidance. The World Honored One taught and directed each one to enlightenment¹⁴. Joining their palms with reverence and promise, they complied with the Buddha's noble instructions.

經 序

世尊成道已，作是思惟：離欲寂靜，是最為勝。
住大禪定，降諸魔道。於鹿野苑中，轉四諦法
輪，度憍陳如等五人而證道果。復有比丘，所
說諸疑，求佛進止。世尊教敕，一一開悟，合
掌敬諾，而順尊敕。

Title

¹ **sutra**(Sanskrit) 佛經. A Buddhist scripture containing the dialogues or discourses of the Buddha.

² **Later Han Dynasty** (25 - 220 C.E.) 35 years after the demise of the Former Han Dynasty (206 - 8 B.C.E., also known as Western Han), a relative of the imperial family re-established Han with Luoyang as the capital, (east of Chang An, the former capital), which was also known as the Later (Eastern) Han Dynasty. It was during the rein of the second emperor, Han Ming Di (漢明帝), circa 70 C.E., that Buddhism was brought to China by two Indian Buddhist Masters, Kashyapa-matanga and Gobharana, who also translated the Sutra of Forty-Two Chapters into Chinese.

Prologue

³ **the World Honored One.** *Bhagavan* (Sanskrit). One of the ten honorable titles (十號) of Shakyamuni and all other buddhas. The ten titles are (in Sanskrit and Chinese):

- *Tathagata* (如來): Thus Come One (one who comes from the Truth); Thus Gone One; One who Neither Comes nor Goes
- *Arhat* (應供): One who is (1) worthy of offering, (2) killer of thieves – Arhat has killed the thieves of afflictions and defilements, and (3) free of future rebirths
- *Samyak-sambuddha* (正遍知): Rightly Enlightened, one who knows the whole truth
- *Vidya-carana-sampanna* (明行足): Perfect in Wisdom and Action
- *Sugata* (善逝): Well-Gone (a good death)
- *Lokavid* (世間解): Knower of the World
- *Anuttara* (無上士): The Unsurpassed One
- *Purusadamyasara* (調御大夫): The Tamer
- *Sasta devamanusyanam* (天人師): Teacher of Heavenly and Human Beings
- *Bhagavan* (世尊 or 薄伽梵): World Honored One

⁴ **desire.** Here it refers to all levels of attachment to worldly phenomena which are the cause of suffering.

⁵ **stillness.** A state of mind in absolute peace and serenity.

⁶ **samadhi** (Sanskrit). A highly concentrated state of mind achieved by meditation.

- ⁷ **evil.** To subdue all evil means to overcome all demons who try to block one's practice.
- ⁸ **Dharma Wheel.** A Buddhist emblem. Dharma, the Buddha's teaching, is likened to a wheel because it can crush illusions and ignorance. To turn the Dharma Wheel is to spread the Buddha's teachings.
- ⁹ **the Four Truths.** Refers to The Four Noble Truths, the foundation of the Buddha's teaching. They are: (1) the truth of suffering, (2) the truth of the cause of suffering, (3) the truth of the cessation of suffering, and (4) the truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering.
- ¹⁰ **Deer Park.** The place where the Buddha delivered his first sermon to the five bhiksus. It is in Sarnath near Varanasi, long considered a Buddhist holy place in India.
- ¹¹ **Kaundinya.** The first disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha to become enlightened and one of the first five bhiksus that followed the Buddha. The other four are Bhadraka, Vaspa, Mahanama, and Ashvajit.
- ¹² **the Way.** The truth, or the path of awakening to the truth, the path to Buddhahood.
- ¹³ **bhiksu** (Sanskrit). An ordained monk who has renounced home life to seek enlightenment; he observes celibacy as well as 250 precepts defining the conduct of a monk. The female equivalent is called *bhikshuni*.
- ¹⁴ **enlightenment.** "Bodhi" in Sanskrit, means awakening. An enlightened person is awakened to the truth, the ultimate nature of reality. There are many levels of enlightenment, the highest being Buddhahood.

Chapter 1: Renounce the Secular Life and Attain the Fruit of Arhatship

The Buddha said, “Those who take leave of their families and renounce the secular life¹⁵, who know their mind, penetrate to its origin, and understand the unconditioned¹⁶ Dharma¹⁷, are called shramanas¹⁸. By always observing the 250 precepts¹⁹, being pure and unblemished in their conduct, and practicing the Path of the Four Truths, they then become arhats²⁰. Arhats possess the powers of levitation and transformation²¹. Their lives may span many kalpas²², and they can move heaven and earth. Prior to arhats are the non-returners²³. At the end of their lives, conscious spirits of the non-returners will ascend above the nineteenth heaven²⁴, where they will attain arhatship. Prior to non-returners are the once-returners, who ascend to the heavens and return to earth at most once before they become arhats. Prior to once-returners²⁵ are the stream-enterers²⁶, who go through birth and death at most seven times before attaining arhatship. Once desire and lust are eradicated, like severed limbs, one will never use them again.”

第一章 出家證果

佛言：辭親出家，識心達本，解無為法，名曰沙門。常行二百五十戒，進止清淨，為四真道行，成阿羅漢。阿羅漢者，能飛行變化，曠劫壽命，住動天地。次為阿那含，阿那含者，壽終靈神上十九天，證阿羅漢。次為斯陀含，斯陀含者，一上一還，即得阿羅漢。次為須陀洹，須陀洹者，七死七生，便證阿羅漢。愛欲斷者，如四肢斷，不復用之。

Chapter 1

¹⁵ **renounce the secular life.** Means to leave the secular home life to become a monk or a nun. In addition, it also means 1) to leave the home of the five *skandhas*(form, feeling, conception, volition, and consciousness), that is, to identify the five aggregates as the 'false' self; 2) to leave the home of *klesas* (greed, anger, and ignorance) or afflictions; and 3) to leave the home of *samsara*, that is, the home of the endless cycle of birth and death.

¹⁶ **unconditioned.** The world as perceived by ordinary people are conditioned which leads to suffering. The enlightened beings are able to transcend the conditioned existence and arrive at the unconditioned shore which is to attain *nirvana*.

¹⁷ **unconditioned Dharma.** To understand the unconditioned Dharma is to realize nirvana. See 'unconditioned'.

¹⁸ **shramanas** (Sanskrit). Monks. Shramanas diligently cultivate precepts, samadhi, and wisdom, striving to eradicate greed, anger, and ignorance.

¹⁹ **250 precepts.** The full set of guidelines of conduct that fully ordained Buddhist monks must observe.

²⁰ **arhat** (Sanskrit). A Buddhist saint who has realized emptiness, having eradicated all afflictions. An arhat is no longer subject to death and rebirth.

²¹ **power of levitation and transformation.** One of the six supramundane powers possessed by an arhat. The other five are clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, knowledge of past lives, and knowledge of having ended all defilements.

²² **kalpa.** A kalpa is a very long period of time. Formally, a large kalpa is a cycle of the universe, which consists of four stages: birth (of the universe or a "buddha world"), stability, disintegration, and void.

²³ **non-returned or anagamin.** The third stage of arhatship. A non-returned has eradicated all defilements of the Desire Realm and thus will never be born in that realm again.

²⁴ **Nineteenth heaven.** Heaven in the Realm of Form which is above the Realm of Desire. There are nineteen heavens in the Realm of Desire and Realm of Form. A non-returned ascends above the Nineteenth heaven to reside in one of the five celestial planes of the Saint.

²⁵ **once-returned or sakridagamin.** The second stage of arhatship. A once-returned has not completely eradicated the defilements of the Desire Realm and thus has to undergo one more human re-birth.

²⁶ **stream-enterer or srotapanna.** The first stage of arhatship. A stream-enterer is enlightened to emptiness, but yet has to undergo a maximum of seven rebirths as a human and seven rebirths as a heavenly being, alternately, in order to eradicate all defilements.

Chapter 2: No-Mind²⁷ Is the Way

The Buddha said, “Those who renounce the secular life to become shramanas eradicate desire and lust, recognize the source of their own mind²⁸, penetrate the profound doctrine of the Buddha, and awaken to the unconditioned Dharma. With nothing to gain from within and nothing to seek from without²⁹, their minds are not attached to the Way, nor do they accumulate karma³⁰. With no thought³¹, no action³², no cultivation³³, and no attainment³⁴, they transcend the successive stages³⁵ and reach the loftiest state of all. This is called the Way.”

第二章 斷欲絕求

佛言：出家沙門者，斷欲去愛，識自心源，達佛深理，悟無為法。內無所得，外無所求。心不繫道，亦不結業。無念無作，非修非證。不歷諸位而自崇最，名之為道。

Chapter 3: Desire³⁶ Makes People Foolish

The Buddha said, “Those who shave their head³⁷ and beard to become shramanas and cultivate the Dharma of the Way should renounce worldly possessions, be content to beg for alms and take only what is needed. Eat one meal a day before noon, pass the nights beneath trees, and be vigilant not to desire more, for desire and lust are what make people foolish and deluded.”

第三章 割愛去貪

佛言：剃除鬚髮，而為沙門，受道法者，去世資財，乞求取足；日中一食，樹下一宿，慎勿再矣。使人愚蔽者，愛與欲也。

Chapter 2

- ²⁷ **no-mind.** The state of the mind free of delusion and dualistic thoughts.
- ²⁸ **recognize the source of their own mind.** To realize our original nature, also known as the buddha nature.
- ²⁹ **nothing to gain from within, nothing to seek from without.** We are intrinsically whole and complete, lacking nothing spiritually or materially.
- ³⁰ **karma.** Karma means action, which includes physical, verbal, and mental activities. By the law of causality, each action has its corresponding consequences. Action that benefits others brings blessings and happiness; action that harms others brings suffering. We are subject to the consequences of our own karma.
- ³¹ **no thought.** The mind is free from deluded thoughts and does not cling to anything.
- ³² **no action.** Free from forced efforts. Refer to the annotation of "unconditioned" above.
- ³³ **no cultivation.** Cultivation without an ego, attachment, and dualistic thoughts.
- ³⁴ **no attainment.** The nature of all phenomena, including the fruit of cultivation, is empty.
- ³⁵ **successive stages.** The levels of enlightenment to Buddhahood.

Chapter 3

- ³⁶ **desire.** All kinds of desires, for example the five cravings for wealth, sex, fame, food, and sleep.
- ³⁷ **shave their heads.** A way Buddhist monastics renounce attachments to appearance and vanity.

Chapter 4: The Ten Evils and Ten Virtues

The Buddha said, “In sentient beings, ten actions are virtuous and ten are evil. What are they? Three pertain to the body, four to the mouth³⁸, and three to the mind. Killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct pertain to the body. Malicious, abusive, false, and frivolous speech pertain to the mouth. Envy, anger, and ignorance pertain to the mind. These ten deeds, known as the ten evils, are not in accord with the Noble Way. To renounce the ten evils is to practice the ten virtues.”

第四章 善惡並明

佛言：眾生以十事為善，亦以十事為惡。何等為十？身三、口四、意三。身三者，殺、盜、淫。口四者，兩舌、惡口、妄言、綺語。意三者，嫉、恚、癡。如是十事，不順聖道，名十惡行；是惡若止，名十善行耳。

Chapter 5: Reducing the Severity of Offenses³⁹

The Buddha said, “If a person with many faults fails to repent⁴⁰ and cease immediately the thoughts⁴¹ that cause harm, his offenses will consume him, just as waters return to the sea which becomes ever deeper and wider. If a person with faults realizes his errors, corrects his actions and cultivates virtue, his offenses will naturally dissolve, just as sweating enables a sick person to recover gradually.”

第五章 轉重令輕

佛言：人有眾過，而不自悔，頓息其心，罪來赴身。如水歸海，漸成深廣。若人有過，自解知非，改惡行善，罪自消滅。如病得汗，漸有痊損耳。

Chapter 4

- ³⁸ **four evil deeds of the mouth.** 1) Malicious speech 兩舌 – divisive words; 2) Abusive speech 惡口 – harsh words, profanities; 3) False speech 妄言 – lying, slandering; 4) Frivolous speech 綺語 – worthless talks, flirtatious talks.

Chapter 5

- ³⁹ **offences.** Bad thoughts and actions that bring upon suffering.
- ⁴⁰ **repent.** To sincerely confess our bad deeds, speech, and thoughts, to realize the harm they have caused, to make amends and vow never to repeat them again.
- ⁴¹ **cease immediately the thoughts.** Getting rid of harmful thoughts and calming the mind right away to allow no time for anger and greed to build up within us.

Chapter 6: Tolerance Without Resentment

The Buddha said, "When a malicious person hears about goodness and intentionally comes to provoke trouble, you should restrain yourself; do not be angry or reprimand him. Evil deeds will fall back upon the evil-doer."

第六章 忍惡無瞋

佛言：惡人聞善，故來撓亂者，汝自禁息，當無瞋責。彼來惡者而自惡之。

Chapter 7: Evil Deeds Return to the Doer

The Buddha said, "Someone came to insult me upon hearing that I uphold the Way and practice great benevolence. But I kept silent and did not respond. After he had stopped, I asked him, 'If you bring someone a gift and he does not accept it, does the gift remain with you?' 'It does,' he replied. The Buddha said, 'Now you insult me, but I do not accept it; this insult will only bring yourself harm. Just as echo follows sound and shadow trails form, there is no escape. Be vigilant to do no evil.'"

第七章 惡還本身

佛言：有人聞吾守道，行大仁慈，故致罵佛。佛默不對。罵止，問曰：子以禮從人，其人不納，禮歸子乎？對曰：歸矣。佛言：今子罵我，我今不納。子自持禍，歸子身矣。猶響應聲，影之隨形，終無免離。慎勿為惡。

Chapter 8: To Fling Dust into the Wind

The Buddha said, “An evil person who harms a sage is like one who spits toward the sky. The spit does not reach the sky, but falls back on himself. When one flings dust into the wind, the dust does not hit others but is blown back on himself. The sage⁴² cannot be harmed; evil actions will inevitably destroy the doer.”

第八章 塵唾自污

佛言：惡人害賢者，猶仰天而唾，唾不至天，還從己墮。逆風揚塵，塵不至彼，還坌己身。賢不可毀，禍必滅己。

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#### Chapter 8

<sup>42</sup> **sage.** An advanced practitioner of the Way who is virtuous and wise, whose words and actions are exemplary.

## Chapter 9: Knowledge and Practice

The Buddha said, “For those who accrue extensive knowledge of the Way, becoming enamored<sup>43</sup> with it, the Way is difficult to attain. For those with unwavering resolve in following the Way, the Way is great indeed<sup>44</sup>.”

### 第九章 返本會道

佛言：博聞愛道，道必難會。守志奉道，其道甚大。

## Chapter 10: Joyfully Aid Others in Giving

The Buddha said, “When you see others practicing dana<sup>45</sup> and joyfully aid in their efforts, you gain great blessings.” A shramana asked, “Will these blessings ever be exhausted?” The Buddha said, “It is like thousands of people who light their torches from the flame of a single torch, to cook food and dispel darkness<sup>46</sup>, yet the original flame is undiminished. So it is with these blessings<sup>47</sup>.”

### 第十章 喜施獲福

佛言：睹人施道，助之歡喜，得福甚大。沙門問曰：此福盡乎。佛言：譬如一炬之火，數百千人，各以炬來分取，熟食除冥，此炬如故。福亦如之。

Chapter 9

<sup>43</sup> **becoming enamored.** Becoming attached to the Way, practicing with extreme views, or being captivated with philosophy without practice.

<sup>44</sup> **the Way is great indeed.** For those with unwavering resolve in following the Way, the path opens widely to them. Because of their persistence, they will go far in their cultivation.

Chapter 10

<sup>45</sup> **dana.** Charity, the first of the six *paramitas* (perfections) practiced by a bodhisattva.

<sup>46</sup> **to cook food and dispel darkness.** "To cook food" represents worldly blessings (good karma). "To dispel darkness" represents gaining great transcendental wisdom (*prajna*), the ultimate blessing of dana paramitas.

<sup>47</sup> **these blessings.** Refer to what the flame can do when thousands of people share it; it refers to the whole thing, not just the single flame.

## Chapter 11: Fields of Blessings<sup>48</sup>

The Buddha said:

“It is better to offer food to a single virtuous person than to one hundred evil people.

“It is better to offer food to one who observes the Five Precepts than to one thousand virtuous people.

“It is better to offer food to one stream-enterer than to ten thousand who observe the Five Precepts<sup>49</sup>.

“It is better to offer food to one once-returner than to one million stream-enterers.

“It is better to offer food to one non-returner than to ten million once-returners.

“It is better to offer food to one arhat than to one hundred million non-returners.

“It is better to offer food to one pratyekabuddha<sup>50</sup> than to one billion arhats.

“It is better to offer food to one of the buddhas of the three periods of time<sup>51</sup> than to ten billion pratyekabuddhas.

“It is better to offer food to one of ‘no thought’<sup>52</sup>, ‘no abidance’<sup>53</sup>, ‘no cultivation’, and ‘no attainment’ than to a hundred billion buddhas of the three periods of time.”

### 第十一章 施飯轉勝

佛言：飯惡人百，不如飯一善人。飯善人千，不如飯一持五戒者。飯五戒者萬，不如飯一須陀洹。飯百萬須陀洹，不如飯一斯陀含。飯千萬斯陀含，不如飯一阿那含。飯一億阿那含，不如飯一阿羅漢。飯十億阿羅漢，不如飯一辟支佛。飯百億辟支佛，不如飯一三世諸佛。飯千億三世諸佛，不如飯一無念無住無修無證之者。



Chapter 11

<sup>48</sup> **fields of blessings.** Good deeds are like seeds; if planted in richer soil (those who are worthy of offerings), they yield greater merits.

<sup>49</sup> **Five Precepts.** The foundation of morality in the Buddhism. They are 1) no killing, 2) no stealing, 3) no sexual misconduct, 4) no lying, and 5) no intoxication.

<sup>50</sup> **pratyekabuddha.** Persons who get enlightened and attain nirvana (1) by meditating on the principle of causality specifically the twelve links of dependent origination; (2) by awakening to the truth through their own effort because they live in time when there is no buddha or Buddhist teachings.

<sup>51</sup> **three periods of time.** The past, present, and future.

<sup>52</sup> **'no thought', 'no cultivation', and 'no attainment'.** Refer to annotations 31, 33, and 34 in Chapter 2 (page22).

<sup>53</sup> **no abidance.** No clinging, no attachment.

## Chapter 12: Twenty Difficulties in Cultivation

The Buddha said, “People have twenty kinds of difficulties:

“It is difficult for the poor to practice dana.

“It is difficult for the rich and eminent to practice the Way.

“It is difficult to renounce life when facing death.

“It is difficult to encounter the Buddhist sutras<sup>54</sup>.

“It is difficult to be born in the age of a buddha.

“It is difficult to subdue desire and lust.

“It is difficult not to covet what one likes.

“It is difficult to face humiliation without anger.

“It is difficult to have power and not abuse it.

“It is difficult to face situations with a detached mind<sup>55</sup>.

“It is difficult to master vast areas of knowledge.

“It is difficult to extinguish self-conceit.

“It is difficult not to belittle those who are unlearned.

“It is difficult for the mind to act with impartiality<sup>56</sup>.

“It is difficult not to gossip or be judgmental.

“It is difficult to meet the right, learned teacher.

“It is difficult to see one’s original nature<sup>57</sup> and practice the Way.

“It is difficult to guide beings appropriately<sup>58</sup> to liberation.

“It is difficult to be unperturbed by circumstances.

“It is difficult to master the expedient means<sup>59</sup> of the Way.”

### 第十二章 舉難勸修

佛言：人有二十難。貧窮布施難。豪貴學道難。棄命必死難。得睹佛經難。生值佛世難。忍色忍欲難。見好不求難。被辱不瞋難。有勢不臨難。觸事無心難。廣學博究難。除滅我慢難。不輕未學難。心行平等難。不說是非難。會善知識難。見性學道難。隨化度人難。睹境不動難。善解方便難。

Chapter 12

<sup>54</sup> **encounter the Buddhist sutras.** Many people in the world do not have the opportunity to read the Buddhist sutras; those who do should cherish this opportunity as it is a result of great benevolent deeds in the past.

<sup>55</sup> **detached mind.** Seeing things without attachments, i.e. the mind remains calm and lucid without clinging to emotions or becoming vexed by the situations.

<sup>56</sup> **impartiality.** Without preference, prejudice, bias, or discrimination; with the view that all sentient beings have Buddha nature and are intrinsically equal.

<sup>57</sup> **original nature.** The Buddha nature that is intrinsically pure; free from delusions of the false ego.

<sup>58</sup> **guide beings appropriately.** To teach beings according to their individual needs, abilities, dispositions, and circumstances.

<sup>59</sup> **expedient means.** Ways to guide all types of sentient beings on the path to Buddhahood.

## Chapter 13: Questions About the Way and Past Lives

A shramana asked the Buddha, “What enables one to know past lives and to attain the supreme Way<sup>60</sup>?” The Buddha said, “By purifying your mind with unwavering resolve, you will attain the supreme Way. It is like polishing a mirror; when you remove the impurities, brightness is revealed. By eradicating desires and seeking nothing, you will gain knowledge of past lives.”

### 第十三章 問道宿命

沙門問佛：以何因緣，得知宿命，會其至道。  
佛言：淨心守志，可會至道。譬如磨鏡，垢去  
明存。斷欲無求，當得宿命。

## Chapter 14: Virtue and Greatness

A shramana asked the Buddha, “What is virtue? What is greatness?” The Buddha said, “To practice the Way and abide by the truth is virtue. When your will is one with the Way<sup>61</sup>, that is greatness.”

### 第十四章 請問善大

沙門問佛：何者為善，何者最大。佛言：行道  
守真者善，志與道合者大。

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Chapter 13

⁶⁰ **supreme Way.** Ultimate enlightenment, Buddhahood.

Chapter 14

⁶¹ **one with the Way.** When our goals, thoughts, and actions are all in unison with the Way.

Chapter 15: Tolerance and Purification

A shramana asked the Buddha, “What is great power? What is the brightest light⁶²?” The Buddha said, “Tolerance under insult is great power⁶³, because it harbors not hatred but peace and fortitude. Those who are tolerant are free from evil and will be honored by others. When the mind is utterly purged of defilements, it is pure without blemish or filth; that is the brightest light. From before the formation of heaven and earth, and through the present, there is nothing in the ten directions⁶⁴ that one does not see, hear, or know—this all inclusive wisdom⁶⁵ is indeed brightness.”

第十五章 請問力明

沙門問佛：何者多力，何者最明。佛言：忍辱多力，不懷惡故，兼加安健。忍者無惡，必為人尊。心垢滅盡，淨無瑕穢，是為最明。未有天地，逮於今日，十方所有，無有不見，無有不知，無有不聞，得一切智，可謂明矣。

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#### Chapter 15

<sup>62</sup> **what is the brightest light.** The shramana, as a cultivator, is trying to understand how to perceive things in the clearest way so he can practice the bodhisattva way wisely and effectively.

<sup>63</sup> **tolerance under insult is great power.** Through tolerance one can endure insults and turn enemies into allies, therefore benefiting oneself and others. That is the great power in the bodhisattva practice.

<sup>64</sup> **the ten directions.** The eight directions of the compass plus the upward and downward directions.

<sup>65</sup> **all inclusive wisdom.** The wisdom of a fully enlightened one, which includes the wisdom of expedient means and emptiness.

## **Chapter 16: Renounce Desire to Attain the Way**

The Buddha said, “Those who harbor desire and lust cannot see the Way. When our hands disturb clear water, none who gather beside it can see their reflections. Similarly, when people are aroused by desires, their minds are so muddled they cannot see the Way. You shramanas should renounce desire. When desire and lust are purged, the Way will manifest itself.”

### **第十六章 捨愛得道**

佛言：人懷愛欲，不見道者，譬如澄水，致手攪之，眾人共臨，無有睹其影者；人以愛欲交錯，心中濁興，故不見道。汝等沙門，當捨愛欲；愛欲垢盡，道可見矣。

## **Chapter 17: Light Dispels Darkness**

The Buddha said, “Seeing the Way is like entering a dark room holding a torch; darkness dissipates and light alone remains. When you follow the Way and see the truth, ignorance vanishes and enlightenment always remains.”

### **第十七章 明來暗謝**

佛言：夫見道者，譬如持炬，入冥室中，其冥即滅，而明獨存。學道見諦，無明即滅，而明常存矣。

## Chapter 18: The No-mind Doctrine<sup>66</sup>

The Buddha said, “My doctrine is to be mindful of no-mind<sup>67</sup>, to act with non-action<sup>68</sup>, to speak the inexpressible<sup>69</sup>, and to cultivate non-cultivation<sup>70</sup>. Those who understand this are close to the Way; those who are confused are far from it. The Way is beyond speech and conception, and nothing can constrain it. To miss this point by a hair’s breadth is to lose the Way instantly.”

### 第十八章 念等本空

佛言：吾法念無念念，行無行行，言無言言，  
修無修修。會者近爾，迷者遠乎。言語道斷，  
非物所拘。差之毫釐，失之須臾。

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Chapter 18

⁶⁶ **no-mind doctrine.** One should practice and abide by the Buddha’s teaching of right thought, right action, right speech, and right cultivation. Yet for advanced practitioners, they should understand that all these practices are empty in nature, so one should not be attached to them.

⁶⁷ **mindful of no-mind.** To be mindful without delusive and dualistic thoughts; to think without attachment.

⁶⁸ **act with non-action.** To act with the understanding that all phenomena are illusive.

⁶⁹ **speak the inexpressible.** To speak with the understanding that reality is indescribable.

⁷⁰ **cultivate non-cultivation.** To cultivate with the understanding that our original nature is complete and perfect; so there is nothing gained or lost from cultivation.

Chapter 19: Meditate on the Illusive and the Real⁷¹

The Buddha said, “Observe heaven and earth, and contemplate impermanence. Observe the world and contemplate impermanence. Seeing one’s awareness is bodhi⁷². With this understanding one swiftly attains the Way.”

第十九章 假真並觀

佛言：觀天地，念非常；觀世界，念非常；觀靈覺，即菩提。如是知識，得道疾矣。

Chapter 20: The Self Is Empty

The Buddha said, “One should be mindful of the four great elements⁷³ of the body. Each of them has a name, but an intrinsic self cannot be found⁷⁴. Since the self is empty, it is illusory.”

第二十章 推我本空

佛言：當念身中四大，各自有名，都無我者，我既都無，其如幻耳。

Chapter 21: Seeking Fame Consumes the Person

The Buddha said, “People follow their desires to seek fame. By the time fame is achieved, the body has fallen apart. Craving for lasting worldly fame⁷⁵ instead of learning the Way, we wear out the body with futile efforts. Like a burning incense, its body is turning to ashes as people smell its scent -- be aware, the imminent fire will consume you⁷⁶.”

第二十一章 名聲喪本

佛言：人隨情欲，求於聲名，聲名顯著，身已故矣。貪世常名，而不學道，枉功勞形。譬如燒香，雖人聞香，香之燼矣，危身之火，而在其後。

Chapter 19

⁷¹ **meditate on the illusive and the real.** The path to Buddhahood involves both meditation on the conventional truth (the Illusive) and meditation on the absolute truth (the Real).

⁷² **seeing one's awareness is bodhi.** Bodhi is a Sanskrit word for awakening, perfect wisdom, and enlightenment. The goal of Buddhism is to attain the bodhi mind, one's true awareness. To attain enlightenment is to see into the true nature of one's own awareness.

Chapter 20

⁷³ **four great elements.** Earth (solid), water (liquid), wind (air or motion), and fire (heat or energy). They comprise all matter.

⁷⁴ **intrinsic self cannot be found.** The "self" cannot be found anywhere in the four elements that make up our body; therefore, the self is illusory. Furthermore, each of the four elements has no independent existence, and thus is empty of a "self". The teaching of emptiness includes two parts: the emptiness of sentient beings and of all phenomena. (The same is true with the other skandhas.)

Chapter 21

⁷⁵ **lasting worldly fame.** No matter how great one's fame is, when that person dies, it becomes irrelevant; the karmic consequences of one's deeds however follow the person like a burning fire.

⁷⁶ **the imminent fire will consume you.** The strong habitual desires and their karmic consequences are the fire that will continue to destroy us.

Chapter 22: Wealth and Lust Bring Suffering

The Buddha said, “People are reluctant to renounce wealth and sex. These are like honey on a knife’s blade, which is not enough to appease one’s hunger, yet a child who licks this honey is in danger of cutting his tongue.”

第二十二章 財色招苦

佛言：財色於人，人之不捨。譬如刀刃有蜜，不足一餐之美。小兒舐之，則有割舌之患。

Chapter 23: The Family Is Like Prison

The Buddha said, “Men are bound to their wives⁷⁷ and homes more than the confinement of a prison. One may be released from prison, but a wife has no desire to let go. How dare one be reckless and indulge in passion and lust! Although they are as dangerous as the tiger’s jaws, people yield willingly, throwing themselves into the mire and drown. That is why they are called ordinary beings. Those who break free from this prison can transcend all defilements to become arhats.”

第二十三章 妻子甚獄

佛言：人繫於妻子舍宅，甚於牢獄。牢獄有散釋之期，妻子無遠離之念。情愛於色，豈憚驅馳？雖有虎口之患，心存甘伏，投泥自溺，故曰凡夫。透得此門，出塵羅漢。

Chapter 24: Sexual Desire Hinders the Way

The Buddha said, “There is no desire more powerful than sex; sex as a desire has no equal. Fortunately, there is no other like it. If there were, no one in the world would be able to cultivate the Way.”

第二十四章 色欲障道

佛言：愛欲莫甚於色，色之為欲，其大無外。
賴有一矣，若使二同，普天之人，無能為道者
矣。

Chapter 25: The Fire of Lust Consumes the Body

The Buddha said, “People who succumb to lust are like those who walk against the wind holding a torch; they will surely burn their hands.”

第二十五章 欲火燒身

佛言：愛欲之人，猶如執炬。逆風而行，必有
燒手之患。

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### Chapter 23

<sup>77</sup> **men are bound to their wives.** Vice versa, women are also bound to their husbands and homes, and the husband has no desire to let go.

## Chapter 26: Deva Tempts the Buddha

A deva<sup>78</sup> offered the Buddha beautiful maidens, wishing to corrupt him. The Buddha told the maidens, "Skin-bags<sup>79</sup> filled with filth, why are you here? Begone! I have no use for you." The deva was filled with respect and asked the Buddha the meaning of the Way. The Buddha instructed him whereupon he attained the fruit of stream-enterer.

### 第二十六章 天魔嬈佛

天神獻玉女於佛，欲壞佛意。佛言：革囊眾穢，爾來何為？去，吾不用。天神愈敬，因問道意。佛為解說，即得須陀洹果。

## Chapter 27: Logs in the Stream

The Buddha said, "Those who cultivate the Way are like logs in a stream, following the current. If they are not grounded on either shore<sup>80</sup>, gathered by men<sup>81</sup>, intercepted by demons or spirits<sup>82</sup>, caught in whirlpools<sup>83</sup>, and they do not decay<sup>84</sup>, then I guarantee that these logs will reach the ocean. If those who follow the Way are not blinded by sensual desires, led astray by evil influences, and are diligent yet empty of effort<sup>85</sup>, then I guarantee that they will attain the Way."

### 第二十七章 無著得道

佛言：夫為道者，猶木在水，尋流而行。不觸兩岸、不為人取、不為鬼神所遮、不為洄流所住、亦不腐敗，吾保此木，決定入海。學道之人，不為情欲所惑、不為眾邪所嬈、精進無為，吾保此人，必得道矣。

Chapter 26

<sup>78</sup> **deva** (Sanskrit). Devas are heavenly beings with significantly higher powers than that of human beings. They are usually benevolent with some exceptions. The deva denoted here is probably the ruler of the sixth heaven, Mara. Mara actively hinders spiritual seekers who are near enlightenment, because they will soon transcend samsara and be out of his control. (Also see annotation 98 "demons" on page 48.)

<sup>79</sup> **skin-bags**. Our body is literally a skin-bag, inside of which are wastes, fetid bodily fluids, germs, and many other foul substances. This is a kind of impurity contemplation that lessens our attraction to the human body, eventually realizing the body is neither impure nor pure.

Chapter 27

<sup>80</sup> **either shore**. Refers to extreme views.

<sup>81</sup> **gathered by men**. As human beings, we are easily pulled away from our cultivation by either loved ones or enemies because of our desires and anger.

<sup>82</sup> **intercepted by demons and spirits**. When cultivators harbor false and erroneous views, they are vulnerable to demons and bad spirits.

<sup>83</sup> **caught in whirlpools**. There are different kinds of barriers in the path of cultivation. If one is not diligent in overcoming obstacles, or if one is attached to secular rewards, then one is caught in a whirlpool, not making real progress.

<sup>84</sup> **do not decay**. One observes the precepts correctly and does not become morally corrupted.

<sup>85</sup> **diligent yet empty of effort**. To attain the Way one must be diligent, but the perfection of diligence is "empty of effort", or "wu-wei" -- i.e. the Way becomes completely natural and effortless.

## Chapter 28: Be Wary of the Unbridled Mind<sup>86</sup>

The Buddha said, “Be wary of trusting your own mind, for it is deceptive. Be wary of situations that may incite lust, for those will lead to disaster. Once you have attained arhatship, you can trust your own mind<sup>87</sup>.”

### 第二十八章 意馬莫縱

佛言：慎勿信汝意，汝意不可信。慎勿與色會，色會即禍生。得阿羅漢已，乃可信汝意。

## Chapter 29: The Right Way to Counter Lust

The Buddha said, “Be wary and refrain from looking at women, or speaking with them. If you do, be righteous in thought and contemplate: ‘I am now a shramana living in an impure world. I should be like the lotus flower<sup>88</sup>, unsullied by mud.’ You should regard elderly women as your mothers, those older than you as your elder sisters<sup>89</sup>, those younger than you as your younger sisters, and the little ones as your children. Resolve to liberate them all, thereby extinguishing impure thoughts.”

### 第二十九章 正觀敵色

佛言：慎勿視女色，亦莫共言語。若與語者，正心思念：我為沙門，處於濁世，當如蓮華，不為泥汙。想其老者如母，長者如姊，少者如妹，稚者如子。生度脫心，息滅惡念。

Chapter 28

<sup>86</sup> **unbridled mind.** Our ordinary mind is easily distracted, clinging to sights, sounds, memories, and ideas, like an unbridled wild horse, unstoppable and rarely in control.

<sup>87</sup> **once you have ... trust your own mind.** Our mind can deceive itself unless we become arhats, which means we are free from delusions.

Chapter 29

<sup>88</sup> **lotus flower.** A symbol of purity in Buddhism because it grows from muddy water and blooms without a trace of mud left upon it. Mud represents defilements that soil our mind.

<sup>89</sup> **regard women as your mother and sister.** All sentient beings have been our relatives through our countless rebirths, so we should regard them as our family and try to help them achieve liberation instead of viewing them as objects of desire.

## Chapter 30: Avoid the Fire of Desire

The Buddha said, "People who cultivate the Way are like those who carry hay<sup>90</sup>; they should avoid fire. Cultivators of the Way must keep their distance from desires."

### 第三十章 欲火遠離

佛言：夫為道者，如被乾草，火來須避。道人見欲，必當遠之。

## Chapter 31: A Still Mind Extinguishes Lust

A man plagued with incessant lust wished to castrate himself. The Buddha told him, "Rather than castrate yourself, you should curb your mind<sup>91</sup>. The mind is like a commander; when the commander halts, so will his subordinates. If you cannot cut off lascivious thoughts, what is the use of castrating yourself?" The Buddha recited the following verse:

Desire arises from thinking,  
Thinking arises from conception and discernment.  
When both aspects of the mind<sup>92</sup> are still,  
There is neither form nor action<sup>93</sup>.

The Buddha said, "This verse was spoken by Kashyapa Buddha<sup>94</sup>."

### 第三十一章 心寂欲除

佛言：有人患淫不止，欲自斷陰。佛謂之曰：若斷其陰，不如斷心。心如功曹，功曹若止，從者都息。邪心不止，斷陰何益？佛為說偈：欲生於汝意，意以思想生；二心各寂靜，非色亦非行。佛言：此偈是迦葉佛說。



Chapter 30

<sup>90</sup> **hay, fire.** Before cultivators get rid of the root of desire, they are vulnerable to temptations and thus should be very cautious.

Chapter 31

<sup>91</sup> **curb your mind.** While the man blamed his lust on the physical body, the Buddha pointed out that all problems originate in the mind.

<sup>92</sup> **both aspects of the mind.** Refers to "conception"(想) and "discernment"(思). When both are quiescent, then "thinking" and "desire" will not arise.

<sup>93</sup> **neither form nor action.** "Form" refers to the physical body and "action" refers to mental activities (feeling, conception...). When both aspects of the mind are still, one sees that form and action are both empty.

<sup>94</sup> **Kashyapa Buddha.** There are buddhas in the past, present, and future. Kashyapa Buddha, one of the Past Seven Buddhas, is the one immediately preceding the historical Shakyamuni Buddha.

## Chapter 32: Desire Leads to Fear

The Buddha said, "Fear<sup>95</sup> arises from worry, and worry arises from craving and desire. If you abandon desire, what fear or worry could you have?"

### 第三十二章 我空怖滅

佛言：人從愛欲生憂，從憂生怖。若離於愛，何憂何怖？

## Chapter 33: Perseverance in Spiritual Battle

The Buddha said, "One who practices the Way is like a single person battling against ten thousand<sup>96</sup>. Donning his armor and leaving home<sup>97</sup>, his will may weaken, he may retreat halfway, he may be killed in combat, or he may return victorious. When shramanas follow the Way, they should be resolute, diligent, and valiant; not fearing what challenges lie ahead, they destroy all demons<sup>98</sup> and attain the Way.

### 第三十三章 智明破魔

佛言：夫為道者，譬如一人與萬人戰。挂鎧出門，意或怯弱，或半路而退，或格鬥而死，或得勝而還。沙門學道，應當堅持其心，精進勇銳，不畏前境，破滅眾魔，而得道果。

Chapter 32

<sup>95</sup> **fear.** Fear arises from worrying about losing what we have and not getting what we desire.

Chapter 33

<sup>96</sup> **ten thousand.** A metaphor referring to the many habitual thoughts, actions, and demons that can hinder the practitioner.

<sup>97</sup> **donning the armor and leaving home.** Means practicing the Dharma and being ready to fight the "ten thousand".

<sup>98</sup> **demons.** Refers to the four kinds of demons (or *Maras*) that block one's practice: the five skandhas (*skandha-mara*), the five poisons (*klesha-mara*), death (*matyu-mara*), and the heavenly demons. (Also see annotation 80 "heavenly demon" on page 42.)

### Chapter 34: Dharma of the Middle Way<sup>99</sup>

One night a shramana<sup>100</sup> was reciting the *Sutra Bequeathed by Kashyapa Buddha*. His tone was woeful and tense. Plagued by doubts<sup>101</sup>, he thought of abandoning the monastic life. The Buddha asked him, "What did you do when you were a householder?" He said, "I was fond of playing the lute." The Buddha asked, "What happens when the strings are too loose?" He replied, "There is no sound." "What happens when the strings are too taut?" He replied, "The sound is discordant." "What happens when the strings are neither too loose nor too taut?" He replied, "All the sounds are in harmony." The Buddha said, "It is the same when a shramana is practicing the Way. If his mind is properly tuned, he will attain the Way. If he pursues the Way too impetuously, his body will be weary. If his body is weary, his mind will be vexed. If vexations arise, his practice will regress. If his practice regresses, his faults will increase. However, if he remains pure, serene, and joyful, he will not lose the Way."

### 第三十四章 處中得道

沙門夜誦迦葉佛遺教經，其聲悲緊，思悔欲退。佛問之曰：汝昔在家，曾為何業？對曰：愛彈琴。佛言：弦緩如何？對曰：不鳴矣。弦急如何？對曰：聲絕矣。急緩得中如何？對曰：諸音普矣。佛言：沙門學道亦然。心若調適，道可得矣。於道若暴，暴即身疲。其身若疲，意即生惱。意若生惱，行即退矣。其行既退，罪必加矣。但清淨安樂，道不失矣。

Chapter 34

<sup>99</sup> **the Middle Way.** Without dualistic thoughts or harboring extreme views. Here it means that in practicing the Way, one's attitude must not be too lax or too eager.

<sup>100</sup> **shramana** (Sanskrit). A monk (see annotation 18 in chapter 1 on page 20.) Here the monk is Sronakotivimsa or "Two-billion Ear." He is known as the most diligent of the Buddha's disciples.

<sup>101</sup> **doubts.** In Buddhism, three types of doubt can hinder one's practice of the Way 1) the doubt of the Dharma, i.e. whether the Dharma can free us of our sufferings, 2) the doubt of oneself, i.e. whether one can make the journey, and 3) the doubting of Dharma teachers, i.e. whether or not they can lead us to enlightenment.

## **Chapter 35: Expel Defilements and the Mind Becomes Pure**

The Buddha said, “When a man forges iron, he removes impurities to make tools of the finest quality. When those who follow the Way expel defilements<sup>102</sup> from their minds, their deeds will be pure.”

### **第三十五章 垢淨明存**

佛言：如人鍛鐵，去滓成器，器即精好。學道之人，去心垢染，行即清淨矣。

## **Chapter 36: Stages to Non-Attainment**

The Buddha said: “It is difficult to ascend from the three wretched destinies<sup>103</sup> and be born as a human being. Even as a human being<sup>104</sup>, it is difficult to be born as a man<sup>105</sup> rather than a woman. Even as a man, it is difficult to have all six senses<sup>106</sup> complete. Even without physical or mental impairment, it is difficult to be born in the middle country<sup>107</sup>. Even in the middle country, it is difficult to be born at the time of a buddha. Even at the time of a buddha, it is difficult to encounter the Way. Even having encountered the Way, it is difficult for one to generate sufficient faith<sup>108</sup>. Even with faith, it is difficult to bring forth the bodhi mind<sup>109</sup>. Even with the bodhi mind, it is difficult to realize non-cultivation and non-attainment<sup>110</sup>.”

### **第三十六章 展轉獲勝**

佛言：人離惡道，得為人難。既得為人，去女即男難。既得為男，六根完具難。六根既具，生中國難。既生中國，值佛世難。既值佛世，遇道者難。既得遇道，興信心難。既興信心，發菩提心難。既發菩提心，無修無證難。

Chapter 35

<sup>102</sup> **defilements.** Refers to all kinds of afflictions such as greed, anger, ignorance, and dualistic thoughts.

Chapter 36

<sup>103</sup> **three wretched destinies.** The three lower planes of existence in the realm of desire, namely animal, hungry ghost, and hell.

<sup>104</sup> **it is difficult ... born as a human being.** An analogy in Buddhism says the chance of being born as a human being is like a blind turtle who rises to the surface of the sea every one hundred years and happens to poke his head through a hole in a piece of floating drift wood.

<sup>105</sup> **it is difficult to be born as a man.** In the time of the Buddha, women suffer more than men. It was preferable to be born a man just as it was preferable to be born into a higher caste. The Buddha broke the caste and gender barriers by leading both men and women to enlightenment through his teachings.

<sup>106</sup> **six senses complete.** It is difficult for one to learn the Buddha's teaching without the five sense organs or without a sound mind.

<sup>107</sup> **the middle country.** A country that is the center of culture, knowledge, and where Buddhism prospers. At the time of the Buddha, it refers to India.

<sup>108</sup> **sufficient faith.** It includes 1) believing the Principle of Causality, 2) understanding "emptiness", 3) seeing that all sentient beings have the Buddha nature and that Buddha nature is inherently whole and complete.

<sup>109</sup> **bring forth the bodhi mind.** A bodhi mind is an awakened mind. To bring forth the bodhi mind is to attain enlightenment. Before one gets enlightened, this phrase also means to resolve to attain Buddhahood and liberate countless sentient beings.

<sup>110</sup> **non-cultivation and non-attainment.** Through the understanding of the principle of emptiness, one cultivates without the thought of self, others, actions, and attachments to their results.

## Chapter 37: Be Mindful of the Precepts

The Buddha said, "If disciples thousands of miles away from me are mindful of my precepts, they will surely attain the fruit of the Way. If those who are by my side and see me constantly do not uphold my precepts, they will never attain the Way."

### 第三十七章 念戒近道

佛言：佛子離吾數千里，憶念吾戒，必得道果。  
在吾左右，雖常見吾，不順吾戒，終不得道。

## Chapter 38: The Impermanence of Life

The Buddha asked a shramana, "How long can one be sure of staying alive?" "A few days," was the reply. The Buddha said, "You do not know about life." He asked another shramana, "How long can one be sure of staying alive?" "The length of a meal," was the reply. The Buddha said, "You do not know about life." He then asked another shramana, "How long can one be sure of staying alive?" The reply was "A single breath." The Buddha said, "Well said, you know about life!"

### 第三十八章 生即有滅

佛問沙門：人命在幾間？對曰：數日間。佛言：子未知道。復問一沙門：人命在幾間？對曰：飯食間。佛言：子未知道。復問一沙門：人命在幾間？對曰：呼吸間。佛言：善哉！子知道矣！



## Chapter 39: The Dharma Is Like Honey

The Buddha said, “Students of the Buddha’s Way should have faith in and comply with all that the Buddha says. It is like honey, sweet from the surface to the middle<sup>111</sup>. So it is with my sutras.”

### 第三十九章 教誨無差

佛言：學佛道者，佛所言說，皆應信順。譬如食蜜，中邊皆甜。吾經亦爾。

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Chapter 39

¹¹¹ **sweet from the surface to the middle.** Like the sweetness of honey, the Buddha’s words are consistently beneficial to those who follow them. The teachings are sweet from the surface (expedient means) to the middle (the ultimate truth of the Middle Way.)

Chapter 40: Ox Turning a Millstone

The Buddha said, “Shramanas who practice the Way should not be like oxen turning millstones¹¹²; although their bodies follow the path, their minds do not. If the mind follows the Way, what need is there to labor on the path?”

第四十章 行道在心

佛言：沙門行道，無如磨牛，身雖行道，心道不行。心道若行，何用行道。

Chapter 41: A Steadfast Mind Frees One from Desire

The Buddha said, “One who practices the Way is like an ox that carries a burden through a mire. Although very tired, the ox dares not look to the right or to the left; he cannot rest until he gets out. You shramanas must look upon sensual desires as worse than a filthy mire. Being steadfast and mindful of the Way, one can avert suffering.”

第四十一章 直心出欲

佛言：夫為道者，如牛負重，行深泥中，疲極不敢左右顧視。出離淤泥，乃可蘇息。沙門當觀情欲，甚於淤泥。直心念道，可免苦矣。

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#### Chapter 40

<sup>112</sup> **an ox turning a millstone.** In a granary an ox is yoked to grind grain by turning a millstone. The ox follows a path around the grinding stone because he is forced to, but his mind does not. A shramana should have his mind and body unified in his cultivation path.

## Chapter 42: Seeing the Illusions of the World

The Buddha said: “I look upon positions of nobility as dust drifting through a crevice<sup>113</sup>. I look upon treasures of gold and jade as mere rubble. I look upon garments of fine silk as worn-out rags. I look upon the universe as a small haritaki fruit<sup>114</sup>. I look upon the water of the Anavatapta Lake<sup>115</sup> as oil applied to the feet. I look upon expedient means as a cluster of imaginary jewels<sup>116</sup>. I look upon the supreme vehicle<sup>117</sup> as a dream of gold and silk. I look upon the Buddha Way as a flower in the air<sup>118</sup>. I look upon samadhi as the great pillar Mount Sumeru<sup>119</sup>. I look upon nirvana as being awake both day and night<sup>120</sup>. I look upon deviancy and orthodoxy as six dancing dragons<sup>121</sup>. I look upon the doctrine of impartiality as the absolute ground of reality<sup>122</sup>. I look upon the flourishing of the teaching as a tree in four seasons<sup>123</sup>.” Having heard the Buddha’s discourses, the great bhiksus<sup>124</sup> joyfully accepted and followed the teaching.

### 第四十二章 達世知幻

佛言：吾視王侯之位，如過隙塵。視金玉之寶，如瓦礫。視紈素之服，如敝帛。視大千界，如一訶子。視阿耨池水，如塗足油。視方便門，如化寶聚。視無上乘，如夢金帛。視佛道，如眼前華。視禪定，如須彌柱。視涅槃，如晝夕寤。視倒正，如六龍舞。視平等，如一真地。視興化，如四時木。諸大比丘，聞佛所說，歡喜奉行。

Chapter 42

<sup>113</sup> **"I look upon positions ..... as a tree in four seasons."** In the first five verses of this chapter, the Buddha presents perceptions of worldly objects that differ from our own. This allows us to contemplate our attachments to our own perceptions. It also shows the impermanent nature of both worldly objects and attachments. In the next eight verses, the Buddha looks upon his own teachings as impermanent. They are useful only as a means to perfect enlightenment. He has no attachment to his own teaching.

<sup>114</sup> **haritaki fruit.** Haritaki fruit is a type of Indian fruit, very small in size. We see the world as massive, yet the Buddha perceives the universe as a small fruit.

<sup>115</sup> **Anavatapta Lake.** What we see as abundant, the Buddha sees it as a few drops of oil. Anavatapta Lake is a great lake near the Himalayas, from which it is said flows the waters of the four great rivers of India, including the Ganges and Indus. Its cool and pure water is considered precious and sacred.

<sup>116</sup> **imaginary jewels.** It is said the Buddha provided eighty-four thousand expedient means to transform our eighty-four thousand afflictions. For those in need, expedient means are treasured. In the Buddha's eyes, expedient means exist only for the people who need it. When the need is gone, they are like imaginary jewels that should disappear.

<sup>117</sup> **Supreme Vehicle.** The One Vehicle that brings everyone to Buddhahood.

<sup>118</sup> **flowers in the air.** An Indian metaphor for the illusion seen by one with eye disease. The Buddha Way exists for the illnesses of the world.

<sup>119</sup> **samadhi as the great pillar Mount Sumeru.** Mount Sumeru is the greatest mountain in the world like a pillar holding up the sky. Worldly Samadhi is as stable as Mount Sumeru. However, just as Mount Sumeru (because it is made of the four elements) will become speckles of dust as the world eventually disintegrates, worldly samadhi is impermanent like any phenomena.

<sup>120</sup> **nirvana as being awake both day and night.** *Nirvana* is being fully awake (enlightened) at all times, contrary to *samsara* which is dreaming (deluded) both day and night. Nirvana and *samsara* are still relative concepts; higher enlightenment means to see that nirvana and *samsara* are not different.

<sup>121</sup> **six dancing dragons.** This analogy comes from the perspective of the Middle Way. The “six dancing dragons” refers to our six senses. Aversion and attachment to phenomena that our six senses perceived are two extremes. For example, ordinary people may view a body as attractive (deviancy), but from the *Theravadans'* point of view, a body is repulsive (orthodoxy). In the ultimate truth, there is no absolute good or bad, pure or impure, up or down, merely the head and tail of a dancing dragon constantly switching places as it moves around.

<sup>122</sup> **absolute ground of reality.** This comes from the perspective of emptiness. All sentient beings have the Buddha nature, therefore they are equal. All phenomena are mutually dependent and inseparable, therefore they are equal. This is the absolute ground of reality.

<sup>123</sup> **a tree in four seasons.** This analogy comes from the perspective of conventional truth. The Buddha sees that his teaching, like a tree in four seasons, goes through the cycle of germination, growth, fruition, and deterioration. The propagation of the teaching waxes and wanes.

<sup>124</sup> **the great bhiksus.** A “great bhiksus” in Buddhism usually refers to the elder bhiksus of the Buddha's disciples or to bhiksus who have already attained arhatship. Here it includes all those who are present in the assembly.

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## THREE REFUGES

### 三 皈 依

I take refuge in the Buddha, may all sentient beings  
Understand the Great Way profoundly,  
And bring forth the bodhi mind.

I take refuge in the Dharma, may all sentient beings  
Deeply enter the sutra treasury,  
And have wisdom vast as the sea.

I take refuge in the Sangha, may all sentient beings  
Form together a great assembly,  
One and all in harmony.

|      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|
| 自皈依佛 | 當願眾生 | 體解大道 | 發無上心 |
| 自皈依法 | 當願眾生 | 深入經藏 | 智慧如海 |
| 自皈依僧 | 當願眾生 | 統理大眾 | 一切無礙 |
| 和南聖眾 |      |      |      |

## FOUR GREAT VOWS

### 四 弘 誓 願

Countless are sentient beings, I vow to liberate;  
Endless are afflictions, I vow to eradicate;  
Measureless are the Dharmas, I vow to master;  
Supreme is the Buddha Way, I vow to attain.

|         |         |
|---------|---------|
| 眾生無邊誓願度 | 煩惱無盡誓願斷 |
| 法門無量誓願學 | 佛道無上誓願成 |

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## REPENTANCE

### 懺悔偈

All the harm I have ever done, since time immemorial,  
Are caused by greed, anger, and ignorance,  
And produced through my body, speech, and will,  
Now I confess and amend all.

往昔所造諸惡業                      皆由無始貪瞋痴  
從身語意之所生                      一切罪障皆懺悔

## DEDICATION OF MERITS

### 回向偈

May the merits of our deeds  
Reach every part of the world;  
Sentient beings large and small  
all attain enlightenment.  
Maha-Prajna-Paramita

願以此功德 普及於一切  
我等與眾生 皆共成佛道  
摩訶般若波羅蜜