

# *Across the Sea of Suffering in a Boat of Vows*

*-by Bhikshu Heng Tso*

Before the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the ten directions and three periods of time, before the Venerable Abbot and in the presence of the four-fold assembly, I, disciple Kuo Yu (Heng-Tso), wish to make the following vows.

1. I vow that I will not attain the Right Enlightenment if there is even one Bodhisattva in the ten directions and the three periods of time to the end of empty space and the Dharma Realm who has not yet become a Buddha.
2. I vow that I will not attain the Right Enlightenment if there is even one Pratyekabuddha in the ten directions and the three periods of time to the end of empty space and the Dharma Realm who has not yet become a Buddha.
3. I vow that I will not attain the Right Enlightenment if there is even one Sravaka in the worlds of the ten directions who has not yet become a Buddha.
4. I vow that I will not attain the Right Enlightenment if there is even one human being in the worlds of the ten directions who has not yet become a Buddha.
5. I vow that I will not attain the Right Enlightenment if there is even one asura who has not yet become a Buddha.
6. I vow that I will not attain the Right Enlightenment if there is even one animal who has not yet become a Buddha.
7. I vow that I will not attain the Right Enlightenment if there is even one hungry ghost who has not yet become a Buddha.
8. I vow that I will not attain the Right Enlightenment if there is even one being in the hells who has not yet become a Buddha.
9. I vow to cultivate the Dharmas of Great Compassion of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva by reciting the Great Compassion Mantra 108 times daily, and by cultivating to perfection the Forty-two Hands and Eyes.
11. I vow to life after life follow my teacher the Great Master Hsuan Hua, leave the home-life with him and help him in his work of teaching and transforming living beings.
12. I vow to be reborn in Amita Buddha's Land of Ultimate Bliss in my next life and upon obtaining irreversibility to return to the world to fulfill my vows.

13. I vow to cultivate the perfection of patience.
14. I vow to dedicate whatever merit I have attained to all living beings to whom I owe a karmic debt, so that we may all quickly be born in the Land of Ultimate Bliss together and become Buddhas.
15. I vow to diligently and carefully cultivate the Buddhas' precepts so that I may become a model for all living beings.
16. I vow to manifest the appropriate body to teach, protect, and encourage any living being to the exhaustion of empty space and the end of the Dharma Realm, who, even with a mind lacking sincerity, recites the Great Compassion Mantra, the Shurangama Mantra, or the Forty-two Hands and Eyes, I vow to stay with these living beings, to protect and encourage them in cultivation until they become Buddhas. When they do become Buddhas I will take up a position of responsibility in their Dharma Assembly and support and uphold their Dharma.
17. I vow to eat one meal a day at noon.
18. I vow that all these vows will be perfected.

*I VOW TO SAVE THE NUMBERLESS LIVING BEINGS,  
I VOW TO CUT OFF THE INEXHAUSTIBLE AFFLICTIONS,  
I VOW TO STUDY THE LIMITLESS DHARMA DOORS,  
I VOW TO REALIZE THE SUPREME BUDDHA WAY.  
Truly recognize your own faults;  
Do not speak of the faults of others.  
Others' faults are just your own.  
Being one with everything is called Great Compassion.*

below, citing the names of representative Buddhas. There is the Buddha whose name is *simha* "lion." *yasas*, the next Buddha's name, means "splendor" or "renown." The combination of *yasas* + *prabhasa* "radiant light" in the next name emphasizes the great radiance of that splendor. The next Buddha is named *dharma* "Dharma," and the following has Dharma as the direct object of *dhara* "maintaining," from root */dhr-* "bear/maintain/uphold." The final Buddha named has *dhvaja* "banner" of Dharma as his name.

Issues #141 and #146 explain the overall grammar of this passage and its phrasing, and other lessons on the Buddhas' names have already described their formation. Any of us who maintain and support the Buddhadharma will be Dharma-Maintaining Buddhas in the future, as well as Dharma Banner Buddhas. — *to be continued*

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