

# *Shastra on Understanding the Hundred Dharmas*

*by Vasabandhu Bodhisattva*

*with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua*

*continued from Issue #190*

TEXT:

THE FOURTH IS THE DHARMAS NOT INTERACTIVE WITH THE MIND. IN GENERAL, THERE ARE TWENTY-FOUR: I. ATTAINMENT (AQUISITION), II. LIFE FACULTY, III. GENERIC SIMILARITY, IV. DISSIMILARITY, V. THE NO-THOUGHT SAMADHI, VI. THE SAMADHI OF EXTINCTION, VII. THE REWARD OF NO THOUGHT, VIII. BODIES OF NOUNS, IX. BODIES OF SENTENCES, X. BODIES OF PHONEMES, XI. BIRTH, XII. DWELLING, XIII. AGING, XIV. IMPERMANENCE, XV. REVOLUTION, XVI. DISTINCTION, XVII. INTERACTION, XVIII. SPEED, XIX. SEQUENCE, XX. TIME, XXI. DIRECTION, XXII. NUMERATION, XXIII. COMBINATION, XXIV. DISCONTINUITY.

COMMENTARY:

IV. THE FOURTH IS THE NON-INTERACTIVE DHARMAS. "Non-Interactive" means not working together with something else. For example, if there are two of us and I say, "Let's go east," and you say, "No, we're going west," then that's called "non-interactive"--not working together. If we work together so that when I say "east," you agree and we both go east, then that's called "interactive." Another example of interaction is when we take some grain in our hands and the pigeons come and eat out of our hands. We have the grain and they want to eat it, so we interact. But if they did not eat it, then there wouldn't be any interaction.

What is it that these twenty-four dharmas don't interact with? They don't interact with the Mind Dharmas. They don't interact with the Dharmas Interactive with the Mind. They don't interact with the Form Dharmas, and even less would they interact with the Unconditioned Dharmas. That's because they are very special.

Why is it that they don't interact with the Mind Dharmas or with Dharmas Interactive with the Mind? Mind Dharmas and Dharmas Interactive with the Mind are able to "climb on conditions." They work on external states. They are conditioned by those states. But these dharmas of the activity skandha that are not interactive with the other dharmas do not have this ability. They are not conditioned by external states. Therefore they are not interactive with the Mind Dharmas or Dharmas Interactive with the Mind.

You might say that they should then be interactive with the Form Dharmas, but they are not interactive with those either. Why not? If you try to say that these dharmas are form dharmas, you must consider the fact that they don't have any substance and they don't have any marks.

They have no physical characteristics. All twenty-four of these dharmas are false. They are absolutely and totally false, so don't mistake them for something true. The reason they don't interact with the other dharmas is because they are false and therefore can't combine with anything else at all. Nonetheless they do exist. But although they exist, they have no substance, no shape, no marks, and they do not interact.

In listening to the Dharma you have now learned that dharmas are both true and false, I am describing some false dharmas to you now, but that is because it is necessary for you to know about the false dharmas. If you know about them, then your true nature can appear. But if you don't know about them, how can you obtain your true nature? If you mistake the false for the true, then that becomes the false within the false. That is to be like the Venerable Ananda who wanted to get to the true but was afraid of losing the false. He couldn't give up the false.

If you can't give up the false, you won't accomplish the true.

If you can't give up death, you will never exchange it for life.

Why are these twenty-four dharmas not interactive with the Unconditioned Dharmas? It is because although they have no shape or characteristics, they still come into being and cease to be. For that reason they also are not interactive with the Unconditioned Dharmas, which don't come into being or cease to be. The reason these Non-Interactive Activity Dharmas are involved with coming into being and ceasing to be is that they are basically shadows cast by the Mind Dharmas, the Dharmas Interactive with the Mind, and the Form Dharmas all acting together. That is also what makes them false, why there is nothing true in them. Someone's thinking, "Today I wanted to hear some true Dharma, but all this Dharma Master has talked about is false dharmas. If I had known his whole lecture was going to be about false dharmas, I wouldn't have come to listen." Well, if you don't listen to false dharmas, then there is no true Dharma. First you have to hear about false dharmas and then you will be able to recognize true Dharma. This is a case of speaking the false for the sake of the true. When you get rid of the false, the true appears.

#### The Twenty-Four Non-Interactive Activity Dharmas

- 1) Attainment ( 得 ) *prapti*
- 2) Life Faculty ( 命根 ) *jivitendriya*
- 3) Generic Similarity ( 衆同分 ) *nikaya-sabhaga*
- 4) Dissimilarity ( 異生性 ) *visabhaga*
- 5) No-Thought Samadhi ( 無想定 ) *asamjnismapatti*
- 6) Samadhi of Extinction ( 滅盡定 ) *nirodha-samapatti*
- 7) Reward of No Thought ( 無想報 ) *asamjnika*
- 8) Bodies of Nouns ( 名身 ) *namakaya*
- 9) Bodies of Sentences ( 句身 ) *padakaya*
- 10) Bodies of Phonemes ( 文身 ) *vyanjanakaya*
- 11) Birth ( 生 ) *jati*
- 12) Dwelling ( 住 ) *sthiti*
- 13) Aging ( 老 ) *jara*

- 14) Impermanence ( 無常 ) *anityata*
- 15) Revolution ( 無轉 ) *pravritti*
- 16) Distinction ( 定異 ) *pratiniyama*
- 17) Interaction ( 想應 ) *yoga*
- 18) Speed ( 勢速 ) *java*
- 19) Sequence ( 次第 ) *anukrama*
- 20) Time ( 時 ) *kala*
- 21) Direction ( 方 ) *desha*
- 22) Numeration ( 數 ) *samkhya*
- 23) Combination ( 和合性 ) *samagri*
- 24) Discontinuity ( 不和合性 ) *anyathatva*

As to these Non-Interactive Activity Dharmas, IN GENERAL, THERE ARE TWENTY FOUR.

1. ATTAINMENT. When you start out not having something and then you get it, that is called "attainment." Where does attainment come from? It arises from greed. Within a state of not wanting anything, you suddenly want to get something. Now I will show you why this is a false dharma. Say, for example, you have a piece of gold. You say, "Oh, I have this piece of gold. Take a look. It's gold, isn't it?" But the gold is not "attainment" in itself. Therefore the concept of "attainment" is just a false name.

2. LIFE FACULTY. The life faculty, or root of life, comes from the seeds which reside in the Eighth Consciousness. When these take on life, there is the life faculty. When the conditions of a lifespan, warmth and consciousness are present, there is the life faculty. When the Eighth Consciousness is in your body, the life faculty is existent. When the Eighth Consciousness leaves your body, the life faculty also departs. Therefore, the root of life, the life faculty, is also false. Don't think, "This life of mine is true. No matter what, I'm going to take care of this precious body of mine. No one can get away with bumping into me. I will not allow anyone to say anything the least bit impolite to me." It's only because you are unable to give up your root of life that you can't become enlightened. The life faculty is actually harmful-- a detriment--but you don't realize it. You think it's a precious treasure. You consider your life to be valuable and important. But that's just an attachment. You are mistaking the false for the true. Your self-nature is true but your life is not true. The life faculty is false.

3. GENERIC SIMILARITY. This refers to factors which a group shares. For example, you have a body, which is your share and I have a body, which is mine. The fact that everyone has a body is then known as a generic similarity. Ordinary people have a generic similarity with other ordinary people; those of the Two Vehicles have a generic similarity with others of the Two Vehicles. There's a generic similarity among Bodhisattvas. However, within these similarities there are also dissimilarities, which is the next dharma.

4. DISSIMILARITY. Let's take the example of two people. Because they're people, they have a generic similarity. But one of these people is impetuous. He just barges right in and starts doing things. The other person is cautious; he always hesitates. Now the impetuous person says of the

cautious person, "See that guy? He doesn't do anything at all. He just eats and sleeps. What use is he anyway? I think we should just get rid of people like that."

The cautious person says of the impetuous person, "See that guy? He'll do anything! Anything at all! It's guys like that who are ruining the world! I think we should do away with all people like that!" Basically these are two human beings but they end up being jealous and obstructive of each other because of their dissimilarities.

There's another good example of dissimilarities within similarities. Take the armour maker and the sword smith. They share a similar occupation--construction of weaponry. But they are on opposite ends of the spectrum, because the armour maker is intent upon making a product which will be invincible against swords, lances, spears, arrows, and all other kinds of weapons. His aim is to protect the warrior. The sword smith, on the other hand, tries to devise weapons which will pierce the armour. He aims to make his products so sharp that with a single blow they will rend the strongest armour. Although both products are used in the military, one product is for defense and the other is for offense. That's a dissimilarity within similarity.

Another example is found within Buddhism itself. Basically all Five Schools are similar in that they are aspects of Buddhism. But when contention arises between members of various schools, then a dissimilarity occurs within that similarity. That's why when someone came the other night and asked me what sect I was, I replied, "I don't have a sect." If you don't have a sect, then there is no way anyone can attack you. But when there are sects, then the Chan School says that the Teaching School is no good; and the Teaching School says that the Chan School is wrong. They all slander one another. That's another dissimilarity within a generic similarity.

Another one occurs among immortals. From time immemorial the immortals have been getting down on one another. One will say, "Oh, Confucius--he's someone who didn't have any sense at all." Or, one will say, "Mencius? He understood even less. I have a lot more wisdom than either one of them." You see? To begin with, they all had a generic similarity, but when they started slandering one another it ended up creating a dissimilarity.

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