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The Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva with Commentary

【初利天宮神通品第一】

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宣化上人講解

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CHAPTER ONE:
SPIRITUAL PENETRATIONS IN THE PALACE OF THE TRAVASTRIMSHA HEAVEN

因為外道行苦行，行得也很苦的，他就開天眼了，開天眼後，看見一隻狗死後升到天上去了，他說這狗升天，那我依照狗去學，也可以升天的，所以他就持「狗戒」。另一外道他得天眼通，看見一隻牛死後升天，所以他就學牛的樣子持「牛戒」。這些外道徒因為沒有智慧，所以雖然修種種的苦行，也沒有益處的，而印度有些外道是這樣的，所以說「無益苦行當遠離」。

「如是行者可度世」：像這樣行道的人，才可以度世，教化眾生。

「精進」：本來沒有精進，說是有精進，這不過是對我們一般凡夫來說這個法，在精進本身上根本不會有個精進的。所以「六度」都是精進，也都不是精進。布施、持戒、忍辱，是屬於身的精進；禪定、般若，是屬於心的精進。這樣講起來，這個精進根本就沒有了，精進就變成其他的，如般若波羅蜜等。

你多做布施，這是布施精進；你多持戒，這是持戒精進；你多忍辱，這是忍辱精進；精進再精進，這是精進本身在精進；你禪定精進，坐禪不休息，這是坐禪的精進；你修般若，修習般若智慧，這是智慧的精進；學習般若法門，則是般若的精進。所以這精進本身就沒有精進，它變成勞而無功，所以你不要執著你有精進，那就是你真精進。要是執著我這裏也精進，那裏也精進，說我這個精進可是無量無邊

Because externalists cultivate bitter practices very vigorously, some of them open their Heavenly Eye. When they open up their Heavenly Eye, they see a dog dies then enters the heavens; so they imitate dogs and do what dogs do. Some other externalists see cows die and enter the heavens and so they imitate cows and do what cows do. These externalists in India lacked wisdom. Although they cultivated various ascetic practices, none of these practices are helpful. So stay far removed from unbeneficial asceticism.

Practitioners like these save the world. People who cultivate like this can save the world, teaching and transforming living beings.

Vigor. Basically vigor doesn't exist. Any talk of vigor is directed at ordinary people. But there is no such thing as vigor on the essence of vigor itself. In fact, the six *paramitas* are all vigor and not vigor. Giving, keeping precepts, and being patient require physical vigor. Being in *dhyana* samadhi and developing *prajna* require mental vigor. Explaining it this way, vigor itself doesn't stand alone, it is embedded in the other *paramitas*, such as *prajna*.

When you give more, that's vigorous giving; when you hold the precepts more, that's vigorously holding the precepts; when you are more patient, that's being vigorous with patience. Vigor on top of vigor; that is being vigorous on vigor itself. You are vigorous when sitting in meditation. You sit and don't rest. That's being vigorous in meditation. You cultivate *prajna* wisdom. That's vigorous wisdom. You study the *prajna* Dharma doors and so you have vigor when it comes to *prajna*. That's why I say that vigor doesn't exist by itself. All that happens is that you tire yourself out to no avail. So not being attached to being vigorous is true vigor. If you attach to how you are vigorous in this and that, claiming that your vigor is without bounds, that your vigor applies to all six *paramitas*, then you are not truly vigorous. that is because you still have a thought of (self being) vigor in your mind, which is an



的，六度波羅蜜我都精進了，那就等於沒有精進了，因為你有一個精進在心裏障住你這種境界，就不是真精進。

佛法要是真明白了，根本就沒有，你沒有明白的時候，是有這個東西；明白了，就沒有了。那你說我現在就沒有了，我也不精進了。那你不精進，也是沒有了，但這是不同的。要是你真正明白佛法，真正精進也沒有了，為什麼呢？因為你不執著了。你要是不明白佛法，一味執著你的精進，那不算精進。因你實在不明白佛法，根本就不懂什麼是精進，所以更談不上精進。所以佛法你沒有懂得，你不明白；你要是懂了，你還要放下它；你不放下，那還是不懂佛法。這就是叫人離一切執著相，什麼事情都不要執著；你有所執著，就是不明白佛法。這是精進。

「禪波羅蜜音」：禪也是梵語，叫做禪那。翻譯中文叫做思惟修，又叫「靜慮」。禪有四禪、八定，又有九次第定。另外，又分世間禪和出世間禪，還有出世上上禪。「世間禪」是我們凡夫所修的，這其中有四無量心，有四無色定，這種境界不必詳細講，你要是用功修行坐禪去，自然就會明白這種境界。

什麼叫出世禪？出世禪有四禪八定，又有八勝處、八背捨，這些名相講出來，你也糊塗了。好像說食數寶似的，雖說這個東西好吃，要是你沒有放到口裏頭，始終不知道它的滋味，所以現在你就知道有世間禪、出世間禪、出世間上上禪、如來禪、祖師禪等，種種的分別。你只要肯用功去修行，將來都會得到其中的滋味。

待續

To be continued

obstacle in your mind state, thus it is not truly being vigorous.

Truly understand the Buddhadharma and there is essentially nothing; there is something when you do not understand. Once you understand, there is nothing. You say, “I do not have anything now. I am not diligent either.” Your not being vigorous is also an example of there being nothing, but that’s not what I mean. What I mean is that if you really understand the Buddhadharma, then even vigor does not exist. Why? It is because you are not attached. If you do not understand the Buddhadharma and continue to be attached to your vigor, then that doesn’t count as vigor. Since you really do not understand the Buddhadharma, you basically do not know what vigor means, let alone how to be vigorous. Thus, you don’t understand the Buddhadharma. Even if you come to understand it, you still have to let it go. If you cannot let it go, then you still have not understood the Buddhadharma. This is telling us to break all attachments to appearances. Don’t attach to anything. If you still have attachments, you have not yet understood the Buddhadharma. That’s the meaning of vigor.

The sound of *dhyana paramita*. *Dhyana* is also Sanskrit. The Chinese transliteration is chan no, usually shortened to *chan*. Translated, it means “cultivation pertaining to thoughts” or “stilling thought processes”. *Dhyana* is included in the the Four Dhyanas¹, the Eight Samadhis², and the Nine Sequential Samadhis³. There is also secular *dhyana*, transcendental *dhyana*, and the most superior form of transcendental *dhyana*. Secular *dhyana* is what we ordinary people cultivate. This includes the Four Boundless Qualities of the Mind⁴ and the Four Formless Samadhis. We do not need to describe these states in detail, just work hard in your meditation and you will naturally understand this state.

What is transcendental *dhyana*? Transcendental *dhyana* includes the Four *Dhyanas* and the Eight Samadhis, the Eight Superior Ways, and the Eight Liberations. You are confused by these terms. This is like talking about food and counting others’ wealth. Something may look good but before you put it in your mouth, you will never know the taste of it. At any rate, now you know that there are different *dhyanas*: secular *dhyana*, transcendental *dhyana*, the most superior form of transcendental *dhyana*, Tathagatas’ *dhyana*, patriarch’s *dhyana* and others. As long as you are willing to work on your cultivation, you will get a taste of its flavor in the future.

¹The first, second, third, and fourth dhyanas, each with three heavens are in the form realm.

²Composed of the four dhyanas in the form realm and the four stations of emptiness in the formless realm

四空處 *catur-ārūpya brahmalokas*: (1)空無邊處 *ākāśānāntyāyatana*, station of boundless emptiness;

(2)識無邊處 *vijñānānāntyāyatana*, station of boundless consciousness;

(3)無所有處 *ākāśānāntyāyatana*, station of nothing whatsoever;

(4)非想非非想處 *naivasanñānāsanñāyatana*, station of neither thought nor non-thought. (Soothill, modified)

³Includes the four dhyanas, the four stations of emptiness, and the samadhi devoid of feeling and thinking 滅受想定.

⁴四無量心 *catvāri apramāṇāni*: 慈無量心 boundless kindness, *maitrī*; 悲無量心 boundless compassion, *karuṇā*;

喜無量心 boundless joy, *muditā*; 捨無量心 limitless giving, *upekṣā*. (Soothill, modified)