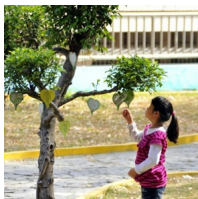


Making Vows after Repenting: Part VI of the Repentance Series

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Tuesday, 27 September 2011 09:18



[[Master's Teachings](#)]

Previously, we spoke of repenting for our many unwholesome thoughts and afflictions. But repentance is not only about recognizing our errors and being sorry for them. It is also about beginning anew and doing things differently. This change begins with our heart, beginning with our five spiritual illnesses. So, after repenting, we should make new vows and aspirations:

Overcoming Desire

Desire is like a sea that can drown us.
We vow to tame our desire and greed,
being mindful when they arise in our heart and mind
and taking care not to let them grow.
We vow to overcome our stinginess
by nurturing a heart of love for others
and helping people in need.

Dissolving Anger

The anger and hatred in us
fill our hearts with tinder.
With the slightest spark,
a fire will burn wildly in our hearts.
When something displeases us,
we unleash our anger on people.
Blinded by our anger,
we are full of ignorance and wrong thinking,
and we burn down all our merits
and all the good that we have done.
We vow to work on our temper
so there is no tinder left in our hearts.

Dispelling Ignorance

Ignorance is like a thick cloud that darkens the sky,
blocking the bright light of our inner wisdom.
We vow to clear away our ignorance and delusion
to recover our Buddha nature,
by learning the Buddha's teachings
and carrying them out in our daily lives.
Listening often to the teachings
and immersing ourselves in the Dharma,
we are reminded to watch out for wrongs
and become more aware of ourselves.
We vow to furthermore apply the teachings

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by helping people in suffering,
so we can learn about suffering personally
and connect the Dharma to our experience.
Realizing how blessed we are,
and with deep compassion for people in suffering,
we vow not only to listen to the Dharma,
but to live it out in all our actions.

Eliminating Arrogance

We have so much pride and arrogance in us.
When we know more than others,
we feel better and above them.
With our inflated egos, we become
so big and cumbersome that we are an eyesore.
We vow to cultivate humility
by practicing the precepts of right conduct,
being tolerant towards others,
and respecting others.
We vow to be humble and "shrink" ourselves.
Then, we can become so small
that we can even enter others' hearts and reside there.
This is the way of a bodhisattva.

Eradicating Doubt

In our hearts, there is doubt
and it is deeply rooted.
Because of this, we cannot believe in true principles
and cannot awaken.
We vow to believe in the correct Dharma,
understand the law of karma,
and develop a true, non-misguided faith
so we can learn the Buddha's teachings
and awaken to truths of life.

Transcending Jealousy

Jealousy makes our hearts small.
Seeing others' success or talent,
we are envious
and cannot feel happy for people.
Learning the bodhisattva way,
we vow to open our hearts wide
to embrace others with a pure heart,
praising their success and good qualities.
Instead of being envious,
we vow to learn from them
and emulate their good

so we may become better people ourselves.

Eschewing Wrong Views

Wrong views are like a net that traps us,
making it difficult for us to pull away from
unwholesome patterns of behavior.
Having given rise to a correct thought,
we vow to hold onto it firmly
and keep our mind from
falling once again into wrong views.
We vow to practice
by putting our good thoughts in action,
keeping ourselves on the path of doing good,
and developing a heart of
loving-kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity
so that misguided notions will have no opportunity
to enter our mind and influence us.

Doing Good

Realizing how impermanent life is,
we vow not to get caught up in petty things
such as jealousy and unhappiness with others.
We vow to focus our precious time and energies
on doing good for others
and cultivating our heart and mind,
seizing the opportunities before us
to create something good for others.

Practicing the Thirty-Seven Aids to Awakening**

Aspiring to the Buddha's awakening,
we vow to diligently practice
the Thirty-seven Aids to Awakening
which are the foundation for Buddhist practice.
Practicing these thirty-seven methods of cultivation,
we can purify our heart and mind,
and remain untainted by
unwholesome influences in the external world.
We vow to mindfully practice
the Thirty-seven Aids to Awakening,
always keeping to the right path,
with our hearts on the Dharma.

***The Thirty-Seven Aids to Awakening comprise:
the four subjects of reflection
the four proper lines of exertion
the four steps towards transcendent powers*

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the five roots
the five strengths
the seven elements to awakening
and the noble eightfold path

Cultivating Compassion and the Bodhi Mind

Knowing that many people in this world
are living in suffering,
we vow to bring forth our compassion
to help relieve people's suffering,
be their suffering from disasters, war, poverty, or illness,
or from inner pain and unhappiness.
We vow to cultivate wisdom
and develop the bodhi mind (the awakened mind)
so that we may be better able to
help all living beings.
Every day, we will hold these vows in our hearts.

From Dharma Master Cheng Yen's Talks
Compiled into English by the Jing Si Abode English Editorial Team