

## The Heart of a Bodhisattva

Written by Master Cheng Yen  
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At the time of spring, the start of the four seasons, everything is growing; the land is full of life and vitality and gives a feeling of freshness.

In the heart of the bodhisattva, it is always spring; a gentle breeze blows there, and the water of the Dharma nourishes their inner land.

When we first encounter the Dharma and experience a moment of understanding and awakening, we feel a sense of joy. This is an encounter with our Buddha nature. This joy comes from touching the Dharma with our heart. A bodhisattva seizes this moment of joy and Dharma and keeps it always.

Bodhisattvas act in accord with the Dharma, and their hearts are broad and pure. When they look, they look with the heart of understanding. They are always looking for ways to help people and solve their problems. At every moment, their mind is open to learning the Dharma, from anyone they meet, in whatever they do. When they successfully help a person, spiritual joy fills their heart. The spring sun is always shining deep in their heart.

Their heart is very big, embracing all the things in this world. This is what Buddhism teaches—to open our heart wide and embrace the universe. The Buddha tells us that our heart can create all things. When we give rise to unwholesome thoughts, we can create hell. On the other hand, if we give rise to wholesome thoughts, heaven can be here now.

Buddhists believe what happens in our world is the result of the karma all of us collectively create. If this karma is negative, the outcomes include natural disasters which bring suffering and sorrow. Yet, if we think and do good in our everyday life, we can bring good fortune and blessings to the place we live.

Bodhisattvas know that if people can have a good heart and good thoughts, they can create many blessings. Because of this, they take on the work of inspiring people to do good. When encountering others, they try to reach out to the goodness in the people's hearts and awaken their selfless love for others—Great Love, and then guide them to express this love in action.

They understand that to enjoy the fruits of blessings, one must first plant the seeds of blessings. That is why they encourage people to create blessings by doing good for others. When a lot of people are doing good, collective good karma is built up. When more and more good karma is accumulated, it "dilutes" the existing collective bad karma. Misfortune is then turned around, and people experience blessings.

The heart of the bodhisattva is full of goodness. This goodness is continually sprouting and growing in the eternal spring of their heart. With their goodness, they bring a power of transformation to our world.

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