

On the great road of buddha ancestors there is always unsurpassable practice, continuous and sustained. It forms the circle of the way and is never cut off. Between aspiration, practice, enlightenment, and nirvana, there is not a moment's gap; continuous practice is the circle of the way. This being so, continuous practice is undivided, not forced by you or others. The power of this continuous practice confirms you as well as others. It means your practice affects the entire earth and the entire sky in the ten directions. Although not noticed by others or by yourself, it is so.

Accordingly, by the continuous practice of all buddhas and ancestors, your practice is actualized and your great road opens up. By your continuous practice, the continuous practice of all buddhas is actualized and the great road of all buddhas opens up. Your continuous practice creates the circle of the way. By this practice, buddha ancestors abide as buddha, not-abide as buddha, have buddha mind, and attain buddha without cutting off.

Because of this practice, there are the sun, the moon, and stars. Because of this practice, there are the great earth and the open sky. Because of this practice, there are body, mind, and their environs. Because of this practice, there are the four great elements and the five skandhas. Continuous practice is not necessarily something people in the world love, but it should be the true place of return for everyone. Because of the continuous practice of all buddhas of the past, present, and future, all buddhas of the past, present, and future are actualized.

The effect of such sustained practice is sometimes not hidden. Therefore, you aspire to practice. The effect is sometimes not apparent. Therefore, you may not see, hear, or know it. Understand that although it is not revealed, it is not hidden.

As it is not divided by what is hidden, apparent, existent, or not existent, you may not notice the causal conditions that led you to be engaged in the practice that actualizes you at this very moment of unknowing. The reason you don't see it is that becoming conscious of it is not anything remarkable. Investigate in detail that it is so because the causal condition [the aspiration] is no other than continuous practice, though continuous practice is not limited by the causal condition.

Continuous practice that actualizes itself is no other than your continuous practice right now. The now of this practice is not originally possessed by the self. The now of this practice does not come and go, enter and depart. The word "now" does not exist before continuous practice. The moment when it is actualized is called now. This being so, your continuous practice of this day is a seed of all buddhas and the practice of all buddhas. All buddhas are actualized and sustained by your continuous practice.

By not sustaining your continuous practice, you would be excluding buddhas, not nurturing buddhas, excluding continuous practice, not being born and dying simultaneously with all buddhas, and not studying and practicing with all buddhas. Blossoms opening and leaves falling now are the actualization of continuous practice. Polishing a mirror or breaking a mirror is no other than this practice.

Even if you might try to ignore it in order to hide a crooked intention and escape from it, this ignoring would also be continuous practice. To go off here and there looking for continuous practice appears similar to the aspiration for it. But it is like leaving behind the treasure at the home of your true parent and wandering poor in another land. Wandering through wind and water at the risk of your life, you should not discard the treasure of your own parent. While you were searching in this way, the dharma treasure would be missed. This being so, continuous practice should not slacken even for a moment.

