

A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE

Sanskrit: Bodhisattvacharyavatara

Tibetan : Byang. chub. sems. dpai'. spyod. pa. la. jug. pa

by

ACHARYA SHANTIDEVA

Translated into English by Stephen Batchelor

LIBRARY OF TIBETAN WORKS & ARCHIVES
DHARAMSALA

Dedication

1

Through the virtue of having composed this work,
A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life,
May all living beings come to engage
In the Bodhisattva's conduct.

2

May all beings everywhere
Plagued with sufferings of body and mind
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of my merits.

3

For as long as they remain in cyclic existence
May their (mundane) happiness never decline,
And may all of them uninterruptedly receive
Waves of joy from Bodhisattvas.

4

May all embodied creatures,
Who throughout the universe
Experience hellish realms,
Come to enjoy the bliss of Sukhavati.

5

May those feeble with cold find warmth,
And may those oppressed with heat be cooled
By the boundless waters that pour forth
From the great clouds of the Bodhisattvas' (merits).

6

May the forest of razor sharp leaves
Become a beautiful pleasure grove,
And may the trees of knives and swords
Grow into wish-fulfilling trees.

7

May the regions of hell become places of joy
With vast and fragrant lotus pools
Beautified with the exquisite calls
Of wild ducks, geese and swans.

8

May the heaps of burning coals change into heaps of jewels,
May the burning ground become a polished crystal floor,

And may the mountains of the crushing hells
Become celestial palaces of worship filled with Sugatas.

9

May the rains of lava, blazing stones and weapons
From now on become a rain of flowers,
And may all battling with weapons
From now on be a playful exchange of flowers.

10

By the force of my virtues, may those caught in the fiery torrents of acid,
Their flesh eaten away, revealing their lily-white bones,
Obtain the bodies of celestials
And dwell with goddesses in gently flowing rivers.

11

"Why are the henchmen of Yama, the unbearable buzzards and vultures afraid?
Through whose noble strength is joy brought upon us and darkness dispelled?"
Looking up, they behold in the firmament the radiant form of Vajrapani!
Through the force of their joy may they be free from evil and find his company.

12

When they see the lava fires of hell extinguished
By a rain of falling flowers mixed with scented water,
Immediately satisfied, they wonder whose work this was:
In this way may those in hell behold Padmapani.

13

"Friends, don't be afraid but quickly gather here,
What need is there to flee when above us is the youthful Manjughosha to dispel our
fears,
The tender Bodhisattva who protects all living things,
Through whose might all suffering is removed and the force of joy abounds.

14

Behold him in an enchanting palace resounding with hymns sung by a thousand
goddesses,
With the tiaras of a hundred gods being offered to his lotus feet.
And a rain of many flowers falling on his head, the eyes of which are moist with
kindness."

Upon seeing Manjughosha in this way, may those in hell cry out loud with joy.

15

Likewise having seen, due to the roots of my wholesome deeds,
The cool and sweet-smelling rain falling from joyful clouds
Created by the Bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Sarva-nirvarana-vishkambhi,
May all beings in hell be truly happy.

16

May all animals be free from the fear
Of being eaten by one another;

May the hungry ghosts be as happy
As the men of the Northern Continent.

17

May they be satisfied
By a stream of milk pouring from the hand
Of the Noble Lord Avalokiteshvara,
And by bathing in it may they always be cooled.

18

May the blind see forms,
May the deaf hear sounds
And just as it was with Mayadevi,
May pregnant woman give birth without any pain

19

May the naked find clothing,
The hungry find food;
May the thirsty find water
And delicious drinks.

20

May the poor find wealth,
Those weak with sorrow find joy;
May the forlorn find new hope,
Constant happiness and prosperity.

21

May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their illness,
And may every disease in the world
Never occur again.

22

May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be freed;
May the powerless find power,
And may people think of benefiting one another.

23

May all travelers find happiness
Everywhere they go,
And without any effort may they accomplish
Whatever they set out to do.

24

May those who sail in ships and boats
Obtain whatever they wish for,
And having safely returned to the shore
May they joyfully reunite with their relatives.

25

May troubled wanderers who have lost their way
Meet with fellow travelers,
And without any fear of thieves and tigers
May their going be easy without any fatigue.

26

May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wildernesses—
The children, the aged, the unprotected,
Those stupefied and the insane—
Be guarded by beneficent celestials.

27

May beings be free from all states of no leisure
And be endowed with faith, wisdom and kindness;
With food (obtained in a proper manner) and excellent conduct,
May they be mindful throughout their lives.

28

May all beings be without want for wealth
Just like the treasury of space,
And without (it being the source of) dispute or harm
May they always enjoy it as they wish.

29

May those who have little splendor
Come to be endowed with majesty;
And may those whose bodies are worn with toil
Find magnificent and noble forms.

30

May all lower life-forms in the universe
Take (rebirth) in higher forms;
May the lowly obtain grandeur
And may the proud be humbled.

31

By the merits I (have accumulated),
May every single being
Abandon all forms of evil
And perpetually engaged in virtue.

32

May they never be parted from the Awakening Mind
And may they always engage in the Bodhisattva's conducts;
May they be cared for by the Buddhas
And relinquish the actions of devils.

33

May sentient beings have lives
Inconceivably long (when in fortunate realms);

May they always live in contentment,
Unfamiliar with even the word 'death'.

34

May there abound in all directions
Gardens of wish fulfilling trees
Filled with the sweet sound of Dharma
Proclaimed by the Buddhas and their Sons.

35

And may the land everywhere be pure,
Smooth and devoid of any rocks,
Level like the palm of the hand,
And of the nature of lapis lazuli.

36

For all the circles of disciples,
May many Bodhisattvas
Dwell in every land
Adorning them with their excellent (manifestations).

37

May all embodied creatures
Uninterruptedly hear
The sound of Dharma issuing from birds and trees,
Beams of light and even space itself.

38

May they always meet with Buddhas
And their sons the Bodhisattvas,
Then may these spiritual masters of the world
Be worshipped with endless clouds of offerings.

39

May celestials bring timely rains
So that harvests may be bountiful.
May kings act in accordance with Dharma
And the people of the world always prosper.

40

May all medicines be effective
And the repeating of mantras successful;
May dakinis, cannibals and the like
Be endowed with compassionate minds.

41

May no living creature ever suffer,
Commit evil or ever fall ill.
May no one be afraid or belittled,
Or their minds ever be depressed.

42

In all temples and monasteries
May reading and recitation flourish and remain;
May the Sangha always be in harmony
And may their purposes be accomplished.

43

May monks desiring to practise
Find quiet and solitary places,
And through having abandoned all wandering thoughts
May they meditate with flexible minds.

44

May nuns be materially sufficient,
Abandon quarrelling (with each other) and be unharmed:
Similarly may all ordained ones
Never let their morality weaken.

45

Having repented any moral falls
May evil always be eradicated,
And thereby obtaining a happy state of birth
May spiritual conduct not decline even there.

46

May the wise be honored
And may they receive alms;
May their minds be completely pure
And may they be renowned in all directions.

47

May beings not experience the misery of lower realms
And may they never know any hardships;
With a physical form superior to the gods
May they swiftly attain Buddhahood.

48

May sentient beings again and again
Make offerings to all the Buddhas,
And may they constantly be joyful
With the inconceivable bliss of the Buddhas.

49

Just as they have intended
May the Bodhisattvas fulfill the welfare of the world,
And may all sentient beings receive
Whatever the buddhas have intended for them.

50

Similarly may the Pratyeka-buddhas
And the Sharvakas find happiness.

51

And until I reach the level of the Joyous One
Through the kindness of Manjughosha,
May I be mindful throughout my lives
And always obtain ordination

52

May I live and be sustained
By simple, common foods,
And in all my lives may I find
The ideal solitude (for practicing Dharma).

53

Whenever I wish to see something
Or even wish to ask the slightest question,
May I behold without any hindrance
The Lord Manjughosha himself.

54

In order to fulfill the needs
Of beings who reach unto the ends of space,
May my way of life
Be just like that of Manjughosha.

55

For as long as space endures
And for as long as living beings remain,
Until then may I too abide
To dispel the misery of the world.

56

May all the pains of living creatures
Ripen (solely) upon myself,
And through the might of the Bodhisattva Sangha
May all beings experience happiness.

57

May the teachings, which are the sole medicine for Suffering
And the origin of every joy,
Be materially supported and honored
And abide for a very long time.

58

I prostrate to Manjughosha
Through whose kindness wholesome minds ensue,
And I prostrate to my spiritual masters
Through whose kindness I develop.