

***Bodhisattvacharyavatara***

Shantideva

translated into English by  
Stephan Batchelor

for the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives  
Dharmshala India

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***Batchelor’s Chapter I - The Benefit of  
the Awakening Mind***

la

Respectfully I prostrate myself to the Sugatas  
Who are endowed with the Dharmakaya,  
As well as to their Noble Sons  
And to all who are worthy of veneration.

lb

Here I shall explain how to engage in the  
vows of the Buddhas' Sons,  
The meaning of which I have condensed in  
accordance with the scriptures.

2

There is nothing here that has not been  
explained before  
And I have no skill in the art of rhetoric;  
Therefore, lacking any intention to benefit  
others,  
I write this in order to acquaint it to my mind.

3

For due to acquaintance with what is  
wholesome,  
The force of my faith may for a short while  
increase because of these (words).  
If, however, these (words) are seen by others  
Equal in fortune to myself, it may be  
meaningful (for them).

4

Leisure and endowment' are very hard to  
find;  
And, since they accomplish what is  
meaningful for man,  
If I do not take advantage of them now,  
How will such a perfect opportunity come  
about again?

5

Just as a flash of lightning on a dark, cloudy  
night  
For an instant brightly illuminates all,  
Likewise in this world, through the might of  
Buddha,  
A wholesome thought rarely and briefly  
appears.

6

Hence virtue is perpetually feeble,  
The great strength of evil being extremely  
intense,  
And except for a Fully Awakening Mind  
By what other virtue will it be overcome?

7

All the Buddhas who have contemplated for  
many aeons  
Have seen it to be beneficial;  
For by it the limitless masses of beings  
Will quickly attain the supreme state of bliss.

8

Those who wish to destroy the many sorrows  
of (their) conditioned existence,  
Those who wish (all beings) to experience a  
multitude of joys,  
And those who wish to experience much  
happiness,  
Should never forsake the Awakening Mind.

9

The moment an Awakening Mind arises  
In those fettered and weak in the jail of cyclic  
existence,  
They will be named 'a Son of the Sugatas',  
And will be revered by both men and gods of  
the world.

10

It is like the supreme gold-making elixir,  
For it transforms the unclean body we have  
taken  
into the priceless jewel of a Buddha-Form  
Therefore firmly seize this Awakening Mind.

11  
 Since the limitless mind of the Sole Guide of  
 the World  
 Has upon thorough investigation seen its  
 preciousness,  
 All beings wishing to be free from worldly  
 abodes  
 Should firmly take hold of this precious  
 Awakening Mind.

12  
 All other virtues are like the plantain tree;  
 For after bearing fruit they simply perish.  
 But the perennial tree of the Awakening  
 Mind  
 Unceasingly bears fruit and thereby  
 flourishes without end.

13  
 Like entrusting myself to a brave man when  
 greatly afraid  
 By entrusting myself to this (Awakening  
 Mind) I shall be swiftly liberated  
 Even if I have committed extremely  
 unbearable evils.  
 Why then do the conscientious not devote  
 themselves to this?

14  
 Just like the fire at the end of an age,  
 It instantly consumes all great evil.  
 Its unfathomable advantages were taught  
 To the disciple Sudhana by the wise Lord  
 Maitreya.

15  
 In brief, the Awakening Mind  
 Should be understood to be of two types;  
 The mind that aspires to awaken  
 And the mind that ventures to do so.

16  
 As is understood by the distinction  
 Between aspiring to go and (actually) going.  
 So the wise understand in turn  
 The distinction between these two.

17  
 Although great fruits occur in cyclic  
 existence  
 From the mind that aspires to awaken,  
 An uninterrupted flow of merit does not  
 ensue  
 As it does with the venturing mind.

18  
 And for him who has perfectly seized this  
 mind  
 With the thought never to turn away  
 From totally liberating  
 The infinite forms of life.

19  
 From that time hence,  
 Even while asleep or unconcerned.  
 A force of merit equal to the sky  
 Will perpetually ensue.

20  
 For the sake of those inclined towards the  
 lesser (vehicle),  
 This was logically asserted  
 By the Tathagata himself  
 In The Sutra Requested by Subahu.

21  
 If even the thought to relieve  
 Living creatures of merely a headache  
 Is a beneficial intention  
 Endowed with infinite goodness,

22  
 Then what need is there to mention  
 The wish to dispel their inconceivable  
 misery,  
 Wishing every single one of them  
 To realize boundless good qualities?

23  
 Do even fathers and mothers  
 Have such a benevolent intention as this?  
 Do the gods and sages?  
 Does even Brahma have it?

24  
 If those beings have never before  
 Even dreamt of such an attitude  
 For their own sake,  
 How would it ever arise for the sake of  
 others?

25

This intention to benefit all beings,  
Which does not arise in others even for their  
own sake,  
Is an extraordinary jewel of the mind,  
And its birth is an unprecedented wonder.

26

How can I fathom the depths  
Of the goodness of this jewel of the mind,  
The panacea that relieves the world of pain  
And is the source of all its joy?

27

If merely a benevolent intention  
Excels venerating the Buddhas,  
Then what need to mention striving to make  
All beings without exception happy?

28

Although wishing to be rid of misery,  
They run towards misery itself.  
Although wishing to have happiness,  
Like an enemy they ignorantly destroy it.

29

For those who are deprived of happiness  
And burdened with many sorrows  
It satisfies them with all joy,  
Dispels all suffering,

30

And clears away confusion.  
Where is there a comparable virtue?  
Where is there even such a friend?  
Where is there merit similar to this?

31

If whoever repays a kind deed  
Is worthy of some praise,  
Then what need to mention the Bodhisattva  
Who does good without its being asked of  
him?

32

The world honors as virtuous  
A man who sometimes gives a little, plain  
food  
Disrespectfully to a few beings,  
That satisfies them for only half a day.

33

What need be said then of one  
who, eternally bestows the peerless bliss of  
the Sugatas  
Upon limitless numbers of beings,  
Thereby fulfilling all their hopes?

34

The Buddha has said that whoever hears an  
evil thought  
Against a benefactor such as that Bodhisattva  
Will remain in hell for as many aeons  
As there were evil thoughts.

35

But if a virtuous attitude should arise (in that  
regard).  
Its fruits will multiply far more than that.  
When Bodhisattvas greatly suffer they  
generate no negativity,  
Instead their virtues naturally increase.

36

I bow down to the body of him  
In whom the sacred precious mind is born.  
I seek refuge in that source of joy  
Who brings to happiness even those who  
harm him.

-----  
36 verses

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***Batchelor’s Chapter II - Disclosure of  
Evil***

1  
In order to seize that precious mind  
I offer now to the Tathagatas,  
To the sacred Dharma, the stainless jewel,  
And to the Sons of Buddha, the oceans of  
excellence,

2  
Whatever flowers and fruits there are  
And whatever kinds of medicine,  
Whatever jewels exist in this world  
And whatever clean refreshing waters;

3  
Likewise gem-encrusted mountains,  
Forest groves, quiet and joyful places,  
Heavenly trees bedecked. with flowers  
And trees with fruit-laden branches;

4  
Fragrances of the celestial realms,  
Incense, wishing trees and jewel trees,  
Uncultivated harvests, and all ornaments  
That are worthy to be offered;

5  
Lakes and pools adorned with lotuses  
And the beautiful cry of wild geese,  
Everything unowned  
Within the limitless spheres of space.

6  
Creating these things in my mind I offer  
them  
To the supreme beings, the Buddhas, as well  
as their Sons;  
O Compassionate Ones, think kindly of me  
And accept these offerings of mine.

7  
Having no merit I am destitute  
And I have no other gifts to offer.  
O Protectors, you who think of helping  
others.  
By your power accept these for my sake.

8  
Eternally shall I offer all my bodies  
To the Conquerors and their Sons.  
Please accept me, you Supreme Heroes.  
Respectfully shall I be your subject.

9  
Through being completely under your care  
I shall benefit all with no fears of conditioned  
existence;  
I shall perfectly transcend my previous evils  
And in the future shall commit no more.

10  
To very sweetly scented bathing chambers  
With brilliantly sparkling crystal floors  
And exquisite pillars ablaze with gems,  
Having canopies above aglow with pearls.

11  
I beseech the Tathagatas and their Sons  
To come and bathe their bodies  
From many jeweled vases filled with waters  
scented and enticing,  
To the accompaniment of music and song.

12  
Let me dry their bodies with incomparable  
cloths  
Clean and well-anointed with scent,  
And then may I present these Holy Beings  
With fragrant garments of suitable colors.

13  
I adorn with manifold ornaments  
And various raiments fine and smooth,  
The Aryas Samantabhadra, Manjughosba  
Avalokiteshvara and all the others.

14  
Just like polishing pure, refined gold  
Do I anoint the Buddhas' forms that blaze  
with light  
With the choicest perfumes whose fragrance  
permeates  
A thousand million worlds.

15

And to the highest objects of giving I offer  
Beautiful, well-arranged garlands,  
As well as enchanting, sweet smelling  
flowers,  
Such as lily, jasmine and lotus blooms.

16

Also I send forth clouds of incense  
Whose sweet aroma steals away the mind,  
As well as celestial delicacies  
Including a variety of foods and drinks.

17

I offer them jeweled lamps  
Arranged on golden lotus buds;  
Upon land sprinkled with scented water  
Do I scatter delicate flower petals.

18

To those who have the nature of compassion  
I offer palaces resounding with melodious  
hymns,  
Exquisitely illuminated by hanging pearls  
and gems  
That adorn the infinities of space.

19

Eternally shall I offer to all the Buddhas  
Jeweled umbrellas with golden handles  
And exquisite ornaments embellishing the  
rims,  
Standing erect, their shapes beautiful to  
behold.

20

And in addition may a mass of offerings  
Resounding with sweet and pleasing music,  
(Like) clouds that appease the misery of all,  
Each remain (for as long as necessary).

21

And may a continuous rain  
Of flowers and precious gems descend  
Upon the reliquaries and the statues,  
And upon all the jewels of Dharma.

22

In the same way as Manjughosha and others  
Have made offerings to the Conquerors,  
Similarly do I bestow gifts upon the  
Tathagatas,  
The Protectors, their Sons and all.

23

I glorify the Oceans of Excellence  
With limitless verses of harmonious praise;  
May these clouds of gentle eulogy  
Constantly ascend to their presence.

24

With bodies as numerous  
As all the atoms within the universe,  
I prostrate to all Buddhas of the three times,  
The Dharma and the supreme community.

25

Likewise I prostrate to all reliquaries,  
To the bases of an Awakening Mind,  
To all learned abbots and masters  
And to all the noble practitioners.

26

I seek refuge in all Buddhas  
Until I possess the essence of Awakening,  
Likewise I seek refuge in Dharma  
And in the assembly of Bodhisattvas.

27

With folded hands I beseech  
The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas  
Who possess the great compassion  
And reside in all directions.

28

Throughout beginningless cyclic existence  
In this life and in others,  
Unknowingly I committed evil deeds  
And ordered them to be done (by others).

29

Overwhelmed by the deceptions of ignorance  
I rejoiced in what was done,  
But now seeing these mistakes  
From my heart I declare them to the  
Buddhas.

30

Whatever harmful acts of body, speech and  
mind  
I have done in a disturbed mental state,  
Towards the three jewels of refuge,  
My parents, my spiritual masters and others;

31

And all the grave wrongs done by me,  
So thoroughly evil and polluted  
But an abundance of faults,  
I openly declare to the Guides of the World.

32

But I may well perish  
Before all my evils have been purified;  
So please protect me in such a way  
As will swiftly and surely free me from them.

33

The untrustworthy lord of death  
Waits not for things to be done or undone;  
Whether I am sick or healthy.  
This fleeting lifespan is unstable.

34

Leaving all I must depart alone.  
But through not having understood this  
I committed various kinds of evil  
For the sake of my friends and foes.

35

My foes will become nothing.  
My friends will become nothing.  
I too will become nothing.  
Likewise all will become nothing.

36

Just like a dream experience,  
Whatever things I enjoy  
Will become a memory.  
Whatever has passed will not be seen again.

37

Even within this brief life  
Many friends and foes have passed,  
But whatever unbearable evil I committed for  
them  
Remains ahead of me.

38

Thereby, through not having realized  
That I shall suddenly vanish,  
I committed so much evil  
Out of ignorance, lust and hate.

39

Remaining neither day nor night,  
Life is always slipping by  
And never getting any longer,  
Why will death not come to one like me?

40

While I am lying in bed,  
Although surrounded by my friends and  
relatives,  
The feeling of life being severed  
Will be experienced by me alone.

41

When seized by the messengers of death,  
What benefit will friends and relatives  
afford?  
My merit alone shall protect me then,  
But upon that I have never relied.

42

O Protectors! I, so unconcerned,  
Unaware of such terror as this,  
Accumulated a great deal of evil  
For the sake of this transient life.

43

Petrified is the person  
Today being led to a torture chamber.  
With dry mouth and dreadful sunken eyes.  
His entire appearance is transfigured.

44

What need to mention the tremendous  
despair  
When stricken with the disease of great  
panic,  
Being clasped by the physical forms,  
Of the frightful messengers of death?

45

"Who can afford me real protection  
From this great horror?"  
With terrified, bulging eyes agape  
I shall search the four quarters for refuge.

46

But seeing no refuge there  
I shall become enveloped in gloom.  
If there should be no protection there,  
Then what shall I be able to do?

47

Therefore I now seek refuge  
In the Buddhas who protect the world,  
Who strive to shelter all that lives  
And with great strength eradicate all fear.

48

Likewise I purely seek refuge  
In the Dharma they have realized  
That clears away the fears of cyclic  
existence,  
And also in the assembly of Bodhisattvas.

49

I, trembling with fear,  
Offer myself to Samantabhadra;  
To Manjughosha also  
I make a gift of my body.

50

To the Protector Avalokiteshvara  
Who infallibly acts with compassion,  
I utter a mournful cry,  
“Please protect this evil-doer!”

51

In my search for refuge  
I cry from my heart  
For Akashagarbha, Ksitigarbha  
And all the Compassionate Protectors.

52

And I seek refuge in Vajrapani,  
Upon the sight of whom all harmful beings  
Such as the messengers of death  
Flee in terror to the four quarters.

53

Previously I transgressed your advice,  
But now upon seeing this great fear  
I go to you for refuge.  
By doing so may this fear be swiftly cleared  
away.

54

If I need to comply with a doctor's advice  
When frightened by a common illness,  
Then how much more so when perpetually  
diseased  
By the manifold evils of desire and so forth.

55

And if all people dwelling on this earth  
Can be overcome by just one of these,  
And if no other medicine to cure them  
Is to be found elsewhere in the universe,

56

Then the intention not to act in accordance  
With the advice of the All-Knowing  
Physicians  
That can uproot every misery,  
Is extremely bewildered and worthy of scorn.

57

If I need to be careful  
Near a small, ordinary precipice,  
Then how much more so near the one of long  
duration  
That drops for a thousand miles.

58

It is inappropriate to enjoy myself  
Thinking that today alone I shall not die,  
For inevitably the time will come  
When I shall become nothing.

59

Who can grant me fearlessness?  
How can I be surely freed from this?  
If I shall inevitably become nothing,  
How can I relax and enjoy myself?

60

What remains with me now  
From the terminated experiences of the past?  
But through my great attachment to them  
I have been going against my spiritual  
masters' advice.

61

Having departed from this life  
And from all my friends and relatives,  
If all alone I must go elsewhere  
What is the use of making friends and  
enemies?

62

How can I be surely freed  
From unwholesomeness, the source of  
misery?  
Continually night and day  
Should I only consider this.



63

Whatever has been done by me  
Through ignorance and unknowing,  
Be it the breaking of a vow  
Or a deed by nature wrong,

64

I humbly-confess it all  
In the presence of the Protectors,  
With folded hands, prostrating myself again  
and again,  
My mind terrified by the misery (to come).

65

I beseech all the Guides of the World  
To please accept my evils and wrongs.  
Since these are not good,  
In future I shall do them no more.

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65 verses

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***Batchelor’s Chapter III - Full  
Acceptance of the Awakening Mind***

1  
Gladly do I rejoice  
In the virtue that relieves the misery  
Of all those in unfortunate states  
And that places those with suffering in  
happiness.

2  
I rejoice in that gathering of virtue  
That is the cause for (the Arhat’s)  
Awakening,  
I rejoice in the definite freedom of embodied  
creatures  
From the miseries of cyclic existence.

3  
I rejoice in the Awakening of the Buddhas  
And also in the spiritual levels of their Sons.

4  
And with gladness I rejoice  
In the ocean of virtue from developing an  
Awakening Mind  
That wishes all beings to be happy,  
As well as in the deeds that bring them  
benefit.

5  
With folded hands I beseech  
The Buddhas of all directions,  
To shine the lamp of Dharma  
For all bewildered in misery’s gloom.

6  
With folded hands I beseech  
The Conquerors who wish to pass away,  
To please remain for countless aeons  
And not to leave the world in darkness.

7  
Thus by the virtue collected  
Through all that I have done,  
May the pain of every living creature  
Be completely cleared away.

8  
May I be the doctor and the medicine  
And may I be the nurse  
For all sick beings in the world  
Until everyone is healed.

9  
May a rain of food and drink descend  
To clear away the pain of thirst and hunger  
And during the aeon of famine  
May I myself change into food and drink.

10  
May I become an inexhaustible treasure  
For those who are poor and destitute;  
May I turn into all things they could need  
And may these be placed close beside them.

11  
Without any sense of loss  
I shall give up my body and enjoyments  
As well as all my virtues of the three times  
For the sake of benefiting all.

12  
By giving up all, sorrow is transcended  
And my mind will realize the sorrowless  
state.  
It is best that I (now) give everything to all  
beings  
In the same way as I shall (at death).

13  
Having given this body up  
For the pleasure of all living beings,  
By killing, abusing and beating it  
May they always do as they please.

14  
Although they may play with my body  
And make it a source of jest and blame,  
Because I have given it up to them  
What is the use of holding it dear?

15  
Therefore I shall let them do anything to it  
That does not cause them any harm,  
And when anyone encounters me  
May it never be meaningless for him.

16

If in those who encounter me  
A faithful or an angry thought arises,  
May that eternally become the source  
For fulfilling all their wishes.

17

May all who say bad things to me  
Or cause me any other harm,  
And those who mock and insult me  
Have the fortune to fully awaken.

18

May I be protector for those without one,  
A guide for all travelers on the way;  
May I be a bridge, a boat and a ship  
For all who wish to cross (the water).

19

May I be an island for those who seek one  
And a lamp for those desiring light,  
May I be a bed for all who wish to rest  
And a slave for all who want a slave.

20

May I be a wishing jewel, a magic vase,  
Powerful mantras and great medicine,  
May I become a wish-fulfilling tree  
And a cow of plenty for the world.

21

Just like space  
And the great elements such as earth,  
May I always support the life  
Of all the boundless creatures.

22

And until they pass away from pain  
May I also be the source of life  
For all the realms of varied beings  
That reach unto the ends of space.

23

Just as the previous Sugatas  
Gave birth to an Awakening Mind  
And just as they successively dwelt  
In the Bodhisattva practices;

24

Likewise for the sake of all that lives  
Do I give birth to an Awakening mind,  
And likewise shall I too  
Successively follow the practices.

25

In order to further increase it from now on,  
Those with discernment who have lucidly  
seized  
An Awakening Mind in this way,  
Should highly praise it in the following  
manner:

26

Today my life has (borne) fruit;  
(Having) well obtained this human existence,  
I've been born in the family of Buddha  
And now am one of Buddha's Sons.

27

Thus whatever actions I do from now on  
Must be in accord with the family.  
Never shall I disgrace or pollute  
This noble and unsullied race.

28

Just like a blind man  
Discovering a jewel in a heap of rubbish,  
Likewise by some coincidence  
An Awakening Mind has been born within  
me.

29

It is the supreme ambrosia  
That overcomes the sovereignty of death,  
It is the inexhaustible treasure  
That eliminates all poverty in the world.

30

It is the supreme medicine  
That quells the world's disease,  
It is the tree that shelters all beings  
Wandering and tired on the path of  
conditioned  
existence.

31

It is the universal bridge  
That leads to freedom from unhappy states of  
birth,  
It is the dawning moon of the mind  
That dispels the torment of disturbing  
conceptions.

32

It is the great sun that finally removes  
The misty ignorance of the world,  
It is the quintessential butter  
From the churning of the milk of Dharma.

33

For all those guests traveling on the path of  
conditioned existence  
Who wish to experience the bounties of  
happiness,  
This will satisfy them with joy  
And actually place them in supreme bliss.

34

Today in the presence of all the Protectors  
I invite the world to be guests  
At (a festival of) temporary and ultimate  
delight,  
May gods, anti-gods and all be joyful.

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33 verses

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***Bachelor’s Chapter IV -  
Conscientiousness***

1  
Having firmly seized the Awakening Mind in  
this way.

A Conqueror's son must never waver;  
Always should he exert himself  
To never stray from his practice.

2  
In the case of reckless actions  
Or of deeds not well considered,  
Although a promise may have been made  
it is fit to reconsider whether I should do  
them or not.

3  
But how can I ever withdraw  
From what has been examined by the great  
wisdom  
Of the Buddhas and their Sons,  
And even many times by me myself?

4  
If having made such a promise  
I do not put it into action,  
Then by deceiving every living being  
What kind of rebirth shall I take?

5  
If it has been taught (by the Buddha)  
That he who does not give away  
The smallest thing he once intended to give  
Will take rebirth as a hungry ghost;

6  
Then if I should deceive all beings  
After having sincerely invited them  
To the unsurpassable bliss,  
Shall I take a happy rebirth?

7  
Only the Omniscient can discern  
The manner of the action of those  
Who give up the Awakening Mind but are  
freed;  
It is beyond the scope of (ordinary) thought.

8  
This, for a Bodhisattva,  
Is the heaviest of downfalls,  
For should it ever happen,  
The welfare of all will be weakened.

9  
And should others for even a single moment  
Hinder or obstruct his wholesome (deeds),  
By weakening the welfare of all  
There will be no end to their rebirth in lower  
states.

10  
For if my being is impaired  
By destroying the joy of even one creature,  
Then what need is there to mention  
Destroying the joy of creatures vast as space.

11  
Thus those who have the force of an  
Awakening Mind  
As well as the force of falling (from it)  
Stay revolving within cyclic existence  
And for a long time are hindered in reaching  
the Bodhisattva levels.

12  
Therefore just as I have promised  
Shall I respectfully accord my actions.  
If from now on I make no effort  
I shall descend from lower to lower states.

13  
Although for the benefit of every creature  
Countless Buddhas have passed by,  
Yet I was not an object of their care  
Because of my own mistakes.

14  
And if I continue to act like this,  
Again and again shall I undergo  
(Suffering) in unhappy realms, sickness,  
bondage,  
Laceration and the shedding of blood.

15  
 If the arising of a Tathagata,  
 Faith, the attainment of a human body  
 And my being fit to cultivate virtue are  
 scarce,  
 When will they be won again?

16  
 Although today I am healthy,  
 Well-nourished and unafflicted,  
 Life is momentary and deceptive:  
 The body is like an object on loan for but a  
 minute.

17  
 And with behavior such as this  
 I shall not win a human body again,  
 And if this human form is not attained  
 There will be solely evil and no virtue.

18  
 If when I have the chance to live a  
 wholesome life  
 My actions are not wholesome,  
 Then what shall I be able to do  
 When confused by the misery of the lower  
 realms?

19  
 And if I commit no wholesome deeds (there),  
 But readily amass much evil,  
 Then for a hundred million aeons  
 I shall not even hear the words "a happy life".

20  
 For these very reasons, the Buddha has said  
 That hard as it is for a turtle to insert its neck  
 Into a yoke adrift upon the vast ocean,  
 It is extremely hard to attain the human  
 state."

21  
 If even by the evil of one instant  
 An aeon may be spent in the deepest hell,  
 Then because of the evil I have gathered  
 since beginningless time,  
 What need to mention, my not going to a  
 happy realm.

22  
 But having experienced merely that (rebirth  
 in hell)  
 I shall still not be liberated;  
 For while it is being experienced  
 Other evil will be extensively produced.

23  
 So if, when having found leisure such as this,  
 I do not attune myself to what is wholesome,  
 There could be no greater deception  
 And there could be no greater folly.

24  
 And if, having understood this,  
 I still foolishly continue to be slothful,  
 When the hour of death arrives  
 Tremendous grief will rear its head.

25  
 Then if my body blazes for a long time  
 In the unbearable flames of hell,  
 Inevitably my mind will be tormented  
 By the fires of unendurable remorse.

26  
 Having found by some coincidence  
 This beneficial state that is so hard to find,  
 If now while able to discriminate  
 I once gain am led into the bells,

27  
 Then as though I were hypnotized by a spell  
 I shall reduce this mind to nothing.  
 Even I do not know what is causing me  
 confusion,  
 What is there dwelling inside me

28  
 Although enemies such as hatred and craving  
 Have neither any arms nor legs,  
 And are neither courageous nor wise,  
 How have I been used like a slave by them?

29  
 For while they dwell within my mind  
 At their pleasure they cause me harm,  
 Yet I patiently endure them without any  
 anger;  
 But this is an inappropriate and shameful  
 time for patience.

30

Should even all the gods and anti-gods  
Rise up against me as my enemies,  
They could not lead nor place me in  
The roaring fires of deepest hell.

31

But the mighty foe, these disturbing  
conceptions,  
In a moment can cast me amidst (those  
flames)  
Which when met will cause not even the  
ashes  
Of the king of mountains to remain.

32

All other enemies are incapable  
Of remaining for such a length of time  
As can my disturbing conceptions,  
The enduring enemy with neither beginning  
nor end.

33

If I agreeably honor and entrust myself (to  
others)  
They will bring me benefit and happiness  
But if I entrust myself to these disturbing  
conceptions  
In future they will bring only misery and  
harm.

34

While in cyclic existence how can I be joyful  
and unafraid  
If in my heart I readily prepare a place  
For this incessant enemy of long duration,  
The sole cause for the increase of all that  
harms me?

35

And how shall I ever have happiness  
If in a net of attachment within my mind  
There dwell the guardians of the prison of  
cyclic existence,  
There (disturbing conceptions) that become  
my butchers and tormentors in hell?

36

Therefore as long as this enemy is not slain  
with certainty before my very eyes.  
I shall never give up exerting myself  
(towards that end).  
Having become angry at someone who  
caused only slight and short-lived harm.  
Self-important people will not sleep until  
their (enemy) is overcome.

37

And if while engaged in a violent battle,  
Vigorously desiring to conquer those whose  
disturbing  
conceptions will naturally bring them  
suffering at death,  
Men disregard the pain of being pierced by  
spears and arrows  
And will not withdraw until the day is won;

38

Then what need to mention that I should not  
be  
faint-hearted and slothful,  
Even if I am caused many hundreds of  
sufferings  
When now I strive to definitely overcome my  
natural enemies,  
(these disturbing conceptions) which are the  
constant source of my misery?

39

If even scars inflicted by meaningless  
enemies  
Are worn upon the body like ornaments,  
Then why is suffering a cause of harm to me  
Who impeccably strives to fulfill the great  
purpose?

40

If fishermen, hunters and farmers,  
Thinking merely of their own livelihood,  
Endure the sufferings of heat and cold,  
Why am I not patient for the sake of the  
worlds joy?

41

When I promised to liberate all those beings  
Dwelling in the ten directions as far as I the  
ends of space  
From their disturbing conceptions,  
I myself was not yet freed from mine.

42

Thus unaware of even my own capacity,  
Was it not somewhat crazy to have spoken  
like that?  
But as this is so I must never withdraw  
From vanquishing my disturbing  
conceptions.

43

And to do this will be my sole obsession:  
Holding a strong grudge I shall meet them in  
battle!  
But disturbing conceptions such as these  
Destroy disturbing conceptions and (for the  
time being)  
are not to be (abandoned).

44

It would be better for me to be burned,  
To have my head cut off and to be killed,  
Rather than ever bowing down  
To those ever-present disturbing conceptions.

45

Common enemies when expelled from one  
country  
Simply retire and settle down in another,  
Though when their strength is recovered they  
return,  
But the way of this enemy, my disturbing  
conceptions  
is not similar in this respect.

46

Deluded disturbing conceptions! When  
forsaken by the eye of wisdom  
And dispelled from my mind, where will you  
go?  
Where will you dwell in order to be able to  
injure me again?  
But, weak-minded, I have been reduced to  
making no effort.

47

If these disturbing conceptions do not exist  
within the objects, the sense organs, between  
the two  
nor elsewhere,  
Then where do they exist and how do they  
harm the world?  
They are like an illusion - thus I should  
dispel within my heart and strive resolutely  
for wisdom.  
For no real reason, why should I suffer so  
much in hell?

48

Therefore having thought about this well,  
I should try to put these precepts into practice  
just as they have been explained-  
If the doctor’s instructions are ignored,  
How will a patient in need of cure be healed  
by his medicines?

-----

48 verses



**Bodhisattvacharyavatara,** °

translated into English by Stephan Batchelor  
for the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives,  
Dharmshala India

***Batchelor’s Chapter V - Guarding Alertness***

1  
Those who wish to guard their practice  
Should very attentively guard their minds  
For those who do not guard their minds  
Will be unable to guard their practice.

2  
In this world subdued and crazed elephants  
Are incapable of causing such harms  
As the miseries of the deepest hell  
Which can be caused by the unleashed  
elephant of my mind.

3  
But if the elephant of my mind is firmly  
bound  
On all sides by the rope of mindfulness,  
All fears will cease to exist  
And all virtues will come into my hand.

4  
Tigers, lions, elephants, bears,  
Snakes and all forms of enemies,  
The guardians of the hell worlds,  
Evil spirits and cannibals,

5  
Will all be bound  
By binding my mind alone,  
And all will be subdued  
By subduing my mind alone.

6  
The Perfect Teacher himself has shown  
That in this way all fears  
As well as all boundless miseries  
Originate from the mind.

7  
Who intentionally created  
All the weapons for those in hell?  
Who created the burning iron ground?  
From where did all the women in hell ensue?

8  
The Mighty One has said that all such things  
Are the workings of an evil mind,  
Hence within the three world spheres  
There is nothing to fear other than my mind.

9  
If the perfection of generosity  
Were the alleviation of the world's poverty,  
Then since beings are still starving now  
In what manner did the previous Buddhas  
perfect it?

10  
The perfection of generosity is said to be  
The thought to give all beings everything,  
Together with the fruit of such a thought  
Hence it is simply a state of mind.

11  
Nowhere has the killing  
Of fish and other creatures been eradicated;  
For the attainment of merely the thought to  
forsake such things  
Is explained as the perfection of moral  
discipline.

12  
Unruly beings are as unlimited as space;  
They cannot possibly all be overcome,  
But if I overcome thoughts of anger alone  
This will be equivalent to vanquishing all  
foes.

13  
Where would I possibly find enough leather  
With which to cover the surface of the earth?  
But wearing leather just on the soles of my  
shoes  
Is equivalent to covering the earth with it.

14  
Likewise it is not possible for me  
To restrain the external course of things;  
But should I restrain this mind of mine  
What would be the need to restrain all else?

15  
Although the development of merely a clear  
state of concentration  
Can result in taking rebirth in Brahma's  
realm,  
Physical and vocal actions cannot so result  
When accompanied by weak mental conduct.

16  
The knower of reality has said  
That even if recitation and physical hardships  
Are practiced for long periods of time,  
They will be meaningless if the mind is  
distracted elsewhere.

17  
Even those who wish to find happiness and  
overcome misery  
Will wander with no aim nor meaning  
If they do not comprehend the secret of the  
mind -  
The paramount significance of Dharma.

18  
This being so,  
I shall hold and guard my mind well.  
Without the discipline of guarding the mind,  
What use are many other disciplines?

19  
Just as I would be attentive and careful of a  
wound  
When amidst a bustling uncontrolled crowd,  
So I should always guard the wound of my  
mind  
When dwelling among harmful people.

20  
And if I am careful of a wound  
Through fear of it being slightly hurt,  
Then why do I not guard the wound of my  
mind  
Through fear of being crushed by the  
mountains of hell?

21  
Should I behave in such a way as this,  
Then whether among harmful people  
Or even in the midst of women,  
The steady effort to control myself will not  
decline.

22  
It is better to be without wealth,  
Honor, body and livelihood;  
And it is better to let other virtues deteriorate,  
Rather than ever to let the virtues of the mind  
decline.

23  
O you who wish to guard your minds,  
I beseech you with folded hands;  
Always exert yourself to guard  
Mindfulness and alertness!

24  
People who are disturbed by sickness  
Have no strength to do anything useful,  
Likewise those whose minds are disturbed by  
confusion  
Have no strength to do anything wholesome.

25  
Whatever has been learnt, contemplated and  
meditated upon  
By those whose minds lack alertness,  
Just like water in a leaking vase,  
Will not be retained in their memory.

26  
Even those who have much learning,  
Faith and willing perseverance  
Will become defiled by a moral fall  
Due to the mistake of lacking alertness.

27  
The thieves of unalertness,  
In following upon the decline of mindfulness,  
Will steal even the merits I have firmly  
gathered  
So that I shall then proceed to lower realms.

28  
The host of thieves who are my own  
disturbing conceptions  
Will search for a good opportunity,  
Having found it they will steal my virtue  
And destroy the attainment of life in a happy  
realm.

29  
Therefore I shall never let mindfulness depart  
From the doorway of my mind.  
If it goes, I should recall the misery of the  
lower realms  
And firmly re-establish it there.

30

Through staying in the company of spiritual masters,  
Through the instructions of abbots and through fear,  
Mindfulness will easily be generated  
In fortunate people who practice with respect.

31

"I am ever dwelling in the presence  
Of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas  
Who are always endowed  
With unobstructed vision."

32

By thinking in this way  
I shall mindfully develop a sense of shame, respect and fear.  
Also through doing this,  
Recollection of the Buddha will repeatedly occur.

33

When mindfulness is set with the purpose  
Of guarding the doorway of the mind,  
Then alertness will come about  
And even that which has gone will return.

34

When, just as I am about to act,  
I see that my mind is tainted with defilement,  
At such a time I should remain  
Unmovable, like a piece of wood.

35

Never should I look around  
Distractedly for no purpose:  
With a resolute mind  
I should always keep my eyes cast downwards.

36

But in order to relax the gaze  
For a short while I should look around,  
And if someone appears in my field of vision  
I should look at him and say, "Welcome."

37

To check if there is any danger on the path  
I should look again and again in the four directions.  
To rest, I should turn my head around  
And then look behind me.

38

Having examined both ahead and behind  
I should proceed to either come or go.  
Being aware of the necessity for such mindful alertness  
I should behave like this in all situations.

39

Once having prepared for an action with the thought,  
"My body will remain in such a way,"  
Then periodically I should look to see  
How the body is being maintained.

40

With the utmost effort I should check  
To see that the crazed elephant of my mind  
Is not wandering off but is bound  
To the great pillar of thinking about Dharma.

41

Those who strive by all means for concentration  
Should not wander off even for a moment;  
By thinking, "How is my mind behaving?" -  
They should closely analyze their mind.

42

But if I am unable to do this  
When afraid or involved in celebrations, then  
I should relax.  
Likewise it has been taught that at times of giving  
One may be indifferent to certain aspects of moral discipline.

43

I should undertake whatever deed I have intended to do  
And think of doing nothing other than it.  
With my mind applied to that task,  
I should set about for the time being to accomplish it.

44

By acting in this way all will be done well.  
 But by acting otherwise neither action will be done.  
 Likewise there will be increase in the proximate disturbing conceptions  
 That come from lack of alertness.

45

If I happen to be present  
 While a senseless conversation is taking place  
 Or if I happen to see show kind of spectacular show,  
 I should abandon attachment towards it.

46

If for no reason I start digging the earth,  
 Picking at the grass or drawing patterns on the ground,  
 Then by recalling the advise of the Buddhas,  
 I should immediately stop out of fear.

47

Whenever I have the desire  
 To move my body or to say something,  
 First of all I should examine my mind  
 And then, with steadiness, act in the proper way.

48

Whenever there is attachment in my mind  
 And whenever there is the desire to be angry,  
 I should not do anything nor say anything,  
 But remain like a piece of wood.

49

Whenever I have distracted thoughts, the wish to verbally belittle others,  
 Feelings of self-importance or self-satisfaction:  
 When I have the intention to describe the faults of others,  
 Pretension and the thought to deceive others;

50

Whenever I am eager for praise  
 Or have the desire to blame others;  
 Whenever I have the wish to speak harshly and cause dispute;  
 At all such times I should remain like a piece of wood.

51

Whenever I desire material gain, honor, fame;  
 Whenever I seek attendants or a circle of friends,  
 And when in my mind I wish to be served;  
 At all these times I should remain like a piece of wood.

52

Whenever I have the wish to decrease or to stop working for others  
 And the desire to pursue my welfare alone,  
 If motivated by such thoughts, a wish to say something occurs,  
 At these times I should remain like a piece of wood.

53

Whenever I have impatience, laziness, cowardice,  
 Shamelessness or the desire to talk nonsense;  
 If thoughts of partiality arise,  
 At these times too I should remain like a piece of wood.

54

Having in this way examined his mind for disturbing conceptions  
 And for thoughts that strive for meaningless things,  
 The courageous Bodhisattva should hold his mind steady  
 Through the application of remedial forces.

55

Being very resolute and faithful,  
 Steady, respectful, polite,  
 With a sense of shame, apprehensive and peaceful,  
 I should strive to make others happy.

56

I should not be disheartened by all the whims  
 Of the childish who are in discord with one another  
 I should know them to arise in their minds due to disturbing conceptions  
 And therefore be kind towards them.

57

In doing that which by nature is not  
unwholesome  
Both for the sake of myself and other sentient  
beings  
I should always hold my mind fast,  
Acting like an apparition, with no sense of  
self.

58

By thinking again and again  
That after a long time I have won the greatest  
leisure,  
Likewise I should hold my mind  
As utterly unshakeable as the king of  
mountains.

59

If, mind, you are not made unhappy  
When this body is dragged and tossed about  
By vultures greedy for flesh,  
Then why are you so concerned about it  
now?

60

Holding this body as "mine",  
Why, mind, do you guard it so?  
Since you and it are separate,  
What use can it be to you?

61

Why, confused mind,  
Do you not hold onto a clean, wooden form?  
Just what is the point of guarding  
This putrid, dirt-filled machine?

62

First of all, mentally separate  
The layers of skin from the flesh  
And then with the scalpel of discrimination  
Separate the flesh from the skeletal frame;

63

And having split open even the bones  
Look right down into the marrow.  
While examining this ask yourself,  
"Where is its essence?"

64

If, even when searching with such effort  
You can apprehend no essence,  
Then why with such much attachment  
Are you still guarding this body now?

65

What use is this body to you  
If its dirty insides are unfit for you to eat,  
If its blood is not fit to drink  
And if its intestines are not fit to be sucked?

66

At second best it is only fit to be guarded  
In order to feed the vultures and jackals.  
Truly this body of a human being  
Should only be employed in the practice of  
virtue.

67

But should you instead guard it with  
attachment  
Then what will you be able to do  
When it is stolen by the unsympathetic lord  
of death  
And given to the dogs and birds?

68

If servants are not given clothing and so forth  
When they are unable to be employed,  
Then why do you exhaust yourself looking  
after the flesh alone  
When even though caring for the body, it  
goes elsewhere?

69

Now having paid my body its wages,  
I shall engage it in making my life  
meaningful.  
But if my body is of no benefit,  
Then I shall not give it anything.

70

I should conceive of my body as a boat,  
A mere support for coming and going.  
And in order to benefit all others  
Transform it into a wish-fulfilling body.

71

Now, while there is freedom to act,  
I should always present a smiling face  
And cease to frown and look angry:  
I should be a friend and counsel of the world.

72

I should desist from inconsiderately and noisily  
Moving around chairs and so forth,  
As well as from violently opening doors:  
I should always delight in humility.

73

The stork, the cat and the thief,  
By moving silently and carefully,  
Accomplish what they desire to do;  
A Bodhisattva too should always behave in  
this way.

74

With respect I should gratefully accept  
Unsought-after words that are of benefit  
And that wisely advise and admonish me.  
At all times I should be a pupil of everyone.

75

I should say, "Well said," to all those  
Who speak Dharma well,  
And if I see someone doing good  
I should praise him and be well pleased.

76

I should discreetly talk about the good  
qualities of others  
And repeat those that others recount.  
If my own good qualities are spoken about  
I should just know and be aware that I have  
them.

77

All deeds of others are the source of a joy  
That would be rare even if it could be bought  
with money.  
Therefore I should be happy in finding this  
joy  
In the good things that are done by others.

78

Through doing this I shall suffer no losses in  
this life  
And in future lives shall find great happiness.  
But the fault of disliking their good qualities  
will make me unhappy and miserable  
And in future lives I shall find great  
suffering.

79

When talking I should speak from my heart  
and on what is relevant,  
Making the meaning clear and the speech  
pleasing.  
I should not speak out of desire or hatred  
But in gentle tones and in moderation.

80

When beholding someone with my eyes,  
Thinking, "I shall fully awaken  
Through depending upon this being."  
I should look at him with an open heart and  
love.

81

Always motivated by great aspiration  
Or being motivated by the remedial forces,  
If I work in the fields of excellence, benefit  
and misery  
Great virtues will come about.

82

Endowed with wisdom and joy  
I should undertake all that I do,  
I need not depend upon anyone else  
In any actions that I undertake.

83

The perfections such as generosity  
Are progressively more exalted  
But for a little morality I should not forsake a  
great gift.  
Principally I should consider what will be of  
the most benefit for others.

84

When this is well understood,  
I should always strive for the welfare of  
others.  
The Far-Seeing Merciful Ones have allowed  
a Bodhisattva  
To do some actions that for others were  
forbidden.

85

I should divide my food amongst those who  
have fallen to lower realms,  
Those without protection, and practitioners.  
And eat merely what is sufficient for myself.  
Except for the three robes I may give away  
all.

86

This body which is being used for the sacred  
Dharma  
Should not be harmed for only slight benefit.  
By my behaving in this way  
The wishes of all beings will be quickly  
fulfilled.

87

Those who lack the pure intention of  
compassion  
Should not give their body away.  
Instead, both in this and future lives,  
They should give it to the cause of fulfilling  
the great purpose.

88

The Dharma should not be explained to those  
who lack respect,  
To those who, like sick men, wear cloth  
around their heads,  
To those holding umbrellas, sticks or  
weapons,  
To those with covered heads,

89

Nor to a woman unaccompanied by a man.  
The vast and profound should not be taught  
to lesser beings,  
Although I should always pay equal respect  
To the Dharmas of the lesser and higher  
beings.

90

I should not communicate the Dharma of a  
lesser being  
To one who is a vessel for the vast Dharma.  
I must not forsake the Bodhisattva way of  
life,  
Nor mislead others by means of sutra or  
mantras.

91

When I spit or throw away the stick for  
cleaning my teeth,  
I should cover it up with earth.  
Also it is shameful to urinate and so forth  
In water or on land used by others.

92

When eating I should not fill my mouth,  
Eat noisily or with my mouth wide open.  
I should not sit with my legs outstretched  
Nor rub my hands together.

93

I should not sit alone in vehicles, upon beds  
Nor in the same room with the women of  
others.  
In brief, having observed or inquired about  
what is proper,  
I should not do anything that would be  
disliked by the people of the world.

94

I should not give directions with one finger,  
But instead indicate the way  
Respectfully with my right arm  
With all my fingers fully outstretched.

95

Nor should I wildly wave my arms about  
But should make my point  
With slight gestures and a snap of fingers. -  
Otherwise I shall lose control.

96

Just as the Buddha lay down to pass away  
So should I lie in the desired direction when  
going to sleep,  
And first of all with alertness  
Make the firm decision to quickly rise again.

97

Although I am unable to practice all  
The limitless varieties of Bodhisattva  
conduct,  
I should certainly practice as much as has  
been mentioned here  
Of this conduct that trains the mind.

98

Three times by day and three times by night  
I should recite The Sutra of the Three Heaps;  
For by relying upon the Buddhas and the  
Awakening Mind  
My remaining downfalls will be purified.

99

Whatever I am doing in any situation,  
Whether for myself or for the benefit of  
others,  
I should strive to put into practice  
Whatever has been taught for that situation.

100

There is no such thing as something  
That is not learned by a Conqueror's Son,  
Thus if I am skilled in living in this way  
Nothing will be non-meritorious.

101

Whether directly or indirectly, I should not  
do anything  
That is not for the benefit of others.  
And solely for the sake of sentient beings  
I should dedicate everything towards  
Awakening.

102

Never, even at the cost of my life,  
Should I forsake a spiritual friend  
who is wise in the meaning of the great  
vehicle  
And who is a great Bodhisattva practitioner.

103

I should practice entrusting myself to my  
spiritual master  
In the manner taught in The Biography of  
Shrisambhava.  
This and other advice spoken by the Buddha  
I can understand through reading the sutras.

104

I should read the sutras  
Because it is from them that the practices  
appear.  
To begin with, I should look at The Sutra of  
Akashagarba.

105

In addition I should definitely read  
The Compendium of all Practices again and  
again,  
Because what is to constantly practiced  
Is very well and extensively shown there.

106

Also I should sometimes look at  
the condensed Compendium of All Sutras.  
And I should make an effort to study  
The works by the same two titles composed  
by the exalted Nagarjuna.

107

I should do whatever is not forbidden in  
those works,  
And when I see a practice there,  
I should impeccably put it into action  
In order to guard the minds of worldly  
people.

108

The defining characteristic of guarding  
alertness  
In brief is only this:  
To examine again and again  
The condition of my body and mind.

109

Therefore I shall put this way of life into  
actual practice,  
For what can be achieved by merely talking  
about it?  
Will a sick man be benefited  
Merely by reading the medical texts?

-----  
109 verses



**Bodhisattvacharyavatara,** °

translated into English by Stephan Batchelor  
for the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives,  
Dharmshala India

***Batchelor’s Chapter VI - Patience***

1.  
Whatever wholesome deeds.  
Such as venerating the Buddhas, and  
generosity  
That have been amassed over a thousand  
aeons  
Will all be destroyed in one moment of  
anger.

2  
There is no evil like hatred,  
And no fortitude like patience.  
Thus I should strive in various ways  
To meditate on patience.

3  
My mind will not experience peace  
if it fosters painful thoughts of hatred.  
I shall find no joy or happiness,  
Unable to sleep, I shall feel unsettled.

4  
A master who has hatred  
Is in danger of being killed  
Even by those who for their wealth and  
happiness  
Depend upon his kindness.

5  
By it, friends and relatives are disheartened;  
Though drawn by my generosity they will  
not trust me,  
In brief there is nobody  
Who lives happily with anger.

6  
Hence the enemy, anger,  
Creates sufferings such as these,  
But whoever assiduously overcomes it  
Finds happiness now and hereafter.

7  
Having found its fuel of mental unhappiness  
In the prevention of what I wish for  
And in the doing of what I do not want,  
Hatred increases and then destroys me.

8  
Therefore I should totally eradicate  
The fuel of this enemy;  
For this enemy has no other function  
Than that of causing me harm.

9  
Whatever befalls me  
I shall not disturb my mental joy;  
For having been made unhappy,  
I shall not accomplish what I wish  
And my virtues will decline.

10  
Why be unhappy about something  
If it can be remedied?  
And what is the use of being unhappy about  
something  
if it cannot be remedied?

11  
For myself and for my friends  
I want no suffering, no disrespect,  
No harsh words and nothing unpleasant;  
But for my enemies it is the opposite.

12  
The causes of happiness sometimes occur  
But the causes for suffering are very many.  
Without suffering there is no renunciation.  
Therefore, mind, you should stand firm.

13  
If some ascetics and the people of Karnapa  
Endure the pain of cuts and bums for no  
reason,  
Then for the sake of liberation  
Why have I no courage?

14  
There is nothing whatsoever  
That is not made easier through  
acquaintance.  
So through becoming acquainted with small  
harms  
I should learn to patiently accept greater  
harms

15

Who has not seen this to be so with trifling sufferings  
Such as the bites of snakes and insects,  
Feelings of hunger and thirst  
And with such minor things as rashes?

16

I should not be impatient  
With heat and cold, wind and rain,  
Sickness, bondage and beatings;  
For if I am, the harm they cause me will increase.

17

Some when they see their own blood  
Become especially brave and steady,  
But some when they see the blood of others  
Faint and fall unconscious.

18

These (reactions) come from the mind  
Being either steady or timid.  
Therefore I should disregard harms caused to me  
And not be affected by suffering.

19

Even when the wises are suffering  
Their minds remain very lucid and undefiled;  
For when war is being waged against the disturbing conceptions  
Much harm is caused at the times of battle.

20

The victorious warriors are those  
Who, having disregarded all suffering,  
Vanquish the foes of hatred and so forth;  
Common warriors slay only corpses.

21

Furthermore, suffering has good qualities:  
Through being disenheartened with it,  
arrogance is dispelled,  
Compassion arises for, those in cyclic existence,  
Evil is shunned and joy is found in virtue.

22

As I do not become angry  
With great sources of suffering such as jaundice,  
Then why be a angry with animate creatures?  
They too are provoked by conditions.

23

Although they are not wished for,  
These sicknesses arise;  
And likewise although they are not wished for,  
These disturbing conceptions forcibly arise.

24

Without thinking, "I shall be angry,"  
People become angry with no resistance,  
And without thinking, I shall produce myself,"  
Likewise anger itself is produced.

25

All mistakes that are  
And all the various kinds of evil  
Arise through the force of conditions:  
They do not govern themselves.

26

These conditions that assemble together  
Have no intention to produce anything,  
And neither does their product  
Have the intention to be produced.

27

That which is asserted as Primal Substance  
And that which is imputed as a Self,  
(Since they are unproduced) do not arise after  
having purposefully thought,  
"I shall arise (in order to cause harm.)"

28

If they are unproduced and non-existent  
Then whatever wish they have to produce  
(harm will also not exist).  
Since (this Self) would permanently  
apprehend its objects,  
It follows that it would never cease to do so.

29

Furthermore if the Self were permanent  
It would clearly be devoid of action, like space.  
So even if it met with other conditions  
How could its unchanging (nature) be affected?

30

Even if when acted upon (by other conditions) it remains as before,  
Then what could actions do to it?  
Thus if I say that this (condition) acts upon (a permanent Self),  
How could the two ever be (casually) related?

31

Hence everything is governed by other factors (which in turn) are governed by (others),  
And in this way nothing governs itself.  
Having understood this, I should not become angry  
With phenomena that are like apparitions.

32

- (If everything is unreal like an apparition) then who is there to restrain what (anger)?  
Surely (in this case) restraint would be inappropriate  
It would not be inappropriate. because (conventionally) I must maintain  
That in dependence upon restraining (anger) the stream of suffering is severed.

33

So when seeing an enemy or even a friend  
Committing an improper action,  
By thinking that such things arise from conditions  
I shall remain in a happy frame of mind.

34

If things were brought into being by choice,  
Then since no one wishes to suffer,  
Suffering would not occur  
To any embodied creature.

35

Through not being careful  
People even harm themselves with thorns and other things,  
And for the sake of obtaining women and the like  
They become obsessed and deprive themselves of food.

36

And there are some who injure themselves  
Through the unmeritorious deeds  
Of hanging themselves, leaping from cliffs,  
Eating poison and unhealthy foods.

37

If, when under the influence of disturbing conceptions,  
People will even kill their treasured selves,  
How can they be expected not to cause harm  
To the bodies of other living beings?

38

Even if I cannot develop compassion for all such people  
Who through the arising of disturbing conceptions,  
Set out to try and kill me and so forth,  
The last thing I should do is to become angry with them.

39

Even if it were the nature of the childish  
To cause harm to other beings,  
It would still be incorrect to be angry with them.  
For this would be like begrudging fire for having the nature to burn.

40

And even if the fault were temporary  
In they who are by nature reliable,  
It would still be incorrect to be angry.  
For this would be like begrudging space for allowing smoke to arise in it.

41

If I become angry with the yielder  
Although I am actually harmed by his stick,  
Then since he too is secondary, being in turn incited by hatred,

42

Previously I must have caused similar harm  
To other sentient beings.  
Therefore it is right for this harm to be returned  
To me who is the cause of injury to others.

43

Both the weapon and my body  
Are the causes of my suffering.  
Since he gave rise to the weapon and I to the body,  
With whom should I be angry?

44

If in blind attachment I cling  
To this suffering abscess of a human form  
Which cannot bear to be touched,  
With whom should I be angry when it is  
hurt?

45

It is the fault of the childish that they are  
hurt,  
For although they do not wish to suffer  
They are greatly attached to its causes.  
So why should they be angry with others?

46

Just like the guardians of the hell worlds  
And the forest of razor-sharp leaves,  
So is this (suffering) produced by my actions;  
With whom therefore should I be angry?

47

Having been instigated by my own actions,  
Those who cause me harm come into being.  
If by these (actions) they should fall into hell  
Surely isn't it I who, am destroying them?

48

In dependence upon them I purify many evils  
By patiently accepting the harms that they  
cause.  
But in dependence upon me they will fall  
Into hellish pain for a very long time.

49

So since I am causing harm to them  
And they are benefiting me,  
Why, unruly mind, do you become angry  
In such a mistaken manner?

50

If my mind has the noble quality (of  
patience)  
I shall not go to hell,  
But although I am protecting myself (in this  
way)  
How will it be so for them?

51

Nevertheless, should I return the harm  
It will not protect them either.  
By doing so my conduct will deteriorate  
And hence this fortitude will be destroyed.

52

Since my mind is not physical  
In no way can anyone destroy it,  
But through its being greatly attached to my  
body  
it is caused harm by (physical) suffering.

53

Since disrespect, harsh speech  
And unpleasant words  
Do not cause any harm to my body,  
Why, mind, do you become so angry?

54

Because others will dislike me  
But since it will not devour me  
Either in this or in another life  
Why do I not want this (dislike)?

55

Because it will hinder my worldly gain  
Even if I do not want this  
I shall have to leave my worldly gains behind  
And my evil alone will remain unmoved.

56

Thus it is better that I die today  
Than live a long but wicked life;  
For even if people like me should live a long  
time,  
There will always be the suffering of death.

57

Suppose someone should awaken from a  
dream  
In which he experienced one hundred years  
of happiness,  
And suppose another should awaken from a  
dream  
In which he experienced just one moment of  
happiness;

58

For both of these people who have awoken  
That happiness will never return.  
Similarly, whether my life has been long or  
short,  
At the time of death it will be finished like  
this.

59

Although I may live happily for a long time  
Through obtaining a great deal of material  
wealth,  
I shall go forth empty-handed and destitute  
just like having been robbed by a thief.

60

Surely material wealth will enable me to live,  
And then shall be able to consume evil and  
do good  
But if I am angry on account of it  
Will not my merit be consumed and evil  
increase?

61

And what use will be the life  
Of one who only commits evil,  
If for the sake of material gain  
He causes (the merits needed for) life to  
degenerate?

62

Surely I should be angry with those  
Who say unpleasant things that weaken other  
beings' (confidence in me)  
But in the same way why am I not angry  
With people who say unpleasant things about  
others?

63

If I can patiently accept this lack of  
confidence  
Because it is related to someone else,  
Then why am I not patient with unpleasant  
words (about myself)  
Since they are related to the arising of  
disturbing conceptions?

64

Should others talk badly of or even destroy  
Holy images, reliquaries and the sacred  
Dharma.  
It is improper for me to resent it  
For the Buddhas can never be injured.

65

I should prevent anger arising towards those  
Who injure my spiritual masters, relatives  
and friends.  
Instead I should see, as in the manner shown  
before,  
That such things arise from conditions.

66

Since embodied creatures are injured  
By both animate beings and inanimate  
objects,  
Why only bear malice to the animate?  
It follows that I should patiently accept all  
harm.

67

Should one person ignorantly do wrong  
And another ignorantly become angry (with  
him),  
Who would be at fault?  
And who would be without fault?

68

Why did I previously commit those actions  
Because of which others now cause me  
harm?  
Since everything is related to my actions  
Why should I bear malice towards these  
(enemies)?

69

When I have seen this to be so,  
I should strive for what is meritorious  
(In order to) certainly bring about  
Loving thoughts between all.

70

For example, when a fire in one house  
Has moved into another house,  
It is right to get rid of straw and such things  
That will cause the fire to spread.

71

Likewise when the fire of hatred spreads  
To whatever my mind is attached,  
I should immediately get rid of it  
For fear of my merit being burned.

72

Why is a man condemned to death not fortunate  
 If he is released after having his hand cut off?  
 Why am I who am experiencing human misery not fortunate  
 If by that I am spared from (the agonies of) hell?

73

If I am unable to endure  
 Even the mere sufferings of the present,  
 Then why do I not restrain myself from being angry,  
 Which will be the source of hellish misery?

74

For the sake of satisfying my desires  
 I have suffered numerous burnings in hell,  
 But by those actions I fulfilled the purpose  
 Of neither myself nor others.

75

But now since great meaning will accrue  
 From harm which is not even (a fraction) of that,  
 I should indeed be solely joyful  
 Towards such suffering that dispels the harms of all.

76

Should someone else find joyous happiness  
 Upon praising (my enemy) as an excellent person,  
 Why, mind, do you not praise him too  
 And likewise make yourself happy?

77

That joyous happiness of yours  
 Would be a source of joy, not something prohibited,  
 A precept given by the Excellent Ones  
 And a supreme (means) for assembling others.

78

It is said that others are made happy through (being praised) in this way.  
 But if, in this way, you do not want (them to have) this happiness,  
 Then, (since it makes them happy), you should cease giving wages and the like (to your servants).  
 But you would be adversely affected both in this and future lives.

79

When people describe my own good qualities  
 I want others to be happy too,  
 But when they describe the good qualities of others  
 I do not wish to be happy myself.

80

Having generated the Awakening Mind  
 Through wishing all beings to be happy,  
 Why should I become angry  
 If they find some happiness themselves?

81

If I wish for all sentient beings to become Buddhas worshipped throughout the three realms,  
 Then why am I tormented  
 When I see them receiving mere mundane respect?

82

If a relative for whom I am caring  
 And to whom I must give many things  
 Should be able to find his own livelihood,  
 Wouldn't I be happy, rather than angry?

83

If I do not wish for beings to have even this,  
 How can I wish for them to awaken?  
 And where is there an Awakening Mind  
 In him who becomes angry when others receive things?

84

What does it matter if (my enemy) is given something or not?  
 Whether he obtains it  
 Or whether it remains in the benefactor's house,  
 In either case I shall get nothing.

85

So why, by becoming angry, do I throw away  
my merits,  
The faith (others have in me) and my good  
qualities?  
Tell me, why am I not angry (with myself)  
For not having the causes for gain?

86

Let alone not having any remorse  
About the evils that you committed, (0  
mind),  
Why do you wish to compete with others  
Who have committed meritorious deeds?

87

Even if your enemy is made unhappy  
what is there for you to be joyful about?  
Your merely wishing (for him to be hurt)  
Did not cause him to be injured.

88

And even if he does suffer as you had  
wished,  
What is there for you to be joyful about?  
if you say, "For I shall be satisfied,"  
How could there be anything more wretched  
than that?

89

This hook cast by the fishermen of disturbing  
conceptions  
Is unbearably sharp:  
Having been caught on it,  
It is certain that I shall be cooked  
In cauldrons by the guardians of hell.

90

The honor of praise and fame  
Will not turn into merit nor life;  
It will give me neither strength nor freedom  
from sickness,  
And will not provide any physical happiness.

91

If I were aware of what held meaning for me,  
What value would I find in these things?  
If all I want is (a little) mental happiness,  
I should devote myself to gambling, drinking  
and so forth.

92

If for the stake of fame  
I give away my wealth or get myself killed,  
What can the mere words (of fame) do then?  
Once I have died, to whom will they give  
pleasure?

93

When their sandcastles collapse,  
Children howl in despair;  
Likewise when my praise and reputation  
decline  
My mind becomes like a little child.

94

Since short-lived sounds are inanimate  
They cannot possibly think of praising me.  
But as it makes (the bestower of praise)  
happy,  
(My) reputation is a source of pleasure (for  
me)

95

But whether this praise is directed at myself  
or someone else  
How shall I be benefited by the joy (of he  
who bestows it)?  
Since that joy and happiness is his alone  
I shall not obtain even a part of it.

96

But if I do find happiness in his happiness  
Then surely I should feel the same way  
towards all?  
And if this were so then why am I unhappy  
When others find pleasure in that which  
brings them joy?

97

Therefore the happiness that arises  
From thinking, "I am being praised", is  
invalid.  
It is only the behavior of a child.

98

Praise and so forth, distract me  
And also undermine my disillusion (with  
cyclic existence);  
I start to envy those who have good qualities  
And all the very best is destroyed.

99

Therefore, are not those who are closely  
involved  
in destroying my praise and the like  
Also involved in protecting me  
From falling into the unfortunate realms?

100

I who am striving for freedom  
Do not need to be bound by material gain and honor.  
So why should I be angry  
With those who free me from this bondage?

101

Those who wish to cause me suffering  
Are like Buddhas bestowing waves of blessing.  
As they open the door for my not going to an unfortunate realm  
Why should I be angry with them?

102

But what if someone should obstruct my gaining merit  
With him too it is incorrect to be angry;  
For since there is no fortitude similar to patience  
Surely I should put it into practice.

103

If due to my own failings  
I am not patient with this (enemy),  
Then it is only I who am preventing myself  
From practicing this cause for gaining merit.

104

If without it something does not occur  
And if with it, it does come to be,  
Then since this (enemy) would be the cause of (patience)  
How can I say that he prevents it?

105

A beggar is not an obstacle to generosity  
When I am giving something away,  
And I cannot say that those who give ordination  
Are an obstacle to becoming ordained.

106

There are indeed many beggars in this world,  
But scarce are those who inflict harm;  
For if I have not injured others  
Few beings will cause me harm.

107

Therefore, just like treasure appearing in my house  
Without any effort on my behalf to obtain it,  
I should be happy to have an enemy  
For he assists me in my conduct of Awakening.

108

And because I am able to practice (patience) with him,  
He is worthy of being given  
The very first fruits of my patience,  
For in this way he is the cause of it.

109

But why should my enemy be venerated,  
He has no intention for me to practice patience?  
Then why venerate the sacred Dharma?  
(It too has no intention) but is a fit cause for practice.

110

But surely my enemy is not to be venerated  
For he intends to cause me harm  
But how could patience be practiced  
If, like doctors, people always strove to do me good?

111

Thus since patient acceptance is produced  
In dependence upon (one with) a very hateful mind,  
That person should be worthy of veneration just like the sacred Dharma,  
Because he is a cause of patience.

112

Therefore the Mighty One has said  
That the field of sentient beings is (similar to) a Buddha-field,  
For many who have pleased them  
Have thereby reached perfection.

113

A Buddha's qualities are gained  
From the sentient beings and the Conquerors alike,  
So why do I not respect them  
In the same way as I respect the Conquerors?

114

(Of course) they are not similar in the quality of their intentions  
But only in the fruits (that they produce);  
So it is in this respect that they have excellent qualities  
And are therefore (said to be) equal.



115  
 Whatever (merit comes from) venerating one  
 with a loving mind  
 is due to the eminence of sentient beings.  
 And in the same way the merit of having  
 faith in Buddha  
 Is due to the eminence of Buddha.

116  
 Therefore they are asserted to be equal  
 In the share they have in establishing  
 Buddha-qualities.  
 But none of them are equal (in good  
 qualities)  
 With the Buddhas who are boundless oceans  
 of excellence.

117  
 Even if the three realms were offered,  
 It would be insufficient in paying veneration  
 To those few beings in whom a mere share of  
 the good qualities  
 Of the Unique Assemblage of Excellence  
 appears.

118  
 Thus since sentient beings have a share  
 In giving rise to the supreme Buddha-  
 qualities,  
 Surely it is correct to venerate them  
 As they are similar in merely this respect?

119  
 Furthermore, what way is there to repay (the  
 Buddhas)  
 Who grant immeasurable benefit  
 And who befriend the world without  
 pretension,  
 Other than by pleasing sentient beings?

120  
 Therefore since benefiting these beings will  
 repay  
 Those who give their bodies and enter the  
 deepest hell for their sake,  
 I shall behave impeccably in all (that I do)  
 Even if they cause me a great deal of harm.

121  
 When for their sake, those who are my Lords  
 Have no regard even for their own bodies,  
 Then why am I the fool so full of self-  
 importance?  
 Why do I not act like a servant towards  
 them?

122  
 Because of their happiness the Conquerors  
 are delighted,  
 But if they are harmed they are displeased.  
 Hence by pleasing them I shall delight the  
 Conquerors  
 And by banning them I shall hurt the  
 Conquerors.

123  
 Just as desirable sense-objects would give  
 my mind no pleasure  
 If my body was ablaze with fire,  
 Likewise when living creatures are in pain  
 There is no way for the Compassionate Ones  
 to be pleased.

124  
 Therefore as I am to living beings,  
 Today I openly declare all my unwholesome  
 acts  
 That have brought displeasure to the  
 Compassionate Ones.  
 Please bear with me, O Lords, for this  
 displeasure I have caused you.

125  
 From now on, in order to delight the  
 Tathagatas  
 I shall serve the universe and definitely cease  
 (to cause harm).  
 Although many beings may kick and stamp  
 upon my head  
 Even at the risk of dying may I delight the  
 Protectors of the World (by not retaliating).

126  
 There is no doubt that those with the nature  
 of compassion  
 Regard all these beings (25 the same) as  
 themselves.  
 Furthermore, those who see (this Buddha-  
 nature) as the nature of sentient beings see  
 the Buddhas themselves;  
 Why then do I not respect (sentient beings)?

127  
 (Pleasing living beings) delights the  
 Tathagatas  
 And perfectly accomplishes my own purpose  
 as well.  
 In addition it dispels the pain and misery of  
 the universe,  
 Therefore I should always practice it.

128  
 For example, should some of the king's men  
 Cause harm to many people,  
 Farsighted men would not return the harm  
 Even if they were able (to do so).

129  
 For they see that (these men) are not alone  
 But are supported by the might of the king.  
 Likewise I should not underestimate  
 Weak beings who cause me a little harm;

130  
 For they are supported by the guardians of  
 hell  
 And by all the Compassionate Ones.  
 So (behaving) like the subjects of that fiery  
 king  
 I should please all sentient beings.

131  
 Even if such a king were to become angry,  
 Could he cause the pain of hell,  
 Which is the fruit I would have to experience  
 By displeasing sentient beings?

132  
 And even if such a king were to be kind,  
 He could not possibly grant me Buddhahood,  
 Which is the fruit I would obtain  
 By pleasing sentient beings.

133  
 Why do I not see  
 That my future attainment of Buddhahood  
 As well as glory, renown and happiness in  
 this very life  
 All come from pleasing sentient beings?

134  
 While in cyclic existence patience causes  
 Beauty, health and renown.  
 Because of these I shall live for a very long  
 time  
 And win the extensive pleasures of the  
 universal Chakra Kings.

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 134 verses

**Bodhisattvacharyavatara,** °

translated into English by Stephan Batchelor  
for the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives,  
Dharmshala India

***Batchelor’s Chapter VII - Enthusiasm***

1.  
Having patience I should develop  
enthusiasm;  
For Awakening will dwell only in those who  
exert themselves.  
Just as there is no movement without wind,  
So merit does not occur without enthusiasm.

2.  
What is enthusiasm?  
It is finding joy in what is wholesome.  
Its opposing factors are explained  
As laziness, attraction to what is bad  
And despising oneself out of despondency.

3  
Because of attachment to the pleasurable  
taste of idleness.  
Because of craving for sleep  
And because of having no disillusion with  
the misery of cyclic existence,  
Laziness grows very strong.

4  
Enmeshed in the snare of disturbing  
conceptions,  
I have entered the snare of birth.  
Why am I still not aware  
That I live in the mouth of the lord of death?

5  
Do I not see  
That he is systematically slaughtering my  
species?  
Whoever remains soundly asleep  
(Surely behaves) like a buffalo with a  
butcher.

6  
When having blocked off every (escape)  
route  
The lord of death is looking (for someone to  
kill),  
How can I enjoy eating?  
And likewise how can I enjoy sleep?

7  
For as long as death is actually approaching  
Then I shall accumulate merits  
Even if I then put a stop to laziness,  
What will be the use? That is not the time!

8  
When this has not been done, when this is  
being done  
And when this is only half finished,  
Suddenly the lord of death will come.  
And the thought will occur "Oh no, I am  
done for!"

9  
Their faces flowing with tears  
And their eyes red and swollen with sorrow,  
My relatives will finally lose hope  
And I shall behold the vision of the  
messengers of death.

10  
Tormented by the memory of my evils  
And hearing the sounds of hell,  
In terror I shall clothe my body in excrement.  
What virtue can I do in such a delirious state?

11  
If even in this life I shall be gripped with fear  
Like that of a live fish being rolled (in hot  
sand),  
Why even mention the unbearable agonies of  
hell  
That will result from my -unwholesome  
deeds?

12  
How can I remain at ease like this  
When I have committed the actions (that will  
bear fruit)  
In my delicate infant's body encountering  
boiling acids  
In the hell of tremendous heat?

13

Much harm befalls those with little  
 forbearance  
 And those who want results without making  
 any effort.  
 While clasped by death they shall cry like the  
 gods,  
 "Oh no, I am overcome by misery!

14

Relying upon the boat of a human (body),  
 Free yourself from the great river of pain!  
 As it is hard to find this boat again,  
 This is no time for sleep, you fool.

15

Having rejected the supreme joy of the  
 sacred Dharma  
 This is a boundless source of delight,  
 Why am I distracted by the causes for pain?  
 Why do I enjoy frivolous amusements and  
 the like?

16

Without indulging in despondency,  
 I should gather the supports (for enthusiasm)  
 And earnestly take control of myself.  
 (Then by seeing) the equality between self  
 and others I should practice exchanging self  
 for others.

17

I should never indulge in despondency  
 by entertaining such thoughts as, "How shall  
 I ever awaken?"  
 For the Tathagatas who speak what is true  
 Have uttered this truth

18

"If they develop the strength of their  
 exertion,  
 Even those who are flies, mosquitoes, bees  
 and insects  
 Will win the unsurpassable Awakening  
 Which is so hard to find."

19

So, if I do not forsake the Bodhisattvas' way  
 of life  
 Why should someone like myself who has  
 been born in the human race  
 Not attain Awakening, since I am able to  
 recognize  
 What is beneficial and what is of harm?

20

But nevertheless it frightens me to think  
 That I may have to give away my arms and  
 legs  
 Without discriminating between what is  
 heavy and what is light,  
 I am reduced to fear through confusion.

21

For over countless myriads of aeons  
 I have been cut, stabbed, burned,  
 And flayed alive innumerable times  
 But I have not awakened.

22

Yet the suffering involved  
 in my awakening will have a limit;  
 It is like the suffering of having an incision  
 made  
 in order to remove and destroy greater pain.

23

Even doctors eliminate illness  
 With unpleasant medical treatments,  
 So in order to overcome manifold sufferings  
 I should be able to put up with some  
 discomfort.

24

But the Supreme Physician does not employ  
 Common medical treatments such as these,  
 With an extremely gentle technique  
 He remedies all the greatest ills.

25

At the beginning, the Guide of the World  
 encourages  
 The giving of such things as food.  
 Later, when accustomed to this,  
 One may progressively start to give away  
 even one's flesh.

26

At such a time when my mind is developed  
To the point of regarding my body like food,  
Then what hardship would there be  
When it came to giving away my flesh?

27

Having forsaken all evil there would be no  
suffering  
And due to wisdom there would be no lack of  
joy;  
But now my mind is afflicted by mistaken  
conceptions  
And my body is caused harm by  
unwholesome deeds.

28

As their bodies are happy due to their merits  
And their minds are happy due to their  
wisdom,  
Even if they remained in cyclic existence for  
the sake of others  
Why would the Compassionate Ones ever be  
upset?

29

Due to the strength of his Awakening Mind,  
The Bodhisattva consumes his previous evils  
And harvests oceans of merit:  
Hence he is said to excel the Shravakas.

30

So, having mounted the horse of an  
Awakening Mind  
That dispels all discouragement and  
weariness,  
Who, when they know of this mind that  
proceeds from joy to joy,  
Would ever lapse into despondency?

31

The supports when working for the sake of  
living beings  
Are aspiration," steadfastness, joy and rest  
Aspiration is developed through fear of  
misery  
And by contemplating the benefits of  
(aspiration) itself.

32

Thus in order to increase my enthusiasm  
I should strive to abandon its opposing  
forces,  
To (amass the supports of) aspiration, self-  
confidence, joy and rest,  
To practice in earnest and to become strong  
in self-control.

33

I shall have to overcome  
The boundless faults of myself and others,  
And (in order to destroy) each of these faults  
(alone)  
(I may have to strive until) an ocean of aeons  
is exhausted.

34

But if within myself I do not perceive  
Even a fraction of the perseverance  
(required) to exhaust these faults,  
Then why do I not have a heart attack?  
For now I have become an abode for infinite  
misery.

35

Likewise I shall have to realize  
Many excellent qualities for myself and  
others,  
And (in order to attain) each of these  
qualities (alone)  
I may have to acquaint myself with its cause  
until an ocean of aeons is exhausted.

36

But I have never developed acquaintance  
with even a fraction of these excellences  
How strange it is to squander  
This birth I have found by some coincidence.

37

I have not made offerings to the Lord  
Buddhas,  
I have not given the pleasure of great  
festivals,  
I have not performed actions for the  
teachings,  
I have not fulfilled the wishes of the poor,

38

I have not granted fearlessness to the  
frightened  
And I have not given happiness to the weak.  
All I have given rise to is  
The agonies in the mother's womb, and to  
suffering.

39

Both now and in previous lives  
Such deprivation has arisen  
Because of my lack of aspiring for the  
Dharma?  
Who would ever reject this aspiring for  
Dharma?

40

The Mighty One himself has said  
That aspiration is the root of every facet of  
virtue;  
Its root is constant acquaintance  
With the ripening-effects (of actions).

41

(Physical) pain, mental unhappiness,  
All the various kinds of fear,  
As well as separation from what is desired  
All arise from an unwholesome way of life.

42

(However) by committing wholesome  
actions  
Which are (motivated by aspiration) in, the  
mind,  
Wherever I go I shall be presented with  
Tokens of the fruit of that merit.

43

But by committing evil (actions),  
Although I may wish for happiness,  
Wherever I go I shall be completely  
overcome  
By weapons of pain (caused) by my evil life.

44

As a result of virtue I shall dwell in the  
spacious, fragrant and cool heart of a lotus  
flower,  
My radiance will be nourished by the food of  
the Conqueror's sweet speech,  
My glorious form will spring from a lotus  
unfolded by the Mighty One's light,  
And as a Bodhisattva I shall abide in the  
presence of the Conquerors.

45

But as a result of non-virtue my skin will be  
ripped off by the henchmen of Yama,  
In this feeble state liquid copper melted by  
tremendous heat will be poured into my  
body.  
Pierced by flaming swords and daggers, my  
flesh will be cut into a hundred pieces  
And I shall tumble upon the fiercely blazing  
iron ground.

46

Therefore I should aspire for virtue  
And with great respect acquaint myself with  
it.  
Having undertaken the wholesome in the  
manner of Vairadhvaja.  
I should then proceed to acquaint myself with  
self-confidence.

47

First of all I should examine well what is to  
be done  
To see whether I can pursue it or cannot  
undertake it.  
(If I am unable) it is best to leave it,  
But once I have started I must not withdraw.

48

(If I do), then this habit will continue in other  
lives  
And evil and misery will increase,  
Also other actions done at the time of its  
fruition  
Will be weak and will not be accomplished.

49

Self-confidence should be applied to  
(wholesome) actions,  
The (overcoming) of disturbing conceptions  
and my ability (to do this).  
Thinking, "I alone shall do it,"  
Is the self-confidence of action.

50

Powerless, their minds disturbed,  
 People in this world are unable to benefit  
 themselves.  
 Therefore I shall do it (for them)  
 Since unlike me these beings are incapable.

51

(Even) if others are doing inferior tasks  
 Why should I sit here (doing nothing)?  
 I do not do those tasks because of self-  
 importance;  
 It would be best for me to have no such  
 pride.

52

When crows encounter a dying snake,  
 They will act as though they were eagles.  
 (Likewise) if (my self-confidence) is weak  
 I shall be injured by the slightest downfall.

53

How can those who out of faint-heartedness  
 have given up trying  
 Find liberation because of this deficiency?  
 But even the greatest (obstacle) will find it  
 hard to overcome

54

Therefore with a steady mind  
 I shall overcome all falls,  
 For if I am defeated by a fall  
 My wish to vanquish the three realms will  
 become a joke.

55

I will conquer everything  
 And nothing at all shall conquer me!  
 I, a son of the Lion-like Conqueror,  
 Should remain self-confident in this way.

56

Whoever has self-importance is destroyed by  
 it:  
 He is disturbed and has no self-confidence.  
 For those with self-confidence do not  
 succumb to the power of the enemy,  
 Whereas the former are under the sway of the  
 enemy of self-importance.

57

Inflated by the disturbing conception of my  
 self-importance,  
 I shall be led by it to the lower realms.  
 it destroys the joyous festival of being  
 human.  
 I shall become a slave, eating the food of  
 others,

58

Stupid, ugly, feeble and everywhere  
 disrespected.  
 Tough people bloated by conceit  
 Are also counted among the self-important;  
 Tell me, what is more pathetic than this?

59

Whoever seizes self-confidence in order to  
 conquer the enemy of self-importance,  
 He is the self-confident one, the victorious  
 hero,  
 And in addition, whoever definitely conquers  
 the spread of this enemy, self-importance,  
 Completely (wins) the fruit of a Conqueror,  
 fulfilling the wishes of the world.

60

If I find myself amidst a crowd of disturbing  
 conceptions  
 I shall endure them in a thousand ways;  
 Like a lion among foxes  
 I will not be affected by this disturbing host.

61

just as men will guard their eyes  
 When great danger and turmoil occur,  
 Likewise I shall never be swayed by the  
 disturbances within my mind,  
 Even at times of great strife.

62

It would be better for me to be burned,  
 To have my head cut off and to be killed,  
 Rather than ever bowing down  
 To those ever-present disturbing conceptions.  
 (So likewise in all situations  
 I should do nothing other than what is fit)

63

Just like those who yearn for the Fruits Of  
Play,  
(A Bodhisattva) is attracted  
To whatever task he may do:  
He never has enough) it only brings him joy.

64

Although people work in order to be happy,  
It is uncertain whether or not they will find it;  
But how can those whose work itself is joy  
Find happiness unless they do it?

65

If I feel that I never have enough sensual  
objects,  
Which are like honey smeared upon a razor's  
edge,  
Then why should I ever feel  
that I have enough merit which ripens in  
happiness and peace?

66

Thus in order to complete this task,  
I shall venture into it just as an elephant  
tormented by the midday sun  
Plunges into a (cool, refreshing) lake.

67

When my strength declines, I should leave  
whatever I am doing  
In order to be able to continue with it later.  
Having done something well, I should put it  
aside  
With the wish (to accomplish) what will  
follow.

68

Just as an old warrior approaches  
The swords of an enemy upon the battlefield,  
So shall I avoid the weapons of the  
disturbing conceptions  
And skillfully bind this enemy

69

If someone dropped his sword during a  
battle,  
He would immediately pick it up out of fear.  
Likewise if I lose the weapon of mindfulness  
I should quickly retrieve it, being afraid of  
hell.

70

Just as poison spreads throughout the body  
In dependence upon the (circulation of)  
blood,  
Likewise if (a disturbing conception) finds an  
opportunity  
Unwholesomeness will permeate my mind.

71

Those who practice should be as attentive  
As a frightened man carrying a jar full of  
mustard oil  
Who is being threatened by someone with a  
sword  
That he will be killed if he spills just one  
drop.

72

Just as I would swiftly stand up  
If a snake came into my lap,  
Likewise if any sleep or laziness occur  
I shall quickly turn them back.

73

Each time something unwholesome occurs  
I should criticize myself,  
And then contemplate for a long time  
That I shall never let this happen again.

74

"Likewise in all these situations  
I shall acquaint myself with mindfulness."  
With this (motivation) as a cause I shall  
aspire  
To meet (with teachers) or accomplish the  
tasks (they assign me).

75

In order to have strength for everything  
I should recall before undertaking any action  
The advice in (the chapter on)  
conscientiousness,  
And then joyfully rise (to the task).

76

Just as the wind blowing back and forth  
Controls (the movement of) a piece of cotton,  
so shall I be controlled by joy,  
And in this way accomplish everything.

-----  
75 verses



**Bodhisattvacharyavatara,**<sup>o</sup>

translated into English by Stephan Batchelor  
for the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives,  
Dharmshala India

***Batchelor’s Chapter VIII - Meditation***

1.

Having developed enthusiasm in this way,  
I should place my mind in concentration.  
For the man whose mind is distracted  
Dwells between the fangs of disturbing  
conceptions.

2.

But through solitude of body and mind  
No distractions will occur;  
Therefore I should forsake the worldly life  
And completely discard distorted  
conceptions.

3.

Worldly life is not forsaken because of  
attachment (to people)  
And due to craving for material gain and the  
like;  
Therefore I should entirely forsake these  
things,  
For this is the way in which the wise behave.

4.

Having understood that disturbing  
conceptions are completely overcome  
By superior insight endowed with calm  
abiding,  
First of all I should search for calm abiding.  
This is achieved through the genuine joy of  
those unattached to worldly life.

5.

Because of the obsession one transient being  
Has for other transient beings,  
He will not see his beloved ones again  
For many thousands of lives.

6.

Not seeing them I am unhappy  
And my mind cannot be settled in equipoise;  
Even if I see them there is no satisfaction  
And, as before, I am tormented by craving.

7.

Through being unattached to living beings  
I am completely obscured from the perfect  
reality,  
My disillusion (with cyclic existence)  
perishes  
And in the end I am tortured by sorrow.

8.

By thinking only of them,  
This life will pass without any meaning.  
(Furthermore) impermanent friends and  
relatives  
Will even destroy the Dharma (which leads  
to) permanent (liberation).

9.

If I behave in the same way as the childish  
I shall certainly proceed to lower realms,  
And if I am led there by those unequal (to the  
Noble Ones),  
What is the use of entrusting myself to the  
childish?

10.

One moment they are friends  
And in the next instant they become enemies.  
Since they become angry even in joyful  
situations,  
It is difficult to please ordinary people.

11.

They are angry when something of benefit is  
said  
And they also turn me away from what is  
beneficial.  
If I do not listen to what they say,  
They become angry and hence proceed to  
lower realms.

12.

They are envious of superiors, competitive  
with equals,  
Arrogant towards inferiors, conceited when  
praised,  
And if anything unpleasant is said they  
become angry;  
Never is any benefit derived from the  
childish.

13.  
Through associating with the childish,  
There will certainly ensure unwholesomeness  
Such as praising myself and belittling others  
And discussing the joys of cyclic existence.

14.  
Devoting myself to others in this way  
Will bring about nothing but misfortune.  
Because they will not benefit me  
And I shall not benefit them.

15.  
I should flee far away from childish people.  
When they are encountered, though, I should  
please them by being happy.  
I should behave well merely out of courtesy.  
But not become greatly familiar.

16.  
In the same way as a bee takes honey from a  
flower,  
I should take merely (what is necessary) for  
the practice of Dharma  
But remain unfamiliar  
As though I had never seen them before.

17.  
"I have much material wealth as well as  
honor,  
And many people like me,"  
Nurturing self-importance in this way  
I shall be made terrified after death.

18.  
So, you thoroughly confused mind,  
By the piling up of whatever objects  
You are attached to,  
Misery a thousandfold will ensue.

19.  
Hence the wise should not be attached,  
(Because) fear is born from attachment.  
With a firm mind understand well  
That it is the nature of these things to be  
discarded!

20.  
Although I may have much material wealth,  
Be famous and well spoken of,  
Whatever fame and renown I have amassed  
Has no power to accompany me (after death).

21.  
If there is someone who despises me  
What pleasure can I have in being praised?  
And if there is another who praises me  
What displeasure can I have in being  
despised?

22.  
If even the Conqueror was unable to please  
The various inclinations of different beings,  
Then what need to mention an evil person  
such as I?  
Therefore I should give up the intention (to  
associate with) the worldly.

23.  
They scorn those who have no material gain  
And say bad things about those who do;  
How can they who are by nature so hard to  
get along with  
Ever derive any pleasure (from me)?

24.  
It has been said by the Tathagatas  
That one should not befriend the childish,  
Because unless they get their own way  
These children are never happy.

25.  
When shall I come to dwell in forests  
Amongst the deer, the birds and the trees,  
That say nothing unpleasant  
And are delightful to associate with?

26.  
When dwelling in caves,  
In empty shrines and at the foot of trees,  
Never look back --  
Cultivate detachment.

27.  
When shall I come to dwell  
In places not clung to as "mine"  
Which are by nature wide and open  
And where I may behave as I wish without  
attachment?

28.

When shall I come to live without fear  
 Having just a begging bowl and a few odd things,  
 Wearing clothes not wanted by anyone  
 And not even having to hide this body?

29.

Having departed to the cemeteries,  
 When shall I come to understand  
 That this body of mine and the skeletons of others  
 Are equal in being subject to decay?

30.

Then, because of its odor,  
 Not even the foxes  
 Will come close to this body of mine;  
 For this is what will become of it.

31.

Although this body arose as one thing,  
 The bones and flesh with which it was created  
 Will break up and separate.  
 How much more so will friends and others?

32.

At birth I was born alone  
 And at death too I shall die alone;  
 As this pain cannot be shared by others,  
 What use are obstacle-making friends?

33.

In the same way as travelers on a highway  
 (Leave one place) and reach (another),  
 Likewise those traveling on the path of conditioned existence  
 (Leave) one birth and reach (another).

34.

Until the time comes for this body  
 To be supported by four pall-bearers  
 While the worldly (stand around) stricken with grief,  
 Until then I shall retire to the forest.

35.

Befriending no one and begrudging no one,  
 My body will dwell alone in solitude.  
 If I am already counted as a dead man,  
 When I die there will be no mourners.

36.

And as there will be no one around  
 To disturb me with their mourning,  
 Thus there will be no one to distract me  
 From my recollection of the Buddha.

37.

Therefore I shall dwell alone,  
 Happy and contented with few difficulties,  
 In very joyful and beautiful forests,  
 Pacifying all distractions.

38.

Having given up all other intentions,  
 Being motivated by only one thought,  
 I shall strive to settle my mind in equipoise  
 (by means of calm abiding)  
 And to subdue it (with superior insight).

39.

Both in this world and the next  
 Desires give rise to great misfortune:  
 In this life killing, bondage and flaying,  
 And in the next the existence of the hells.

40.

For the sake of (women) many requests  
 Are first of all made between go-betweens,  
 All forms of evil and even notoriety  
 Are not avoided for their sake.

41.

I engaged in fearful deeds for them  
 And will even consume my wealth,  
 But these (very bodies of others)  
 That I greatly enjoy in the sexual embrace

42.

Are nothing other than skeletons,  
 They are not autonomous and are identityless.  
 Rather than being so desirous and completely obsessed,  
 Why do I not go to the state beyond sorrow  
 (instead)?

43.

In the first place I made efforts to lift (her veil)  
And when it was raised she bashfully looked down.  
Previously whether anyone looked or not,  
Her face was covered with a cloth.

44.

But now why do I run away  
Upon directly beholding  
This face that disturbs the mind  
As it is being revealed to me by the vultures?

45.

(Previously) I completely protected (her body)  
When others cast their eyes upon it.  
Why, miser, do you not protect it now  
While it is being devoured by these birds?

46.

Since vultures and others are eating  
This pile of meat that I behold,  
Why did I offer flower garlands, sandalwood  
and ornaments  
To that which is now the food of others?

47.

If I am frightened by the skeletons I see,  
Even though they do not move,  
Why am I not frightened by walking corpses  
Which are moved around by a few  
(impulses)?

48.

Although I am attached to it when it is covered (with skin)  
Why do I not desire it when it is uncovered?  
Since I have no need for it then,  
Why copulate with it when it is covered?

49.

Since both excrement and saliva  
Arise solely from food,  
Why do I dislike excrement  
And find joy in saliva?

50.

Cotton too is soft to the touch,  
But while I find no (sexual) delight in a pillow  
I think that (a woman's body) does not emit a putrid odor,  
Lustful one, you are confused as to what is unclean!

51.

Thinking that they cannot sleep with this cotton  
Although it is soft to the touch,  
Confused, negative and lustful people  
Become angry towards it (instead).

52.

If I am not attached to the unclean,  
Then why do I copulate with the lower parts  
of others' bodies  
Which are merely cages of bones tied  
together with muscles,  
Plastered over with the mud of flesh?

53.

I myself contain many unclean things  
Which I constantly experience;  
So why, because of an obsession for uncleanliness,  
Do I desire other bags of filth?

54.

- But it is the flesh that I enjoy -  
I this is what I wish to touch and behold,  
Why do I not desire it in its natural state  
devoid of any mind?

55.

Furthermore, any mind that I may desire  
Is unable to be touched or behold,  
And whatever I am able to touch will not be mental;  
So why indulge in this meaningless copulation?

56.

It is not so strange that I do not understand  
The bodies of others to be of an unclean nature,  
But it is indeed strange that I do not understand  
My very own body to be by nature unclean.

57.

Having forsaken the young lotus flower  
 Unfolded by means of sunlight free from  
 cloud,  
 Why, with a mind craving for what is  
 unclean,  
 Do I revel in a cage of filth?

58.

Since I do not wish to touch  
 A place that is smeared with excrement,  
 Then why do I wish to touch the body  
 From which that (excrement) arose?

59.

If I am not attached to what is unclean,  
 Why do I copulate with the lower parts of  
 others' bodies  
 Which arise from the unclean field (of a  
 womb)  
 And are produced by the seeds within it?

60.

I have no wish for a small dirty maggot  
 Which has come from a pile of filth,  
 So why do I desire this body which by nature  
 is grossly unclean,  
 For it too was produced by filth?

61.

Not only do I not disparage  
 The uncleanliness of my own body,  
 But because of an obsession for what is  
 unclean  
 I desire other bags of filth as well.

62.

Even attractive things such as savory foods,  
 Cooked rice and vegetables,  
 Make the ground dirty and unclean,  
 Should they be spat out after being in the  
 mouth.

63.

Although such uncleanliness is obvious,  
 If I still have doubts I should go to the  
 cemeteries  
 And look at the unclean bodies (of others)  
 That have been thrown away there.

64.

Having realized that when their skin is rent  
 open  
 They give rise to a great deal of fear,  
 How will such things as these  
 Ever again give rise to joy?

65.

The scents with which someone's body is  
 anointed  
 Are sandalwood and the like, but not that of  
 the other's body,  
 So why am I attached to others' (bodies)  
 Because of scents that are other (than theirs)?

66.

Since the body has a naturally foul odor,  
 Isn't it good to be unattached to it?  
 Why do those who crave for the meaningless  
 things of the world  
 Anoint this body with pleasant scents?

67.

And furthermore, if it is the pleasant scent of  
 sandalwood,  
 How can it come from the body?  
 So why am I attached to others' (bodies)  
 Because of scents that are other (than theirs)?

68.

Since the naked body (left) in its natural state  
 Is very frightening due to its long hair and  
 nails,  
 Its yellowish foul-smelling teeth  
 And its being coated with the odor of dirt,

69.

Why do I make such an effort to polish it  
 Like (cleaning) a weapon that will cause me  
 harm?  
 Hence the entire world is disturbed with  
 insanity  
 Due to the exertions of those who are  
 confused about themselves.

70.

When my mind rises (above worldly  
 concerns),  
 Through having behold nothing but skeletons  
 in the cemetery,  
 Will there be any joy in graveyard cities  
 Which are filled with moving skeletons?

71.

Furthermore, these unclean (female bodies)  
 Are not found without paying a price:  
 In order to obtain them I exhaust myself  
 And (in future) will be injured in the hells.

72.  
As a child I am unable to increase my wealth,  
And as a youth what can I do (being unable  
to afford a wife)?  
At the end of life when I have the wealth,  
Being an old man, what good will sex be then?

73.  
Some evil and lustful people  
Wear themselves out by working all day  
And when they return home (in the evening)  
Their exhausted bodies lie prostrate like  
corpses.

74.  
Some have the suffering of being disturbed  
by travel  
And having to go a long way from home.  
Although they long for their spouses,  
They do not see them for years at a time.

75.  
And some who wish for benefit  
Due to confusion, even sell themselves for  
the sake of (women and the like);  
But not attaining what they wish,  
They are aimlessly driven by the winds of  
others' actions.

76.  
Some sell their own bodies  
And without any power are employed by  
others.  
Even when their wives give birth  
Their children fall at the feet of trees and in  
lonely places.

77.  
Some fools who are deceived by desire,  
Wishing for a livelihood think, "I shall earn  
my living (as a soldier);"  
Then, although afraid of losing their lives,  
they go to war  
And become slaves for the sake of profit.

78.  
Some lustful people even cut their bodies,  
Others impale themselves on the points of  
sticks,  
Some stab themselves with daggers,  
And others burn themselves - such things as  
these are quite apparent.

79.  
Due to the torment involved in collecting it,  
protecting and finally losing it,  
I should realize wealth to be fraught with  
infinite problems,  
Those who are distracted by their attachment  
to it  
Have no opportunity to gain freedom from  
the misery of conditioned existence.

80.  
In the same way as animals drawing  
carriages  
Are only able to eat a few mouthfuls of grass,  
Likewise desirous people  
Have many disadvantages such as these and  
little (profit).

81.  
And since even animals can obtain that (little  
profit),  
Those who are pained by their (previous)  
actions  
Waste these leisure and endowments so  
difficult to find  
For the sake of something trivial that is not  
so scarce.

82.  
The objects of desire will certainly perish  
And then I shall fall into hellish states.  
But Buddhahood itself is attained  
With just one millionth of the difficulty.

83.  
Involved in continually exhausting myself  
For the sake of what is not very great.  
(Hence) the desirous experience greater  
misery than (those following) the Awakening  
way of life –  
But (for them) there is no Awakening.

84.

When having contemplated the miseries of hell,  
 (It will be clear that) there is nothing comparable  
 To the harm caused to desirous beings  
 By weapons, poison, fire, ravines and foes.

85.

Having in this way developed disillusion with desire,  
 I should generate joy for solitude.  
 The fortunate ones stroll in peaceful forests,  
 Devoid of disputes and disturbing conceptions.

86.

(They live) in joyful houses of vast flat stones,  
 Cooled by the sandal-scented moonlight,  
 Fanned by the peaceful, silent forest breeze,  
 Thinking of what is of benefit for others.

87.

They dwell for as long as they wish  
 In empty houses, at the feet of trees and in caves,  
 Having abandoned the pain of clinging to and guarding (possessions),  
 They abide independent, free of care.

88.

Living as they choose, desireless,  
 Having no ties with anyone -  
 Even the powerful have difficulty finding  
 A life as happy and content as this.

89.

Having in such ways as these  
 Thought about the excellences of solitude,  
 I should completely pacify distorted conceptions  
 And meditate on the Awakening Mind.

**90-186****Missing ...**

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186 verses