

Bodhisattvacharyavatara

Shantideva

translated into English by
Stephan Batchelor

for the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives
Dharmshala India

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Bodhisattvacharyavatara[°]

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Bachelor’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^l 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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Bachelor’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;
0 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.
0 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, Manjughosha
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 bate.

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.

65 verses

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***Bachelor’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 bands 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 (bome) 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.

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

Bachelor’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 advise 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

Bachelor’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 burns 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 disheartened 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 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 wood 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 arisal 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 arisal 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 arm 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.

134 verses

Bodhisattvacharyavatara, °

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

Bachelor'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^o

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

Bachelor’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 leisures 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 ...

186 verses