

GUIDE TO A BODHISATTVA'S WAY OF LIFE

*Selected Verses for Teachings with Tsenshap Serkong Rinpoche
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1. The need to extract the essence as a support for leasures

Verse 1.4:

The leasures and endowments are very hard to find. Since they accomplish the purposes of beings, if I do not accomplish benefit upon this, how will I acquire this in the future?

2. You will be deceiving yourself if you do not take the essence of this support for leisure

Verses 4.23-4.24:

If, having found such leisure, I do not familiarize with virtue, there can be no deception other than this; There can be no confusion other than this.

If, having understood this, out of confusion I am indolent afterwards, when it is time to die tremendous grief will rear its head.

3. One needs to take the essence of this support for leisure right now

Verse 2.39:

Remaining neither day nor night, this life is always slipping by and never lengthening. Why will death not come to one like me?

Verse 2.33:

The untrustworthy Lord of Death without waiting, whether or not something has been done; Whether one is sick or otherwise, suddenly comes; do not be complacent about life.

Verse 2.58:

It is inappropriate to stay happily thinking, "Today alone I shall not die," For inevitably the time will come when I shall go out of existence.

Taking the essence of this support for leisure: the only purpose you will accomplish for yourself as a result of negative actions of harming others will be being the least kind of person. If even you are not harming others, thinking mainly of your own welfare is not being a supreme being and thus, what you need to practice here is the great being's scope. The supreme being not only abstains from harming others, they also practice beneficial activities in all ways. To do so one needs first to abstain from harming others. There are many classifications of negativities and yet the main ones are the ten non-virtues: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, idle chatter, covetousness, malice, and wrong virtues. Therefore, do

not settle on simply knowing them but start with a simple motivation and all day and night you need to make effort to not allow your three doors to become sullied even by trivial misbehaviour.

4. Identifying the result of harming others

Verse 7.41

Suffering, mental unhappiness, the various kinds of fear, as well as separation from what is desired will arise from negative deeds.

Verse 7.43:

Although one who commits misdeeds wishes for happiness, wherever he goes there those misdeeds will completely destroy him with the weapons of suffering.

5. One needs to think of ways to become free from negativities

Verse 2.62:

“How can I be surely freed from non-virtue, the source of suffering?” Continually night and day should I only consider this.

6. Identifying the cause of negativities

Verse 1.28:

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

Verse 2.38:

Thereby, through not having realized That I will suddenly vanish, I committed many negativities Through ignorance, attachment, and hatred.

7. To abandon the afflictions, one needs to cultivate a strong mind

Verses 4.36-38:

Therefore, as long as this enemy is not overcome with certainty before my very eyes, I shall never give up exerting myself against it. Self-important people who become angry even at slight short-lived harm Will not go to sleep until it is overcome.

If at the time of a violent battle, vigorously desiring to conquer those afflicted ones who are naturally subject to suffering through death, men, disregarding the pain of being pierced by spears and arrows, do not withdraw until the goal is accomplished,

Then what need to mention that I should not despair and be indolent, even if I am caused many hundreds of sufferings, when now I strive to definitely overcome my natural enemies that are the constant cause of all suffering?

Verse 4.42 (second half):

Since this is the case I should never withdraw from vanquishing the afflictions, I shall adhere to this and, resenting them, I shall meet them in battle!

8. Considering the disadvantages of the afflictions

- a. The fault of taking away your freedom/self-control:

Verse 4.28:

Since enemies such as hatred and craving Have neither arms nor legs, and are neither courageous nor clever, how have I been used like a slave by them?

Verses 6.35-6.37:

Through lacking conscientiousness People even harm themselves with thorns and other things, and for the sake of obtaining women and the like they become obsessed and starve themselves.

And there are some who harm themselves by hanging themselves, leaping from cliffs, eating poison and incompatible food and unmeritorious deeds.

If, when under the influence of afflictions, people will even kill their treasured selves, how can they not cause harm to the bodies of others?

- b. The fault of connecting you with suffering only

Verse 4.33:

If I agreeably honour and rely upon [others], all will enact benefit and happiness, but if I rely upon these afflictions in return I will be harmed by suffering.

- c. The fault of hindering the practice of virtue

Verse 5.28:

This host of thieves of the afflictions will search for a good opportunity and occasion. Having found it, they will steal my virtue and destroy even life in a good migration.

9. It is inappropriate to be patient with the afflictions

Verse 4.29:

While they dwell within my mind, at their pleasure they cause me harm, yet I patiently endure them without any anger. This is an inappropriate state and patience is a contemptible state.

Verse 4.44:

I would rather be burned and killed, and even have my head cut off, than to ever bow down to the enemy that is the afflictions in any way.

Verses 6.70-6.71:

For example, if a fire in one house has moved into another house, it is right to remove and get rid of straw and such things that the fire will spread to.

Likewise, when my mind is attached to something and the fire of hatred spreads, I should immediately get rid of it for fear of my merit being burned.

10. Guarding the mind is required to abandon the afflictions

Verse 5.19:

Just as I would be attentive and conscientious of a wound when amidst an unruly, freed crowd, so I should always guard the wounds of my mind when dwelling among negative people.

Verses 5.17-5.18:

Even those who wish to obtain happiness and overcome suffering will wander with no aim if they do not comprehend the secret of the mind - the principal dharma. This being so, I shall hold and guard my mind well. Except for the mode of conduct of guarding the mind, what use are many other modes of conduct?

11. What to do when afflictions arise

Verses 5.48-5.52:

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.

Whenever I have excitement, the wish to verbally belittle others, {168} pride and arrogance; when I have the thought to describe the faults of others, cunningness and the thought to deceive others;

whenever I am eager for praise or have the desire to blame others; Whenever I have the wish to scold and quarrel; at such times I should remain like a piece of wood.

Whenever I desire material gain, honour, or fame; Whenever I seek servants or a retinue, and when in my mind I wish to be served; At these times I should remain like a piece of wood.

Whenever I have the mind wishing to neglect the welfare of others and to pursue my own welfare, wishing to say something, at these times I should remain like a piece of wood.

Verse 7.70:

Just as poison spreads throughout the body in dependence upon the blood, likewise if it finds an opportunity misdeeds will permeate my mind.

Verse 7.73:

Each time a misdeed occurs I should deride myself, and then contemplate for a long time: "No matter what, I shall not let this happen in the future."

Performing perfect virtue, benefiting others:

12. Thinking of your own purpose alone is faulty

Verse 8.129:

And whatever suffering there is in this world all comes from desiring myself to be happy.

Verses 8.134-8.135:

If whatever harms, Fear and suffering in the worlds All arise from grasping at a self, then of what use is that great ghost to me?

If I do not completely forsake it, I shall not be able to abandon suffering, Just as I cannot avoid being burnt If I do not cast aside fire.

13. There are good qualities to the kind consideration of other's welfare

Verse 8.129:

Whatever joy there is in this world all comes from desiring others to be happy.

Verses 1.21-1.22:

If even the thought to relieve Sentient beings of merely a headache possesses the attitude to benefit and possesses boundless merit, then what need is there to mention the desire to dispel the boundless unhappiness of each sentient being and to accomplish boundless good qualities of every single one of them?

Verse 7.42:

By performing virtues intended in the mind, wherever I go, due to those merits, there I shall be honoured with the excellences that are their results.

Verses 3.29-3.32:

This is also the supreme ambrosia that overcomes the lord of death of migrating beings. This is also the inexhaustible treasure that eliminates all poverty of migrating beings.

This is the supreme medicine that quells the disease of migrating beings too. It is the tree of rest for migrating beings wandering and weary on the path of conditioned existence.

It is the universal platform that leads all migrating beings to freedom from the bad migrations. It is the dawning moon of the mind that dispels the torment of afflictions of migrating beings.

It is the great sun that annihilates the cataracts of ignorance of migrating beings. It is the quintessential butter from the churning of the milk of the holy Dharma.

Verse 1.36:

I prostrate to the body of he in whom the sacred precious mind is born. I seek refuge in that source of happiness who brings to happiness even those who harm him.

14. The benefit of directly accomplishing other's welfare

Verse 1.27:

If merely a benevolent intention excels venerating the buddhas, then what need to mention striving to make all beings without exception happy?

Verse 5.77:

All initiatives are a source of joy that would be rare even if it could be bought with money. Therefore, the excellent qualities causing others [joy] causes the enjoyment of the happiness of joy.

Verse 8.130:

What need is there to say much? The childish work for their own purpose; The Muni worked for others' purpose. Look at the difference between these two!

15. The actual way of training in the thought of benefiting others:

Verses 8.90-8.91:

First of all, I should make an effort to meditate upon the equality between self and others: I should protect all as I do myself because of equal happiness and suffering.

Although there are many different divisions and aspects such as the hands, they are same in being the body that is to be thoroughly protected. Likewise, all the different migrating beings in their happiness and suffering are the same in wishing to be happy just as I do.

Verses 8.94-8.97:

I should dispel the suffering of others because it is suffering, just like my own suffering, And I should benefit others because they are sentient beings, just like my body.

When both others and I are similar in wishing to be happy, what is the difference with me? Why do I strive for my happiness alone?

And when both I and others are similar in not wishing to suffer, what is the difference with me? Why do I protect myself and not others?

OBJECTION: I do not protect them because their suffering does not cause me harm.

RESPONSE: Then why protect [myself] against future suffering If it causes me no harm?

Verse 8.99:

If whenever there is suffering that itself must protect from that, the suffering of the foot is not that of the hand, why then does it protect from that?

Verse 8.114:

In the same way as the hands and so forth Are asserted as limbs of the body, likewise why are embodied creatures not asserted as limbs of migrating beings?

Verses 8.136-8.137:

Therefore, in order to pacify the harms inflicted upon me and in order to pacify the sufferings of others, I shall give myself up to others and cherish them as I do myself.

“I am under the ownership of others,” of this, mind, you must know certainly; Now, except for the purpose of all sentient beings, you must not think of anything else.

16. It is inappropriate to become discouraged when acting for the welfare of others

Verse 5.56:

I should not be disheartened by the whims of the childish who are in discord with one another; I should be merciful, thinking, “This mind of theirs is due to the generation of afflictions.”

Verse 6.75:

But now since great purpose will be established from harm which is not as much, I should be solely joyful towards such suffering that dispels the harms of migrating beings.

Verse 7.28:

If their bodies are happy due to their merits and their minds are happy due to their skill, then, even if they remain in cyclic existence for the sake of others, why would the Compassionate Ones be disheartened?

Verse 7.30:

So, having mounted the horse of the mind of enlightenment that dispels all disheartenment and weariness, and proceeds from happiness to happiness, which ones who know of this mind would lapse into despondency?

17. When acting for the sake of others, one constantly needs to avoid regarding difficult actions as being a burden

Verses 4.39-40:

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 strive to fulfill the great purpose?

If fishermen, outcastes, farmers, and so forth, thinking merely of their own livelihood, endure the harms of heat and cold, why do I not endure them for the sake of the happiness of migrating beings?

Verse 7.23:

Even all doctors eliminate illness with unpleasant medical treatments, so in order to overcome manifold sufferings I should put up with little discomfort.

Verse 6.14:

There is nothing whatsoever that is not made easier through acquaintance. So through becoming acquainted with small harms, I will become patient with great harms.

Verse 6.21:

Furthermore, suffering has good qualities: through being disheartened with it, arrogance is dispelled, compassion arises for those in cyclic existence, negativities are shunned, and joy is found in virtue.

Verse 6.19:

Even when those who are skilled are suffering, their minds remain very lucid and undefiled.

18. Training in generosity

Verse 3.11:

Without any sense of loss, I shall give my body and resources, as well as all my virtues of the three times, for the sake of accomplishing the welfare of all sentient beings.

Verses 7.25-26:

At the beginning, the Guide applies the giving of such things as vegetables. Later, having become accustomed to that, one may progressively give away even one's flesh.

At such a time when I have generated a mind that regards my body as being like vegetables, then what hardship will there be when it comes to giving away my flesh?

Verse 8.125:

“If I give them, what shall I enjoy?”— such thinking for my own purpose is the way of ghosts; “If I enjoy them, what shall I give?”— such thinking for others' purpose is a quality of the gods.

As for unsuitable time of giving:

Verse 5.87:

Those whose attitude of compassion is impure Should not give their body away. No matter what, both in this and future lives, they should give it as causes for fulfilling the great purpose.

Not giving one's body for the sake of trivial ends:

Verse 5.86:

This body that is for practicing the sublime Dharma Should not be harmed for only slight benefit. If I behave in this way, the wishes of all beings will be quickly fulfilled.

19. Training in ethics:

Verse 5.1:

Those who wish to guard their trainings should very tightly guard their minds. Those who do not guard their minds are unable to guard their trainings.

Verse 5.99:

Whatever I do on any occasion, whether in terms of myself or others, I should make effort and learn whatever training has been taught for that occasion.

Verse 5.107:

I should do whatever is not forbidden in those [works]. I should impeccably practice whatever training I see in order to guard the minds of worldly people.

Verses 5.100-5.101:

There is no such thing as something that is not learned by the Victors' Children. Thus, if I am skilled in abiding in this way nothing will be non-meritorious.

Directly or indirectly, I should not do anything other than the welfare of sentient beings. Solely for the welfare of sentient beings I should dedicate all towards enlightenment.

20. The need to train in patience

Verses 5.12-14:

Unruly sentient beings are like space; All of them cannot possibly be overcome. But if I overcome the mind of anger alone, this will be equivalent to vanquishing all those foes.

Where could I possibly find enough leather with which to cover the surface of the earth? Having leather on just the soles of my shoes is equivalent to covering the earth with it.

Likewise, it is not possible for me to counteract things externally; But should I counteract this mind of mine, what is the need for counteracting others?

Verse 6.2:

There is no negativity like hatred, and no fortitude like patience. Thus, I should cultivate patience persistently through various ways.

21. The benefits of patience:

Verse 6.134:

While in cyclic existence patience causes beauty, freedom from sickness, and fame. Because of these I shall live for a very long time and win the prosperous pleasures of the wheel-turning kings.

Verse 6.127:

It delights the tathagatas and perfectly accomplishes my own purpose as well. It dispels the suffering of the world. Therefore, I should always practice it.

22. Considering the drawbacks of anger

Verse 6.3-5:

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

A master who has hatred is in danger of being killed even by those who for their wealth and honour depend upon his kindness.

By it, friends and relatives are disheartened though drawn by his generosity they will not rely upon him; In brief there is nobody who dwells comfortably with anger.

23. Identifying the causes of anger

Verse 6.7:

Having found its fuel of mental unhappiness in the doing of what I do not wish for and in the hindering of what I wish for, Hatred develops and then destroys me.

24. It is not reasonable to become unhappy:

Verse 6.16:

I should not be impatient with heat and cold, wind and rain, and so forth, and Sickness, bondage, beatings, and so forth; For if I am, the harm will increase.

Verse 6.9-10:

Whatever befalls me, I shall not disturb my mental joy. Having been made unhappy, I shall not accomplish what I wish for and my virtues will decline.

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?

25. Getting angry with an aggressor is unreasonable:

When inspecting whether they have self-control anger is unreasonable

Verse 6.23-25:

For example, although they are not wished for, these sicknesses arise; Likewise, although they are not wished for, these afflictions forcibly arise.

Without thinking, "I shall be angry," people become angry with no resistance, and without thinking, "I shall produce," likewise anger itself is produced.

All misdeeds there are and all the various kinds of negativities arise though the force of conditions; They do not have self-power.

Verses 5.33-34:

So, when seeing an enemy or even a friend doing something incorrect, By thinking, "It arises from such conditions," I shall remain in a happy frame of mind.

If things were established with one's freedom, then since no one wishes to suffer, suffering would not occur To any embodied creature.

When inspecting either nature or it being occasional, anger is unreasonable

Verses 6.39-40:

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

And even if the fault were incidental in sentient beings of definite nature, It would be inappropriate to be angry, For this would be like begrudging space for allowing smoke to rise in it.

Verse 6.41:

If I become angry with the wielder, although I am directly harmed by the stick and so forth, then since he too is incited by hatred, I should be angry with the two or with the hatred.

When inspecting the cause that instigated the aggressor, anger is unreasonable

Verse 6.42:

Previously I caused similar harm to sentient beings. Therefore, it is right for this harm to occur to me who is the agent of harm to sentient beings.

Verse 6.45:

The childish do not wish to suffer, and are greatly attached to its causes, thus they are harmed by their own misdeeds; Why should they begrudge others?

Anger is unreasonable when inspecting the base

Verse 6.43-44:

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

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

It is unreasonable to get angry only towards those who have a mind

Verse 6.22:

As I do not become angry at great sources of suffering such as bile disease, then why be angry at those with mind? They too are provoked by conditions.

Verse 6.66:

If embodied creatures are harmed by both those with mind and those without mind, why single out and begrudge only those with mind? Therefore, I should be patient with harm.

26. Arresting impatience with those who harm the representations of the three jewels:

Verse 6.64:

Should others talk frivolously about or even destroy holy images, reliquaries, and the sacred Dharma, my hatred is inappropriate, for the buddhas and so forth can never be harmed.

27. Arresting impatience with those who harm lamas, etc.:

Verse 6.65:

I should counteract anger towards those who harm my spiritual masters, relatives and so forth, and friends by seeing, as in the manner shown before, that they arise from conditions.

28. Arresting impatience with those who hindered one's praise and fame:

Considering the way in which praise and so forth have no good qualities

Verses 6.90-91:

The honour of praise and fame will turn into neither merit nor life; It will turn into neither strength nor freedom from sickness for me, and also will not transform into physical happiness.

If I were to understand my welfare, what is there in them that is my welfare? If I desire just mental happiness, then I should devote myself to gambling and so forth, and also drinking.

The way to consider their faults

Verses 6.92-6.93:

If for the sake of fame, I lose my wealth or get myself killed, what can mere words do then? Once I am dead, to whom will they give pleasure?

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

Verse 6.98:

Praise and the like distract me and also destroy my disillusionment. I start to envy those who have excellent qualities and success is destroyed.

Arresting like and dislike to mere praise and blame

Verse 8.21:

If there is someone who derides me, what is there for me to be happy about in being praised? And if there is another who praises me, what is there for me to be unhappy about in being derided?

29. Arresting impatience with being slandered and ridiculed

Verses 6.52-6.53:

Since my mind is not physical in no way can anyone destroy it. Through it strongly adhering to my body, my body is harmed by suffering.

Since contempt, harsh speech, and unpleasant words do not cause any harm to my body, why, mind, do you become so angry?

Verses 6.55-6.56:

Because it will hinder my gain, I do not want this. I shall discard my gains here any negativities will remain securely.

Thus, it is better that I die today than live a long time through wrong livelihood. Even if I should live a long time, there will be the very suffering of death.

30. It is improper to be happy when your enemy is harmed

Verses 6.87-6.88:

Even if your enemy is not joyful, what is there for you to be joyful about? Your mind merely wishing did not cause him to be harmed.

Even if his suffering is established due to your wish, what is there for you to be joyful about?

OPINION: I shall be satisfied.

RESPONSE: How could there be anything more ravaging than that?

Verse 6.38:

Even if I virtually cannot develop compassion for such people who through the arising of afflictions set out to kill me and so forth, the last thing I should do is to become angry with them.

31. Disliking enemies is improper

Verses 6.106-6.107:

There are indeed beggars in this world, but rare are those who inflict harm; If I have not harmed others few beings will cause me harm.

Therefore, just like a treasure appearing in my house idly without me accomplishing it, I should be happy at the enemy for he assists me in my deeds of enlightenment.

Verse 6.104:

If without it something does not occur and if with it, it does come to be, then since this would be the cause of it, how can I call it “a hindrance”?

Verse 6.111:

Thus, since patience is produced in dependence upon a very hateful mind, he is a cause of patience, whereby he is worthy of veneration just like the sacred Dharma.

32. Training in joyous effort

Identifying that which is incongruous with joyous effort

Verse 7.2:

What is enthusiasm? It is enthusiasm about virtue. Its discordant classes should be explained. They are laziness, adherence to what is negative, and despising oneself out of despondency

The causes giving rise to laziness

Verse 7.3:

Because of relishing the pleasurable taste of indolence and craving based on sleep, From not being disillusioned with the suffering of cyclic existence, Laziness grows very strong.

Arresting the laziness of procrastination

Verses 7.5-7:

Do you not see that he is systematically slaughtering your species? Any craving based on sleep is like a buffalo with a butcher.

While the lord of Death is looking, having blocked off every route, how can you enjoy eating? And thus, how can you enjoy sleep?

For as long as death is quickly approaching, then I shall accumulate the collections. Even if I were to abandon laziness then, at that improper time what will be the use?

Arresting attachment to ignoble activities

Verse 7.15:

Having rejected the supreme joy of the sacred Dharma that is an infinite cause of joy, why do you enjoy being distracted by the causes for suffering, frivolous amusements and the like?

Arresting indolence and disparaging oneself

Verse 7.19:

Since I have been born human by race and recognize what is beneficial and what is harmful, if I do not forsake the deeds of enlightenment, why will I not attain enlightenment?

Verse 7.53:

How do the faint-hearted who have given up exerting themselves find liberation from destitution? By generating pride and exertion, even the great will find it hard to overcome me.

33. Amassing the collection of supportive conditions

Verse 7.32:

Thus, I shall abandon its discordant classes and make effort in order to increase joyous effort through the powers of interest, pride, joy, and relinquishment, diligence and mastery.

The power of esteem

Verses 7.39-40:

If in the past and even now such deprivation are arising because of my lack of interest in the Dharma, who would reject this interest in the Dharma?

The Muni himself has said that interest is the root of every class of virtue; Its root is constant acquaintance with the ripening results.

The power of stability

Verses 7.49-7.55:

Apply pride to the three: actions, afflictions, and ability.

(Pride of actions): Thinking, "I alone shall do it," is the pride of action.

(Pride of ability): Afflicted, powerless beings in this world are unable to accomplish their own welfare. Migrating beings are not able like me, therefore I shall do this.

If others are doing inferior work, why do I sit around? I do not perform it out of pride; It would be best for me to have no pride.

(Pride over the afflictions): I will conquer everything and nothing at all shall conquer me! I, a son of the Lion-like Victor, shall dwell in this pride.

The power of joy

Verses 7.63-66

Just like those who desire the pleasurable result of play, this [bodhisattva] adheres to whatever task he may do. He is not satiated by it; it makes him happy.

Although people work in order to be happy, it is uncertain whether or not they will be happy; But how can those whose work itself is happiness find happiness without doing the work?

If I am not satiated by desirable objects, which are like honey smeared upon a razor's edge, then why am I satiated by merit which is ripening and pacification in happiness?

Thus, in order to complete this task, I shall engage in it just as an elephant tormented at midday enters into a lake.

The power of suspension

Verse 7.67:

When my strength is related to degeneration, I should leave whatever I am doing in order to return to it. If something is finished well, I should put it aside With the wish for more and more later.

The power of being in control

Verse 7.76:

Just as the wind blowing back and forth Controls a piece of cotton, so shall I be mastered by enthusiasm, and in this way I will accomplish all.

34. The need to train in absorption/dhyana

Verse 5.24:

People who are disturbed by sickness lack strength in all actions. Likewise, the minds disturbed by confusion lack strength in all actions.

Verse 8.1:

The man whose mind is distracted dwells between the fangs of afflictions.

35. The benefit of guarding the mind

Verse 5.3:

But if the elephant of my mind is tightly bound through all by the rope of mindfulness, all fears will cease to exist, and all virtues will come into my hand.

Verse 5.5:

... Will all be bound by binding this mind alone and will all be subdued By subduing this mind alone.

Verse 21:

Should I behave in such a way, then whether among negative people or even in the midst of women, the steady effort of restraint will not decline.

36. The way to guard the mind

Verse 7.71:

Just as a man carrying a jar full of mustard oil in the presence of someone wielding a sword who is being threatened that he will be killed if he spills it will be frightened, likewise, those who have the modes of conduct should be attentive.

Verse 5.23:

To you who wish to guard your minds, I thus fold my hands [and urge you], “At the cost of your life, guard mindfulness and introspection!”

37. The fault of lacking alertness

Verse 5.25-5.27:

Whatever has been heard, contemplated, and meditated by those whose minds lack introspection, just like water in a leaking vase, will not remain in mindfulness.

Even those who have plenty of hearing, faith, and diligent endeavour will become sullied by a downfall due to the fault of lacking introspection.

The thieves of non-introspection, in following upon the degeneration of mindfulness, will steal even the merits I have firmly gathered [so that] I shall then proceed to lower realms.

38. The way to guard alertness

Verse 5.41:

I who strive by all means for concentration should not wander off even for a moment. Thinking, “What is this mind of mine doing?” I should investigate my mind.

Verse 5.47:

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

Verse 5.108:

The defining characteristic of introspection in brief is only this: to examine again and again the states of my body and mind.

39. Teaching that mindfulness is the cause of alertness

Verse 5.33:

When mindfulness abides for the purpose of guarding against [afflictions] from the doorway of the mind, then introspection will come about and even that which had gone will return.

40. Identifying the causes that will easily give rise to mindfulness

Verse 5.30:

Through the company of gurus, through the subsequent teachings of abbots, and through fear, mindfulness will easily be generated in fortunate people who act respectfully.

41. Identifying the hindrances to absorption

Verses 8.2-3:

Through isolation of body and mind No distractions will occur; therefore, I should abandon the world and completely discard conceptualizations.

Because of attachment and due to craving for material gain and the like, the world is not abandoned. Therefore, I shall entirely abandon these; The skilled analyse in this way.

42. It is improper to be attached to the body

Verses 8.63-8.64:

Although such uncleanliness is obvious, if I have doubt, then I should look at the unclean bodies that have been disposed of at the charnel grounds.

Although they understand that they will generate great fear of that from which the skin is rent open, in any case they will again generate joy towards those themselves.

Verse 8.121:

Because of attachment to my body, even a small object of fear frightens me; Who would not abhor as an enemy this body that gives rise to fear?

Verse 8.174:

To whatever degree I take great care of this body, to that degree I shall fall into a state of extreme anxiety.

43. It is improper to be attached to sentient beings

Verses 8.6-8.14:

Not seeing them I will not be happy. Also, my mind will not be set in equipoise; Even if I see them there will be no satisfaction, whereby, as before, I will be tormented by craving.

Through being attached to sentient beings, I will be completely obscured from the perfect reality. My mind of disillusion will also be destroyed. In the end I will be tormented by sorrow.

By only thinking of them, this life will pass without any meaning. Friends and relatives lacking permanence will even destroy the everlasting Dharma.

If I behave in the same way as those equal in fortune to the childish, I will certainly proceed to lower realms. If I am led there to those unequal in fortune what is the use of entrusting myself to the childish?

And in a while they become enemies. Since they become angry even at the sources of joy, it is difficult to please ordinary people.

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

They are envious of superiors, competitive with equals, and proud towards inferiors. They are conceited when praised, and if anything unpleasant is said they get angry; when is any benefit obtained from the childish?

Through associating with the childish, non-virtue will certainly ensue, such as praising myself and belittling others and discussing the joys of cyclic existence.

Others and I relying [upon each other] in this way will bring about nothing but ruin.

44. It is improper to be attached to gain

Verses 6.57-6.59

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 a short while of happiness,

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

Although I may acquire abundant gain and enjoy happiness for a long time, I shall go forth naked and empty-handed, just like having been robbed.

Verse 6.61:

If my very life were to degenerate for the sake of that, then what will be the use of the life of who commits only negativities?

45. Being attached to wealth is improper

Verse 8.70:

When my mind is despondent in the charnel grounds through having beheld nothing but skeletons, will there be any joy in the charnel grounds which are cities filled with moving skeletons?

Verse 8.79

Due to the torment of collecting, guarding, and losing it, I should understand wealth to be infinite problems. Those who are distracted by their attachment to wealth have no opportunity to attain freedom from the sufferings of [cyclic] existence.

Verses 8.18-8.19:

So, thoroughly confused mind, by the combination of whatever attachments to this and that, multiplying into thousands, suffering will ensue and arise.

Hence, the wise should not be attached; Fear is produced from attachment. Firmly understand well that it is the nature of these things to be discarded!

46. Training in wisdom

Verse 9.77:

The pride that is the cause of suffering is confusion regarding the self, therefore it will increase [suffering]. “Apart from that, there is no turning away.” Meditation on selflessness is the best.

Verse 9.25:

Seeing, hearing, and knowing Are not what are refuted here. Here that which is the cause of suffering— the conception of these as truly existent—is that to be averted.

Verse 9.59:

The flesh and skin are not the self. The warmth and winds are also not the self. The orifices are not the self. In all ways the six primary consciousnesses are also not the self.

Verse 9.74:

For example, when the trunk of a banana tree is separated into parts, there is nothing at all. Likewise, when sought with analysis, the self is also not real.

Verse 9.143:

Examine whatever is emanated by an illusionist and whatever is emanated by causes: where would they come from and also where would they go to?

Verse 9.149:

In that case, there is no cessation and also entities do not exist. Therefore, all these migrating beings are always not produced and not ceased.

Verses 9.151-9.152:

With respect to entities that are empty in that way, what attainment is there? What loss is there? Who is honoured or despised by whom?

Where does happiness or suffering come from? What is there to be displeased about? What is there to be pleased about? When searched for in thusness, what craves and what does it crave for?

Verse 9.98:

When there is no one who feels and feelings also do not exist, having seen this situation at that time, why would you not turn away from craving?

Verses 9.30-9.31:

“Even if you know them to be like illusions, how would the afflictions be averted? Even when the very creator of an illusory woman [realizes it], he would produce attachment.”

That creator has not abandoned the latencies of the afflictions with respect to the object of knowledge. Therefore, when he sees it, his latencies of emptiness are weak.

Verse 9.34:

When neither entity nor non-entity Abides before the mind, since there is no other aspect at that time, and the objects of observation are absent, [elaborations] are utterly pacified.

47. The way to begin acting for the benefit of others

Verse 7.47:

At the beginning having examined the endowments, I should either undertake it or not undertake it. It is best not to undertake it, but once I have undertaken it I should not withdraw.

Verse 4.4:

If, having made such a promise, I do not accomplish it through action, then by deceiving all those sentient beings what kind of rebirth will I take?

Verse 4.12:

Therefore, just as I have promised I shall respectfully accomplish it. If from now on I do not strive I shall descend from lower to lower states.

Verses 5.43-5.44:

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

By acting in this way, all will be done well. Otherwise, neither will be done.

48. The training

Verse 5.55:

Being very resolute and faithful, steady, respectful, polite, with a sense of shame, fear, and pacification - I should strive to make others happy.

Verses 5.74-5.76:

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

I should say, "Virtuously said," To all those who speak well, and if I see someone creating merit, I should praise him and be well pleased.

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

Verse 5.79:

When talking I should speak from my heart and on what is related. Making the meaning clear and the speech pleasing. I should abandon attachment or hatred and speak in gentle tones appropriately.

Verse 8.15-8.16:

I should flee far away from childish people. When they are encountered, I should please them joyfully. I should behave well, merely ordinarily, without becoming greatly familiar.

In the same way a bee takes honey from a flower, I should take merely the purpose of Dharma and remain unfamiliar as though I have never seen all of them before.

Verse 5.83-5.84:

... But for a little I should not forsake something greater. Principally I should consider the welfare of others.

When these are well understood, I should always strive for the welfare of others.

Verse 5.109:

Thus, I shall put these into action with my body, for what can be achieved by merely expressing words? Will sick people be benefited merely by reading the medical texts?

49. Aspirations

Verses 3.7-3.8:

...May all the suffering of all sentient beings be dispelled. May I be the doctor and the medicine and may I be the nurse.

Verses 3.15-3.16:

... When anyone encounters me may it never be meaningless for him.

If in those who encounter me a faithful or an angry mind arises, may that eternally become the cause for fulfilling all their aims.

Verse 3.21:

Just like the great elements, such as earth, and like space, may I always be many varieties of bases of sustenance for the boundless sentient beings.

Verse 10.21:

However, many sick sentient beings there are, May they quickly be freed from their illnesses. May all the diseases without exception of migrating beings never occur again.

Verse 10.23:

May all travellers be happy in every direction whatsoever. May their aims for which they travel Be effortlessly accomplished.

Verse 10.31:

Due to this merit of mine, may all sentient beings without exception abandon all negativities and always create virtue.

Verses 9.166-9.167:

In that manner, when may I pacify those tormented by the fire of suffering, with the rain of accumulations of happiness springing forth excellently from the clouds of my merit?

When shall I respectfully collect the accumulation of merit in a manner of non-objectification and teach emptiness to those ruined by objectification?

Verse 10.55:

For as long as space endures and for as long as sentient beings remain,
For that long may I abide and eliminate the sufferings of migrating beings.

50. Recollecting the kindness of virtuous friends

Verse 10.58:

I prostrate to Manjughosha by whose kindness virtuous minds arise. I prostrate also
to my virtuous friends by whose kindness I develop.

Ample visible challenges on this earth - homicide, theft, deception, pretention, etc. - are not the work of the elements nor are they the deeds of animals. They are perpetrated by those who are so called "human beings" - those characterised by speaking and comprehending meanings.

Moreover - it is not because the nature of humans is being rough and crude; experience proves that they are not of such nature when they are initially being born from a womb. On account of not elevating their education standard, their place of dwelling becomes fearsome, condition by negligence of love and care. However - since it is not possible for the innate nature of humans to be without seeds of love, if love and care are nourished through education, it is certain that this world could become better than now.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama's has said - it is not possible to develop and increase a wholesome ethical conduct amongst humans in general, relying just on one religion, and thus if there is a need to promote a wholesome ethical conduct that will be common to all - secular ethics will be the way to go.

When Gen Rinpoche gave teachings on the Bodhisattva-caryāvātara - as an introduction to Buddhism in Gujarat a few years ago, he gave a profound advice, saying that for future unadulterated discourses - it could be of great help if we create manuals that combine teachings on many techniques for accomplishing peace and happiness in this life. Out of the extensive content of the Bodhisattva-caryāvātara I have extracted 50 subjects and have compiled them here. I saw a need to augment topical classes given to future keen students - with some verses and thus I've supplemented them with verses from this text.

Ex-Riglob - Rime Geshe Tenzin Gyurme, 18/1/2021.