

Seven Limb Practice from Shantideva's *Engaging in Bodhisattva Behavior*

Translated by Dr. Alexander Berzin, studybuddhism.com

Offering

(2.1) To gain hold of that precious mind, I offer sincerely to you, the Thusly Gone (Buddhas), to the stainless Rare Gem of the hallowed Dharma, and to you, the offspring of the Buddhas, with oceans of good qualities:

(2.2) Whatever flowers and fruits there are and whatever manners of medicine there are, whatever jewels there are in this world and whatever pure pleasing waters there are,

(2.3) Mountains of precious minerals and likewise forests and secluded delightful places, trees adorned and bedecked with blossoms, and trees whose branches are laden with all sorts of excellent fruit;

(2.4) And from the realms of divine beings and others, fragrances, incense, wish-granting trees, jewel shrubs, an assortment of wild-growing crops, and ornamentals as well, fit to be offered,

(2.5) Lakes and pools adorned with lotus and with swans possessing a bewitching cry, everything that's without an owner to the far reaches of the infinite sphere of space –

(2.6) Taking them to mind, I offer them fully to you, the Sages, Foremost of Beings, together with your spiritual offspring. Hallowed objects for offerings, having great compassion, think kindly of me and accept these (tokens) of mine.

(2.7) Lacking in positive karmic force, I'm extremely impoverished and have nothing else that is precious to offer. Therefore, Guardians whose thoughts are for the welfare of others, accept them by the power of your concern for my sake.

(2.8) All my bodies I offer for eternity to you, the Triumphant and to your spiritual offspring. Supreme Beings, please fully accept me. Respectfully, I shall serve as your attendant.

(2.9) Completely under your care and thus unafraid of compulsive existence, I shall benefit limited beings. I shall perfectly transcend my previous negative karmic force and henceforth, never commit further negative acts.

(2.10) To bathing chambers, exquisitely sweet scented, with crystal floors, transparent and polished to a shine, having beautiful pillars, glowing with gems, and crowned with canopies, radiant with pearls,

(2.11) I invite you, Thusly Gone (Buddhas) and your spiritual offspring, and shower your bodies, over and again, from many jeweled vases filled to the brim with scented water and delightful things, to the accompaniment of song and music.

(2.12) I (now) dry your bodies with incomparable cloths, clean and well-anointed with scent, and then present you hallowed beings with most fragrant robes correctly dyed to color.

(2.13) I adorn with excellent garments, fine and smooth, and with hundreds of the choicest pieces of jewelry, this and that, you, the Aryas Samantabhadra, Manjushri, Lokeshvara and all the rest.

(2.14) With the best colognes whose fragrant vapors rise to all the myriad worlds, I anoint the bodies of all you Kings of the Sages, who shine with light, like sluiced, refined, and polished gold.

(2.15) To you, the Kings of the Sages, foremost objects for offerings, I present lovely flowers, such as mandarava, lotus, and water lily, with sweet fragrance, each of them (loose) and also delicately strung together and exquisite in garlands.

(2.16) I offer you, as well, masses of clouds from the burning of the choicest incense, stealing the mind, whose fragrant aroma pervades (everywhere). I offer you also a celestial feast with a wide array of dishes, delicacies, and nectars to drink.

(2.17) I offer you lamps of precious metals as well, arranged in rows on lotuses of gold. On swept ground, sprinkled with scented water, I scatter beautiful flower petals

(2.18) And offer to you, with a nature of compassion, immeasurable palaces, enchanting with arias of praise, draped with dangling ornaments of pearls and gems, beautiful and sparkling, beyond fathom, becoming an adornment of space.

(2.19) Eternally, I offer to you Kings of the Sages stunning jeweled parasols with golden handles, their rims adorned with exquisite types of decoration, with an elegant shape, erect and gorgeous to behold.

(2.20) And, in addition to this, may clouds bursting with the music of a symphony of offering (instruments) and beautiful celestial musicians each take their place, alleviating the suffering of limited beings.

(2.21) May they shower, without interruption, a rain of jewels, flowers, and so forth on all you Rare Supreme Gems of the hallowed Dharma, and on your stupa monuments and Buddha images.

(2.22) Just as Manjushri and others have made offerings to you, the Triumphant, so do I, too, make offerings to you, my Thusly Gone Guardians, and to your spiritual offspring.

Prostration

(2.23) I offer praises to you Oceans of Good Qualities, with melodious eulogies and a sea of tongues. May clouds of harmonies of melodious eulogies to you amass with certainty all around.

(2.24) I prostrate to all you Buddhas who have graced the three times, to the Dharma and to you, the Highest Assembly, bowing down with bodies as numerous as all the atoms of the world.

(2.25) I prostrate to you bases for the bodhichitta aim and to your stupa monuments. I prostrate to you abbots and likewise to you (ordaining) masters, and to you supreme (upholders of) tamed behavior.

(2.26) Till I reach the heart of a purified state, I take safe direction from you Buddhas. Likewise, I take safe direction from the Dharma and from you, the Assembly of bodhisattvas.

Confession

(2.27) With palms pressed together, I beseech you Buddhas and bodhisattvas residing in every direction, possessing great compassion:

(2.28) Throughout my beginningless samsaric existence, in this and other lives, I've unwittingly committed negative acts or caused others to commit (them), and further,

(2.29) Oppressed by the confusion of naivety, I've rejoiced (in them) – whatever I've done, I see them as mistakes and openly admit (them) to you, my Guardians, from the depths of my heart.

(2.30) Whatever harmful actions of body, speech and mind I've committed out of disturbing emotion toward you Three Supreme Gems, my fathers, my mothers, my spiritual mentors or others,

(2.31) And whatever extremely unbearable base actions I've done – I, who am full of negative force that gives rise to faults through many wrong actions – I openly admit all of them to you Spiritual Leaders.

(2.32) But, I may be snatched from my life before cleansing myself of my negative forces of karma. Just as (then I may fall to a horrible rebirth), I beseech you for safe direction to free myself definitely from that, with the swiftest of means.

(2.33) Whether or not I've done (purification), since this Lord of Death, who can't be trusted, never will wait, everyone, whether sick or not, (dies) all of a sudden. My life can't be trusted.

(2.34) Leaving all behind, I'll depart. But not having realized this, I've committed all sorts of negative acts for the sake of my friends and my foes.

(2.35) My foes will vanish; my friends also will vanish; I too shall vanish; likewise, all will vanish.

(2.36) Just like the experiences in a dream, anything I enjoy will become an object of memory; everything that's passed, I won't see (again).

(2.37) Even within this brief lifetime itself, many friends and foes have passed. But whatever unbearable (fruits) there are from the negative acts I've committed for their sake (still) lie ahead.

(2.38) Through not having realized that, all of a sudden, I (can die) like this, I've committed negative acts of so many sorts out of naivety, desire, and anger.

(2.39) Day and night, without a stop, this life is always getting shorter – no extension ever comes from the side; why should someone like me not die?

(2.40) While lying in bed, even if I'm surrounded by all my relatives and friends, I alone shall experience the feelings of my life being severed.

(2.41) When seized by the messengers of the Lord of Death, what help are relatives? What help are friends? Only my positive karmic force will provide me a safe direction then, but I've never relied on just that.

(2.42) O Guardians! Not (really) caring, I didn't know (there'd be) such terror as this, and so, for the sake of this impermanent life, I've caused so much negative karmic force to build up.

- (2.43) If someone even just being led to where his limbs will be lopped off today is so terrified that, with dry mouth, sunken eyes, and worse, he appears transfigured from before,
- (2.44) What need to mention the tremendous torment when grabbed by the macabre physical forms of the sinister messengers of the Lord of Death and fallen into a fit of great panic.
- (2.45) "Who can show me a safe and sound direction out of this monstrous horror?" Staring with terrified, bulging eyes I'll search the four quarters for anyone (who can show me) safe direction out.
- (2.46) (And then,) seeing no one in the four quarters who can give safe direction, I'll become filled with total despair from that. If no one having safe direction is there in that place, what can I do at that time?
- (2.47) Therefore, from this very day, I take safe direction from you, the Triumphant, you Guardians of those who wander, who strove to become safe directions for wandering beings and who can remove all my fears with your stupendous forces.
- (2.48) Likewise, I purely take safe direction from the Dharma you've realized, which abolishes the fears of recurring samsara, and also from you, the Assembly of bodhisattvas.
- (2.49) Totally panicked with anguish, to you, Samantabhadra, I offer myself; and, of my own accord, I make to you, Manjughosha, an offering of my body.
- (2.50) To you as well, Guardian Avalokiteshvara, who are undeceiving in acting with compassion, I cry out for help in a wail of torment: "Pray, give safe direction to me who has (such) a negative karmic force!"
- (2.51) From Akashagarbha, Kshitigarbha, and all you Guardians with great compassion, I seek safe direction and, from my heart, cry out for help.
- (2.52) I take safe direction from you, the One with a Vajra: upon your sight, all malevolent beings, such as the messengers of the Lord of Death, flee in panic to the four quarters (of the world).
- (2.53) Previously, I've transgressed your advice, but seeing now these horribly frightening things, I take safe direction from you, and by this, may I purge myself quickly of these fearful things.
- (2.54) If even when scared by a common illness, I have to act in accord with a doctor's advice, what need to mention when perpetually afflicted by diseases, like desire, (that produce) hundreds of injuries.
- (2.55) If just one of these can bring all the people living in this Southern Continent to ruin, and if no other medicine to cure them is to be found in any direction,
- (2.56) Then the urge not to act in accord with the advice of the Omniscient Physicians concerning that, which can remove every painful disease, is something to be rebuked as extremely naive.
- (2.57) If I need to be careful at a small and ordinary cliff, what need to mention at the cliff over which I can fall for thousands of leagues for a long duration (in the joyless realms).
- (2.58) It's incorrect (for me) to sit at ease, thinking, "I won't die just today," for without a doubt that time will come when I shall be no more.

(2.59) Who can give me a state of no fear? How can I be freed with certainty from this? If I shall doubtlessly vanish, how can I sit with my mind at ease?

(2.60) What I've experienced in the past has disappeared, and because of my clinging to whatever extra I have beyond that, I've been acting contrary to my mentors' advice.

(2.61) Having abandoned this lifetime and likewise my relatives and friends, if alone I must wander in an uncertain direction, what use with all of my friends and foes?

(2.62) "From destructive actions comes (nothing but) suffering; how can I be liberated definitely from that?" It's proper for me to think, day and night, constantly only about that.

(2.63) Out of naivety or (simply) not knowing, whatever I've done that fits into being either naturally disgraceful or a negative act proscribed (by you Buddhas),

(2.64) I openly admit all of them directly before the eyes of you Guardians, prostrating over and again, with palms pressed together and a mind dreading suffering.

(2.65) Spiritual Leaders, in (light of my) taking my negative acts as having been misdeeds, I beseech you: since this was not wholesome, I shall never do them again.

Rejoicing

(3.1) With pleasure, I rejoice in the positive actions that relieve the sufferings of the worse rebirth states for all limited beings and that place these, who suffer, in better rebirth states.

(3.2) I rejoice in that build up of positive (force) that became the causes for the (arhats') purified state; I rejoice in the definite freedom of (these) embodied beings from the miseries of uncontrollable rebirth.

(3.3) I rejoice in the purified state of the Guardian (Buddhas) and also in the levels of mind of their spiritual offspring; and with pleasure, I rejoice in the ocean of positive force from their having developed bodhichitta aims to bring every limited being joy and in their deeds that have aided limited beings.

Requesting to teach

(3.4) With palms pressed together, I beseech the Buddhas of all directions: please shine Dharma's lamp for limited beings suffering and groping in darkness.

Requesting to remain

(3.5) With palms pressed together, I beseech the Triumphant who would pass beyond sorrow: I beg you, remain for countless eons so as not to leave in their blindness these wandering beings.

Dedication

(3.6) By whatever positive force I've built up through all of these that I've done like that, may I remove every suffering of all limited beings.