
Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

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As usual generate the virtuous motivation of bodhicitta thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. In order to achieve that aim I am going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

Dedications for the success of those who set out on journeys

May all the travellers in all directions [23]
Have happiness;
May the purpose for which they set out on the
journey
Be accomplished effortlessly.

May all travellers who *journey in all* kinds of different *directions* in order to attain wealth, success and other aims, achieve those aims and have happiness. May whatever aims they have be achieved *effortlessly*.

May those who sail on small and big ships, [24]
Achieve their aims according to their wishes.
May they safely and happily reach the shore of their
destination
And be happily reunited with their family.

May those who set out on *small boats and big ships* *achieve* the wealth and so forth, for which they set out.

In the past people set out on boat journeys primarily to seek wealth, precious jewels etc. So here one prays that they find all the wealth that they are looking for. *May they safely* return to their home *and be happily reunited with their family*. Also, may they not experience any sickness or accidents and so forth.

This is a very nice and useful prayer to do. For example, sometimes it happens that, when one returns home from a long journey, for some reason one cannot be happily reunited with one's family.

May those who wander about, lost on dry plains,
mistaken paths and so forth, [25]
Meet with travellers
May they be free from dangers such as bandits,
thieves, tigers and so forth
May they be able to walk their paths untiringly and
happily.

May those who wander about lost on remote *plains* and *mistaken paths* *meet up with* other *travellers*. *May they* be protected from all *dangers such as bandits, thieves, tigers and so forth*. *May they* be able to proceed along the journey *happily, untiringly* in body and mind.

Repeatedly people who go hiking in remote places get lost, and have to live off what they can find in the forest, until they meet up with others or find their way and so forth.

May those who are lost in isolated places, [26]
Who have experienced suffering, who are elderly,
without protector
Whose minds are deluded, crazy or sleepy and so
forth
May all of these be looked after by the gods.

May those who are lost in isolated places, regardless of whether they are young or old, or who are of unstable and disturbed mind and *without* protection, *be looked after by the gods*.

Prayers for the good fortune of fortunate beings to continue

To this point the prayers have been for the alleviation of the different sufferings of human beings. Now one prays for different happinesses - for the increase of fortune and wealth, freedoms and endowments and so forth - to increase.

May they be liberated from inopportune states; and
may they in all their lifetimes, [27]
Be endowed with faith, wisdom and love and
compassion;
May they always have food; and
May they always be aware of good actions and
behaviours;

Here inopportune states relates to the inopportune states to practice the Dharma. *May* beings be free from the eight *inopportune states* for the practice of the Dharma. *May* their lives *be endowed with faith, wisdom, love and compassion*. *May they have* good and tasty *food*. *May they,* through their *actions,* always have the mindfulness that remembers all past lives. This refers to the clairvoyance that remembers past lives.

May they receive unceasing wealth [28ab]
Equalling the space-like treasure.

There is a specific type of concentration that is referred to as the space concentration. When *one* has achieved this specific type of concentration, then one will effortlessly achieve great *wealth*.

May they live together without quarrels and
arguments; [28cd]
May they without harmfulness, attain independence;

Usually when sentient beings achieve wealth, they very quickly they start to quarrel amongst themselves and start to harm each other in various ways. *May they* be able to *live without quarrels and disputes,* live *independently,* enjoying their wealth *without harming* each other.

May sentient beings who have little splendour and
charisma [29ab]
Achieve splendour and charisma.

May those sentient beings who have a bad complexion, *little charisma and splendour* and so forth, *achieve* a good complexion and lots of *charisma and splendour* and so forth.

For those who are sick and diseased with physical
defects, [29cd]
May their forms become completely perfect and
whole.

May all the bodies of those who have physical problems, difficulties and any kind of *physical defect* and so forth, *become perfect, whole*, beautiful, healthy and so forth.

May all women become men; [30]
May all who are low
Achieve a high status; and
May all those who are proud become humble.

The first line has to be read carefully. In Shantideva's time women had a very, very hard time. He was praying from that point of view. Observing the suffering of women, and seeing that they were suffering much more than the men, because of being suppressed, having to work harder and so forth, he prayed that they be reborn as men.

Some people use this line to criticise Shantideva, but I think it is important to understand that Shantideva does not have a low view of women, and that this dedication is not from the point of view of seeing women as inferior. Therefore one should not use these two lines to say that Shantideva discriminates against women. One should not listen to people who say such a thing, because that places a very harmful imprint on one's mind to be separated from bodhicitta for many lifetimes.

May those of *low* family lineage *achieve a higher status*, and *may* they not *become* very *proud*, but remain *humble*.

Quite often there is increasing pride when somebody rises from a lower social status to a higher social status. That's why Shantideva prays that they remain humble.

By my merits, [31]
May all sentient beings
Having abandoned all negativity,
Continuously practise virtue.

Shantideva prays, '*By my merits may all sentient beings abandon all negativity and continuously practise virtue*'. Shantideva prays that by the merits he has accumulated through engaging into the bodhisattva practices, all sentient beings will abandon the negativity of the ten non-virtuous actions, and through that, continuously practice virtue.

Dedication for sentient beings to progress along their path to liberation

May sentient beings never be separated from
bodhicitta, [32ab]
And engage in the bodhisattva practices.

May sentient beings never be separated from the wishing *bodhicitta*, the engaging *bodhicitta* and so forth, and practise the different *bodhisattva practices* such as the six perfections and so forth.

First there is the motivation of bodhicitta, in dependence on which one engages into the practice of the six perfections. May sentient beings to be able to engage in these practices.

May they always be looked after by the buddhas [32cd]
May they always abandon the actions induced by
different demons.

This refers to abandoning actions that are harmful towards one's progress along the path. *May* sentient beings *looked after by the buddhas* and virtuous teachers,

the conducive condition for the path. Here 'virtuous teacher' refers to the buddhas themselves. *May they always abandon the actions* that are counter-productive to progress along *the path*.

As we did last week, we can recite the chapter from the beginning. Here one can pray for everything. People repeatedly ask for prayers to be done for those who have exams, or for people who are sick and so forth. Here you can pray for all of that.

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Edited Version

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