

佛子行三十七頌
The Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas

無著賢大師著
by Nguluchu Thogme Zangpo

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English Translation: Ari-ma

南無觀世音菩薩 (南無羅格秀惹亞) (三次)
Homage to Lokeshvaraya! (3 times)

誰見諸法無來去 唯一勤行利眾生 殊勝師及觀自在 三門恭敬恆頂禮
利樂之源諸圓覺 從修正法而出生 彼亦依賴知其行 是故當說佛子行

At all times I prostrate with respectful three doors to the supreme guru and the Protector Chenrezig who, though realizing that all phenomena neither come nor go, strive solely for the welfare of migrators. The perfect buddhas, source of benefit and happiness, arise from accomplishing the sublime Dharma; and as that [accomplishment] depends on knowing the [Dharma] practices, I will explain the bodhisattvas' practices.

1. 獲得暇滿大舟時, 自他為渡輪迴海, 晝夜恆時不懶散, 聞思修是佛子行.

At this time when the difficult-to-gain ship of leisure and fortune has been obtained, ceaselessly hearing, pondering and meditating day and night in order to liberate others and oneself from the ocean of cyclic existence is the bodhisattvas' practice.

2. 親方貪心如水蕩, 怨方嗔心似火燃, 取捨皆忘癡黑暗, 拋棄故鄉佛子行.

[The mind of] attachment to loved ones wavers like water. [The mind of] hatred to enemies burns like fire. [The mind of] ignorance that forgets what to adopt and what to discard is greatly obscured. Abandoning one's fatherland is the bodhisattvas' practice.

3. 捨惡境故漸減惑,無懶散故善自增,心澄於法起正見,依靜處為佛子行.

When harmful places are abandoned, disturbing emotions gradually diminish. Being without distraction, virtuous endeavors naturally increase. Being clear-minded, certainty in the Dharma arises. Resorting to secluded places is the bodhisattvas' practice.

4. 長伴親友各自散,勤聚財物遺為跡,識客捨棄身客房,捨此世為佛子行.

Long-associated companions will part from each other. Wealth and possessions obtained with effort will be left behind. Consciousness, the guest, will cast aside the guesthouse of the body. Letting go of this life is the bodhisattvas' practice.

5. 交近彼而三毒增,且令聞思修退轉,能使慈悲滅盡者,遠惡友為佛子行.

When [evil companions] are associated with, the three poisons increase, the activities of listening, pondering and meditation decline, and love and compassion are extinguished. Abandoning evil companions is the bodhisattvas' practice.

6. 依止何者罪過滅,功德增如上弦月,勝善知識及自身,愛彼勝己佛子行.

When [sublime spiritual friends] are relied upon, one's faults are exhausted and one's qualities increase like the waxing moon. Cherishing sublime spiritual friends even more than one's own body is the bodhisattvas' practice.

7. 自亦束縛輪迴故,世間神祇能救誰,由此依止不欺者,皈依三寶佛子行.

What worldly god, himself also bound in the prison of cyclic existence, is able to protect others? Therefore, when refuge is sought, taking refuge in the undecieving Triple Gem is the bodhisattvas' practice.

8. 諸極難忍惡趣苦,能仁說為惡業果,是故縱遇命難時,終不造罪佛子行.

The Subduer said that all the unbearable suffering of the three lower realms is the fruition of wrongdoing. Therefore, never committing negative deeds, even at peril to one's life, is the bodhisattvas' practice.

9. 三界樂如草頭露,一瞬剎那毀滅法,恆時不變解脫果,追求其為佛子行.

The pleasure of the triple world, like a dewdrop on the tip of a blade of grass, is imperiled in a single moment. Striving for the supreme state of never-changing liberation is the bodhisattvas' practice.

10. 無始以來慈我者,諸母若苦我何樂,是故為渡諸有情,發菩提心佛子行.

When mothers who have been kind to one since beginningless time are suffering, what is the use of one's own happiness? Therefore, generating the mind of enlightenment in order to liberate limitless sentient being is the bodhisattvas' practice.

11. 諸苦源於欲自樂,諸佛利他心所生,由此自樂與他苦,如實交換佛子行.

All suffering without exception comes from wishing for one's own happiness. The perfect buddhas arise from the altruistic mind. Therefore, completely exchanging one's own happiness for the suffering of others is the bodhisattvas' practice.

12. 誰以大欲劫我財,或令他奪一切財,己身受用三世善,仍迴向彼佛子行.

Even if others, influenced by great desire, steal all one's wealth or have it stolen, dedicating to them one's body, possessions and virtues [accumulated in] the three times is the bodhisattvas' practice.

13. 吾雖無有少過咎,他人竟來斷我頭,以悲心故彼諸罪,自身代受佛子行.

Even if others cut off one's head when one is utterly blameless, taking upon oneself all their negative deeds by the power of compassion is the bodhisattvas' practice.

14. 何者於吾生誹謗,雖廣宣傳遍三千,仍復吾以慈心故,讚彼德是佛子行.

Even if someone broadcasts throughout the billion worlds all sorts of offensive remarks about one, speaking in turn of that person's qualities with a loving mind is the bodhisattvas' practice.

15. 何者於眾集會中,揭吾隱私惡言向,於彼還生益友想,恭敬其是佛子行.

Even if, in the midst of a public gathering, someone exposes faults and speaks ill of one, humbly paying homage to that person, perceiving him as a spiritual friend, is the bodhisattvas' practice.

16. 吾以如子養護人,彼若視我如怨仇,猶如母憐重病兒,倍悲憫是佛子行.

Even if someone for whom one has cared as lovingly as one's own child regards one as an enemy, to cherish that person as dearly as a mother does an ailing child is the bodhisattvas' practice.

17. 與吾同等或下劣,雖懷傲慢屢欺凌,吾仍敬彼如上師,恆頂戴為佛子行.

Even if, influenced by pride and equal or inferior person treats one with contempt, respectfully placing him like a guru at the crown of one's head is the bodhisattvas' practice.

18. 恆受貧苦為人欺,復遭重病及魔侵,眾生諸苦己代受,無怯弱是佛子行.

Though one may have an impoverished life, always disparaged by others, afflicted by dangerous illness and evil spirits, to be without discouragement and to take upon oneself all the misdeeds and suffering of beings is the bodhisattvas' practice.

19. 美名四揚眾人敬,財物量等多聞天,然視世妙無實義,離憍慢是佛子行.

Though one may be famous and revered by many people or gain wealth like that of Vaishravana, having realized that worldly fortune is without essence, to be unconceited is the bodhisattvas' practice.

20. 倘若未伏內嗔敵,外敵雖伏旋增盛,故應速興慈悲軍,降服自心佛子行.

If outer foes are destroyed while not subduing the enemy of one's own hatred, enemies will only increase. Therefore, subduing one's own mind with the army of love and compassion is the bodhisattvas' practice.

21. 一切妙欲如鹹水,任己受用渴轉增,於諸能生貪著物,頓捨卻是佛子行.

However much sense pleasures are enjoyed, as [when drinking] salt water, craving still increases. Immediately abandoning whatever things give rise to clinging and attachment is the bodhisattvas' practice.

22. 諸所顯現唯自心,心性本離戲論邊,知己當於二取相,不作意是佛子行.

Appearances are one's own mind. From the beginning, mind's nature is free from the extremes of elaboration. Knowing this, not to engage the mind in subject-object duality is the bodhisattvas' practice.

23. 會遇悅意之境時,應觀猶如夏時虹,雖現美妙然無實,捨貪著是佛子行.

When encountering pleasing sense objects, though they appear beautiful like a rainbow in summertime, not to regard them as real and to abandon clinging attachment is the bodhisattvas' practice.

24. 諸苦如夢中喪子,妄執實有極勞累,是故會遇違緣時,視為幻象佛子行.

Diverse suffering is like the death of a child in a dream. By apprehending illusory appearances as real, one becomes weary. Therefore, when encountering disagreeable circumstances, viewing them as illusory is the bodhisattvas' practice.

25. 欲証菩提身尚捨,何況一切身外物,不望回報與異熟,佈施即是佛子行.

If it is necessary to give away even one's body while aspiring to enlightenment, what need is there to mention external objects? Therefore, practicing generosity without hope of reciprocation or [positive] karmic results is the bodhisattvas' practice.

26. 無戒自利尚不成,欲行利他成笑柄,是故無世間希求,守護戒是佛子行.

If, lacking ethical conduct, one fails to achieve one's own purpose, the wish to accomplish other's purpose is laughable. Therefore, guarding ethics devoid of aspirations for worldly existence is the bodhisattvas' practice.

27. 欲享福善之佛子,一切損害如寶藏,於諸眾生無怨心,修忍辱是佛子行.

To bodhisattvas who desire the wealth of virtue, all those who do harm are like a precious treasure. Therefore, cultivating patience devoid of hostility is the bodhisattvas' practice.

28. 唯求自利小乘士,見勤猶如救頭燃,為利眾生功德源,發起精進佛子行.

Even hearers and solitary realizers, who accomplish only their own welfare, strive as if putting out a fire on their heads. Seeing this, taking up diligent effort – the source of good qualities – for the sake of all beings is the bodhisattvas' practice.

29. 已知具寂之勝觀,能盡摧滅諸煩惱,遠離無色界四處,修禪定是佛子行.

Having understood that disturbing emotions are destroyed by insight possessed with tranquil abiding, to cultivate meditative concentration that perfectly transcends the four formless [absorptions] is the bodhisattvas' practice.

30. 若無智慧以五度,不得圓滿菩提果,故具方便離三輪,修智慧是佛子行.

If one lacks wisdom, it is impossible to attain perfect enlightenment through the [other] five perfections. Thus, cultivating skillful means with the wisdom that does not discriminate among the three spheres is the bodhisattvas' practice.

31. 若不細察己過失,以行者貌行非法,是故恆察己過失,斷除其是佛子行.

If having [merely] the appearance of a practitioner, one does not investigate one's own mistakes, it is possible to act contrary to the Dharma. Therefore, constantly examining one's own errors and abandoning them is the bodhisattvas' practice.

32. 因惑說餘佛子過,令自違犯且退轉,已入大乘行者過,莫議論是佛子行.

If, influenced by disturbing emotions, one points out another bodhisattva's faults, oneself is diminished. Therefore, not speaking about the faults of those who have entered the Great Vehicle is the bodhisattvas' practice.

33. 貪圖利敬互爭執,令聞思修業退轉,故於親友施主家,離貪著是佛子行.

Because the influence of gain and respect causes quarreling and the decline of the activities of listening, pondering and meditation, to abandon attachment to the households of friends, relations and benefactors is the bodhisattvas' practice.

34. 粗語傷害他人,復傷佛子之行儀,故於他人所不悅,斷惡言是佛子行.

Because harsh words disturb others' minds and cause the bodhisattva's conduct to deteriorate, abandoning harsh speech that is unpleasant to others is the bodhisattvas' practice.

35. 煩惱串習則難治,士執念知對治劍,貪等煩惱初萌時,即剷除是佛子行.

When disturbing emotions are habituated, it is difficult to overcome them with antidotes. By arming oneself with the antidotal weapon of mindfulness, to destroy disturbing emotions such as desire the moment they first arise is the bodhisattvas' practice.

36. 總之何處行何事,應觀自心何相狀,恆具正念與正知,成辦利他佛子行.

In brief, whatever conduct one engages in, one should ask, "What is the state of my mind?" Accomplishing others' purpose through constantly maintaining mindfulness and awareness is the bodhisattvas' practice

37. 如是勤修所生善,為除無邊眾生苦,悉以三輪清淨慧,迴向菩提佛子行.

In order to clear away the suffering of limitless beings, through the wisdom [realizing] the purity of the three spheres, to dedicate the virtue attained by making such effort for enlightenment is the bodhisattvas' practice.

追隨經續論典義	及諸聖賢之教授	為利欲學佛子道	撰此佛子行卅七
吾慧淺薄少學故	文劣難令智者喜	然依經典教言故	佛子行頌應無謬
然諸宏闊佛子行	智淺如我難測故	違理無關等過失	祈請諸聖賢寬恕
吾以此善願眾生	依勝二諦菩提心	不住有寂之邊際	等同怙主觀世音

Following the speech of the Sublime ones on the meaning of the sutras, tantras and their commentaries, I have written The Thirty-Seven Practices of Bodhisattvas for those who wish to train on the bodhisattvas' path.

Due to my inferior intellect and poor learning, this is not poetry that will please scholars, yet as I have relied upon the sutras and the speech of the Sublime Ones, I think the bodhisattva practices are not mistaken. However, because it is difficult for one of inferior intellect like myself to fathom the depth of the great deeds of bodhisattvas, I beseech the Sublime one to forbear my errors such as contradictions and incoherent reasoning. By the virtue arising from this may all migrators become, through excellent conventional and ultimate bodhicitta, like the Protector Chenrezig who does not abide in the extremes of existence or peace.

為利益自他故 宣說教理之出家人無著 寫於水銀寶窟

This was written for the benefit of himself and others by the monk Thogme, an exponent of scripture and reasoning, in a cave in Ngulchu Rinchen.