A Bodhisattva's Garland of Gems

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(Byang-chub sems-dpa'i nor-bu'i phreng-ba, Skt. Bodhisattva-mani-avali)
by Atisha (Dipamkara Shrijnana)

translated by Alexander Berzin, 2004

I make prostration to great compassion.
I make prostration to the sublime teachers.
I make prostration to the Buddha-figures,
Those in whom to have belief.

(1) Let me rid myself of all indecisive wavering
And cherish being wholeheartedly earnest in my practice.
So, let me rid myself fully of being sleepy, foggyminded, and lazy,
And always make effort with joyful perseverance.

(2) Let me always safeguard the gateway of my senses
With mindfulness, alertness, and care.
So, let me check repeatedly the flow of my mind,
Three times each day and each night.

(3) Let me make my own failings be known
And seek not mistakes in others.
So, let me keep my own good qualities hidden
And make the good qualities of others be known.

(4) Let me rid myself of (desire for) material gain and honor
And always rid myself of (desire for) profit and fame.
So, let me have few desires, be content,
And show appreciation for the kind acts that've been done.

(5) Let me meditate on love and compassion
And stabilize my bodhichitta aim.
So, let me rid myself of the ten destructive actions
And make myself stable, always, with belief in fact.

(6) Let me overcome rage and pride
And come to have an attitude of humility.
So, let me rid myself of dishonest ways of living
And make my living with a livelihood that accords with the Dharma.

(7) Let me rid myself of all material burdens
And adorn myself with an aryas' gems.
So, let me rid myself of all bustling activities
And live in seclusion.

(8) Let me rid myself of idle words
And always restrain my speech.
So, when I see a sublime teacher or learned master,
Let me extend my service with respect.

(9) As for persons with the eye of the Dharma
And limited beings who are beginners,
Let me expand my discernment
Of them as my teachers.

(10) Whenever I see any limited beings,
Let me expand my discernment of them as my father,
my mother, my child or grandchild.
So, let me rid myself of misleading friends
And entrust myself to spiritual friends.

(11) Let me rid myself of hostility and uneasy mental states,
And go happily everywhere.
So, let me rid myself of whatever I'm attached to
And live without attachments.

(12) With attachment, I won't attain even a happy rebirth
And I'll cut off the life of my liberation, in fact.
So, wherever I see a Dharma measure (for bringing) happiness,
Let me exert effort always in that.

(13) Whatever I've undertaken to start with,
Let me accomplish that very thing first.
Everything, this way, will get accomplished well;
Otherwise, neither will come about.

(14) While still acting always negatively and parted from joy,
When a feeling of superiority arises about anything,
Let me cut off my pride and remember
My sublime teacher's guideline instructions.

(15) And when a feeling of discouragement arises,
Let me praise the glories of the mind
And meditate on the voidness of both (states).

(16) Whenever an object of attachment or hostility
arises in any situation,
Let me regard it like an illusion or a projection;
Whenever I hear unpleasant words,
Let me regard them like an echo;
And whenever harm happens to my body,
Let me regard it as (coming from) my previous karma.

(17) Let me step up to living in a sequestered place,
Outside the limits (of any town),
And, like a corpse of a dead game animal,

Hide myself in solitude and live without attachments.

(18) (There,) let me always be stable with my Buddha-figure
And whenever a feeling of laziness or exhaustion arises,
Let me enumerate my own shortcomings
And remind myself of the essential points
of taming behavior.

(19) But if I happen to see others,
Let me speak calmly, gently, and sincerely,
Rid myself of any frowns or closed-off expressions,
And always keep a smile.

(20) And when I'm continually seeing others,
Let me not be miserly, but take joy in giving,
And rid myself of all envy.

(21) In order to safeguard the minds of others,
Let me rid myself of all contention
And always have patient tolerance.

(22) Let me not be fawning, nor fickle in friendship,
But rather always stay faithful.
Let me rid myself of insulting others,
And keep a respectful manner.
Then, when imparting guideline instructions to others,
Let me have compassion and a mind to help.

(23) Let me never deny the Dharma and,
Setting my intention on whichever ones I fervently admire,
Let me make effort to split my days and nights
(Passing) through the gateways of the ten Dharma acts.

(24) Let me dedicate to great peerless enlightenment
As many constructive acts as I've amassed
throughout the three times,
And extend out to limited beings my positive force.
So, let me always offer the great prayer
Of the seven-part practice.

(25) Doing like that, let me complete my two networks
of positive force and deep awareness,
And deplete my two obscurations as well.
Thus, making my attainment of a human body meaningful,
Let me attain a peerless enlightenment.

(26) The gem of belief in fact, the gem of ethical self-discipline,
The gem of generosity, the gem of listening,
The gems of care for how my actions reflect on others
and of moral self-dignity,
And the gem of discriminating awareness make seven.

(27) These sacred gems
Are the seven gems that will never deplete.
They must not be mentioned to quasi-humans.

(28) When in the midst of many,
Let me keep a check on my speech;
When remaining alone,
Let me keep a check on my mind.

Notes

Verse 23:
The ten Dharma acts *(chos-spyod rnam-bcu)* are (1) copying scriptures, (2) making offerings to the Three Gems, (3) giving to the poor and sick, (4) listening to teachings, (5) reading scriptures, (6) taking to heart the essence of the teachings through meditating, (7) explaining the teachings, (8) reciting sutras, (9) thinking about the meaning of the texts, and (10) meditating single-pointedly on the meaning of the teachings.