

A STRAND OF DHARMA JEWELS
AS ADVICE FOR THE KING
The Rāja Parikathā Ratnāvalī

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CHAPTER ONE

ON GAINING HAPPINESS AND LIBERATION

I. CHAPTER 1: ON HAPPINESS AND LIBERATION

A. DECLARATION OF HOMAGE

001

To he who has gained liberation from all obstacles
And is adorned with the perfected qualities—⁴
I bow in reverence to the Omniscient Honored One,⁵
The true good friend of beings.⁶

B. THE INTENT IN COMPOSING THIS WORK

002

Right Dharma, definite in its goodness,
[Is presented here] for the Dharma-cherishing Great King.
I shall explain it in a manner reliant upon Dharma,
That it may flow into a person fit to be a vessel of the Dharma.⁷

C. THE TOPICS AND THEIR SEQUENCE

003

First, I shall explain the dharmas causing happiness,
Afterwards, I shall distinguish the dharmas generating liberation.
Beings place obtaining happiness as foremost,
And then afterwards pursue liberation.

1. DEFINITIONS AND CAUSES OF HAPPINESS AND LIBERATION

004

Perfection in the path of goodness defines “happiness.”
“Liberation,” refers to the extinguishing of delusions.
Generally speaking, the causes for these two
Lie solely in two faculties: faith and wisdom.

a. THE ROLES OF FAITH AND WISDOM

005

Due to faith, one is able to uphold the Dharma.
Through wisdom, one’s comprehension accords with reality.
Of the two, wisdom is superior.
Still, one first relies on faith to initiate the practices.⁸

1) A DESCRIPTION OF SUPERIOR-GRADE FAITH

006

If someone beset by delusion, desire, hatefulness, or fear
 Is nonetheless able to avoid ruining [his practice of] Dharma,
 One should realize he possesses faith
 And may be considered a vessel of auspicious happiness.

2) THE DEFINING BASIS OF WISDOM

007

Once one has become able to be skillfully selective
 In the three karmic actions of body, mouth, and mind
 While also constantly benefiting self and others,
 He becomes fit to be known as one who is wise.⁹

D. THE CAUSES OF HAPPINESS

1. DEEDS TO BE AVOIDED; DEEDS TO BE CULTIVATED

a. THE TEN EVIL DEEDS TO BE AVOIDED

008

Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct,
 False speech, divisive speech,
 Harsh speech, inappropriate discourse,
 Covetousness, ill-will, and wrong views—

b. DEEDS TO BE CULTIVATED

009

These dharmas constitute the ten unwholesome karmic deeds.
 Their opposites are just the ten good karmic deeds.
 Abandoning intoxicants, adhering to pure livelihood,
 Having no motivation to torment, practicing generosity,

010

And making offerings to those who should be revered—
 Briefly described, one's Dharma should be of this sort.¹⁰

c. THE USELESSNESS OF NON-BENEFICIAL ASCETICISM

If one only practices ascetic disciplines,
 One will definitely fail to generate the dharmas of goodness.

011

Because it involves abandonment of wisdom and compassion,
 If one is exclusively devoted to ascetic disciplines,
 One remains unable to do away with harming others,
 And unable to provide them with rescue and benefit.

012

That which is illuminated by giving, moral virtue, [and patience]
 Is the great and level road of right Dharma.¹¹
 If one were to forsake it and course instead on an erroneous path,
 Taking on oneself austerities emulating a cow's karmic torments,¹²

013

Then, in this vast wilderness swamp of cyclic birth and death,
 One might course on without drink, food, or shade of trees,
 And might be subject then to being devoured by wolves,
 Journeying on within it for a long time and across great distances.¹³

d. THE NEGATIVE FRUITS OF THE TEN EVILS AND RELATED TRANSGRESSIONS

014

On account of killing, one is born into short-lived existences.
 By physically tormenting others, one brings on much sickness.
 Through stealing, one brings about insufficiency of wealth.
 Through invading another's domain, one gains many enemies.¹⁴

015

On account of lying, one is bound to encounter slander.
 Through divisive speech, one is estranged from those held dear.
 Because of harsh speech, one will hear what is not pleasing.
 Through frivolous speech, one becomes loathed by others.¹⁵

016

Through covetousness, one brings harm to what is sought.
 Due to hatefulness, one will be subjected to terror.
 Because of wrong views, one generates perverse attachments.
 Through drinking alcohol, the mind becomes dull and chaotic.

017

Through failure to practice giving, one falls into poverty.
 On account of wrong livelihood, one encounters deceit.
 Due to not being respectful, one is born into low social station.
 Through jealousy, one becomes devoid of awe-inspiring qualities.

018

Through constant anger, one's appearance becomes ugly.
 By failing to inquire of the intelligent, one becomes stupid.
 These are retributions as they occur on the path of human rebirth,
 Prior to this, one has already endured the wretched destinies.

2. SUMMATION ON THE CAUSALITY OF SUFFERING AND HAPPINESS¹⁶

019

The karmic-offense dharmas associated with killing and such
Involve karmic retributions such as have just been described.
[*kuśālānāṃ ca sarveṣāṃ viparītaḥ phalodayaḥ*]: (19c-d emended via Sanskrit.)
[All of the good karmic deeds
Involve karmic retributions opposite to those.]¹⁷

020

[*lobho dveṣāś ca mohas ca tajaṃ karmeti cāśubham*]: (20a-b via Sanskrit)
[Covetousness, hatred, and delusion
As well as karma arising from them are moral evils.]
Non-covetousness and such as well as karma arising from them
Exemplify the causality involved in good karmic actions.

021

The wretched destinies¹⁸ and the various forms of suffering
Are all produced as a consequence of wrong dharmas.
The good destinies and happiness,
All arise because of good dharmas.

022

One should always avoid every form of evil
While constantly engaging in every form of goodness,
Doing so through the karmic actions of body, mouth, and mind.
One should abide in awareness of these two dharmas.¹⁹

023

By resort to the first dharma, one is able to gain freedom
From the hells and the rest of the four [unfortunate] destinies.²⁰
The second of these dharmas is able to bring on
The wealth and happiness enjoyed by humans, gods, and kings.

024

Through concentrations, *brahma-vihāras*, and formless absorptions,²¹
One gains the bliss of Brahmā and the others.²²
Thus we set forth a summary explanation of
The causes for happiness as well as their blissful karmic rewards.

E. THE CAUSES OF LIBERATION

1. THE ABSTRUSENESS OF LIBERATION'S DHARMAS

025

Additionally, there are the dharmas associated with liberation
Which are subtle, profound, and difficult to perceive.
As for the common person whose mind has no ears for them—
Were he to hear them described, he would be struck with fear.

a. THE NON-EXISTENCE OF "SELF"

026

The "I" is non-existent, nor shall it arise in the future.
 Anything considered "mine" is non-existent, now and in the future.
 When the common person ponders this, he becomes frightened.
 As for the wise—all fears are forever ended in them.

b. THE WORLD'S ORIGIN IN THE IMAGINING OF "SELF" AND ITS POSSESSIONS

027

The world is born from the view imputing existence of a "self."
 One is then bound by attachment to phenomena seen as "other."
 The Buddha achieved his realization based on the ultimate path.
 By resort to compassion, he explained this for the sake of others.

1) WHEN PERCEIVED IN ACCORD WITH REALITY, SUCH FALSE CONCEPTIONS CEASE

028

The existence of a self as well as that which belongs to a self—
 These two, in reality, are in all cases false.
 It is through perceiving them in accordance with reality
 That the two types of attachment arise no more.

2) THE AGGREGATES ORIGINATE WITH ATTACHMENT TO SELF

029

The aggregates are generated through attachment to a self.²³
 According to the [ultimate] meaning,²⁴ attachment to "self" is invalid.
 If the seed itself has no reality,
 How could the sprout and such be grounded in truth?²⁵

3) REALITY-BASED PERCEPTION OF AGGREGATES DEFEATS SELF-GRASPING VIEW

030

If one perceives that the aggregates themselves are not real,
 Then the view imputing existence of self no longer arises.
 Through complete cessation of the view imputing a "self,"
 The aggregates themselves no longer arise.

4) ANALOGY: AGGREGATES LIKE MIRROR, "SELF" LIKE AN UNREAL REFLECTED IMAGE

031

It is just as when a person using a polished mirror
 Is able to observe the reflection of his own face in it.
 This reflection is only something one is able to perceive,
 For it has never been something real.

a) THE AGGREGATES REFLECT A FALSE IMAGE OF "SELF"

032

The view imputing existence of self is just the same.
It is in reliance upon the aggregates that it is able to appear.
Examined in accordance with reality, it is found to be non-existent
Just as in the case of the mirror's reflection of a face.

b) RELEASING THE AGGREGATE "MIRROR," THE "REFLECTION" OF SELF CEASES

033

Were a person to refrain from holding up the mirror,
He would no longer observe the reflection of his own face.
So too, when one analytically contemplates the aggregates,
Then the view imputing a self straightaway ceases to exist.

c) ĀNANDA'S ACQUISITION OF THE DHARMA EYE VIA THIS ANALOGY

034

It was on account of hearing this same concept
That the great *ārya*, Ānanda,
Immediately achieved purification of the Dharma eye
And then repeatedly explained this for the sake of others.

5) ATTACHMENT TO THE AGGREGATES ENSURES CONTINUATION OF CYCLIC EXISTENCE

035

So long as attachment to the aggregates continues to be sustained,
The view imputing a "self" shall be constantly retained as well.
It is based on the presence of a view imputing existence of a self
That "karmic action" and "becoming" continue constantly on.²⁶

6) TWIRLING FIREBRAND ANALOGY: CYCLIC EXISTENCE IS A CONTINUOUS CYCLE

036

As for the three phases in the wheel of cyclic births and deaths,
As it turns, none are "prior," "intermediary," or "subsequent."
Just as with the "wheel" appearing by the twirling of a firebrand,
Their generation is interdependently caused.²⁷

7) CESSATION OF SELF-IMPUTING VIEW ENTAILS THE END OF KARMA-BOUND ACTION

037

It does not exist having arisen from itself, from some other, or both,
And also does not exist in any of the three periods of time,
Once this is realized, the view imputing a "self" ceases
Along with subsequent karmic actions and retributions.²⁸

8) UNDERSTANDING OF ORIGINATION AND CESSATION HALTS EXTREME VIEWS
038

Having perceived cause-and-effect in this manner,
Its arising, and its complete cessation,
One therefore refrains from seizing upon there being any reality
To the world's existence or its non-existence.²⁹

9) THE FOOLISH NEEDLESSLY FEAR THIS DHARMA
039

When the foolish hear this Dharma
So able to bring about the ending of all suffering,
Because they have no knowledge of it, they become fearful
Of that station in which one has nothing to fear.³⁰

10) SINCE YOU DON'T FEAR A FUTURE NIRVĀṆA, WHY FEAR "EMPTINESS"?
040

That there shall be none of this in the station of nirvāṇa—
How could that generate any fear in you?
As for what we explain as "emptiness of intrinsic reality,"
How could this cause you to be struck with fear?³¹

11) SINCE NON-SELF IS INEVITABLE IN NIRVĀṆA, WHY FEAR IT NOW?
041

On gaining that liberation, there is neither self nor aggregates.
If you do accept this dharma,
Then, how can you be displeased
At the prospect of relinquishing self and aggregates?

12) THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF EXTREME VIEWS AND NIRVĀṆA
042

Not even "non-existence" qualifies as nirvāṇa.
How much the less might "existence" qualify as such?
The complete end of attachments to existence or non-existence—
The Buddha described this as essential to nirvāṇa.

2. DEFINITION OF WRONG VIEW AND ITS DISASTROUS EFFECTS
043

Were one to provide a summary description of "wrong view,"
One would refer to "dismissing cause-and-effect as non-existent."
This causes one to become filled with non-meritorious karma
And is the weightiest cause for entering the wretched destinies.³²

3. DEFINITION OF RIGHT VIEW AND ITS AUSPICIOUS EFFECTS

044

Were one to provide a summary description of "right view,"
 One would refer to "believing in the existence of cause-and-effect."
 This is able to cause one to gain a full measure of merit
 And is the most superior cause for rebirth in the good destinies.³³

4. WISDOM'S PREEMINENCE OVER DUALITIES AND ITS GENERATION OF LIBERATION

045

Through wisdom, "existence" versus "non-existence" is stilled,
 One steps beyond [ideas about] "merit" versus "non-merit,"
 And one transcends [concern over] "good" versus "bad" destinies.
 The Buddha described this as tantamount to gaining liberation.³⁴

a. THE WISE RELINQUISH ATTACHMENT TO ASSERTING NON-EXISTENCE OR EXISTENCE

046

Having perceived that production has causes,
 The wise relinquish any attachment to "non-existence."
 Through perceiving that cessation involves joint causation,
 One thereby relinquishes any attachment to "existence."³⁵

b. THE UNREALITY OF PRODUCTION AND BOTH PRIOR AND CONCURRENT CAUSE

047

As for two types of causation, prior cause and concurrent cause,
 According to [ultimate] reality, they do not qualify as causes.
 This is because artificial designations are devoid of any bases,
 And is also because "production" itself does not qualify as real.³⁶

c. THE FALLACIOUSNESS OF POLARITY AND INTERDEPENDENCY-BASED DESIGNATIONS

048

Where the existence of "that" is linked to the existence of "this,"
 As with "long" and "short"—
 And where, because "this" is produced, "that" is produced,
 As with a "lantern" and "light"—[these are inadmissible].

049

Where there is first something "long" and later something "short,"
 This is invalid, for these [attributes] are not intrinsic to their nature.
 Because, when it is not producing light,
 The "lantern" itself is not genuinely existent.³⁷

d. *CONDITIONED ARISING COUNTERS NIHILISM; REALISM'S ROOTS IN DELUSION*

050

If one [rightly] perceives such cases of cause-and-effect production,
 He does not seize on [the nihilist view asserting] "non-existence."
 Where one has believed in the actual reality of the world,
 That is a product of a mind that is confused.³⁸

e. *REALIZATION OF TRUE SUCHNESS, NON-ATTACHMENT, AND NON-DUAL LIBERATION*

051

Through perceiving that "cessation" is not a false notion,
 One straightaway gains realization of true suchness.
 One therefore desists from attachment to "existence,"
 Refrains from relying on dualities, and gains liberation.

5. *MIRAGE ANALOGY FOR THE WORLD, SELF, AGGREGATES, AND DHARMAS*a. *PERCEPTIBILITY OF FORMS CONTRASTED WITH IMPERCEPTIBILITY OF A MIRAGE*

052

Forms are such that, one may observe them from a distance,
 And then, on coming closer, they appear with distinct detail.
 If the forms in a mirage were real,³⁹
 Why does one fail to see them at all on drawing up close?⁴⁰

b. *THE UNREALITY OF THE WORLD*

053

If one abides far away from genuine wisdom,
 One straightaway views the world as existing.
 On gaining realization of reality, one no longer perceives this.
 It is then found to be signless, just like a mirage.

c. *REFUTATION OF THE REALITY OF THE FIVE AGGREGATES*

054

Just as a mirage has the appearance of water,
 But is not water, and is not a real entity—
 In this same fashion, the aggregates appear to be a person,
 But are not a person, and are not real dharmas.

d. *CLINGING TO ILLUSION AS INDICATIVE OF FOOLISHNESS*

055

Having determined that a mirage consists of water,
 One might reasonably go toward it, intending to drink from it.
 If, discovering it to be non-existent, one still clings to it as "water"—
 This sort of person would be deemed to be a fool.