

**A STRAND OF DHARMA JEWELS
AS ADVICE FOR THE KING**

The Rāja Parikathā Ratnāvalī

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CHAPTER THREE

THE PROVISIONS FOR GAINING ENLIGHTENMENT

III. CHAPTER 3: THE PROVISIONS FOR GAINING ENLIGHTENMENT

A. THE IMMENSE MERIT REQUIRED FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

001

The major marks and subsidiary physical signs of the Buddhas
Are generated from inconceivably vast merit.
I shall now describe it for you,
Doing so based upon the *āgama* scriptures of the Great Vehicle.⁹⁰

002

The merit generated by all of the pratyekabuddhas,
The merit produced by those in training and beyond training,⁹¹
And the merit generated by beings in the ten directions' worlds—
That sum of merit, as with the worlds themselves, is incalculable.

003

Such merit, when multiplied by ten,
Is adequate to bring forth one body hair of a buddha.
In the case of the remaining ninety-nine thousand hairs,
The merit required for each and every one is precisely the same.

004

Such a manifold amount of merit as this
Is involved in generating all of the hairs on a buddha's body.
This [entire sum] must be increased by yet a hundred times more
To bring forth but one of a buddha's subsidiary physical signs.

005

In this fashion, through so very much [merit] as this,
Each and every one of the subsidiary physical signs is perfected.
And so this continues on till the requisites are fulfilled for all eighty
Serving as subsidiary gracing adornments for each major mark.

006

Such an accumulation of merit as this
Is able to bring forth the eighty subsidiary physical signs.
Taken all together and multiplied by one hundred,
[Such merit] brings forth one of a buddha's major marks.

007

An amount of merit such as this
 Is able to bring about [each one of] the thirty major marks.
 When multiplied again by one hundred,
 It brings forth the hair-tuft [at mid brow] resembling a full moon.

008

That merit able to bring about that white hair-tuft,
 When multiplied again by a thousand fold—
 Such a sum of merit is able to bring forth the vision-surpassing
Uṣṇīṣa [mark] atop a buddha's crown.

009

Such an incalculable amount of merit as this,
 Is expediently described herein as calculable.
 However, if one drew from throughout the ten directions
 An amount of merit present in ten times all those worlds,

010

The causal basis for obtaining a buddha's form body
 Would itself be just as incalculable as such a number of worlds.
 How much the less would the causes of a buddha's Dharma body
 Be such as might have any bounds?

011

If causes operative in the world, even though minor,
 Are capable of generating effects so great they are incalculable,
 Since the causes for buddhahood are incalculably [potent,]
 How could one even conceive of the scale of their result?

B. THE FORM BODY ARISES FROM MERIT, THE DHARMA BODY FROM WISDOM

012

The possession of the form body by the Buddhas,
 In every case arises from the merit-generating practices.
 Great King, the Dharma body of the Buddhas
 Is perfected through the wisdom-generating practices.

C. HENCE THE CORRECT CAUSES OF BUDDHAHOOD ARE MERIT AND WISDOM

013

Therefore practices generating the merit and wisdom of a buddha
 Are the correct causes for the realization of bodhi.
 Hence one prays that you will constantly cultivate
 The practices generating the merit and wisdom leading to bodhi.

1. ONE SHOULD NOT BE DISCOURAGED BY THE AMOUNT OF MERIT REQUIRED
014

Regarding the amount of merit needed for realization of bodhi,
You must not fall into a state of discouragement.
Based on the principles involved as well as the *āgama* scriptures,⁹²
One is able to cause one's mind to be established in faith.

a. BEINGS BESET BY SUFFERING ARE BOUNDLESSLY MANY
015

Just as, throughout the ten directions, there is
Boundless space and so forth, including earth, water, and fire,
So too it is with those beings beset by suffering,
For their boundlessness is just the same.⁹³

b. THE BODHISATTVA VOWS TO LIBERATE THE COUNTLESS BEINGS
016

As for this boundless number of beings,
The bodhisattva, relying on the great compassion,
Extricates them, rescuing them from their suffering,
Vowing that they shall be caused to gain *parinirvāṇa*.

c. IMMEASURABLE MERIT FLOWS FROM THIS VOW
017

As a result of generating this firm resolve,
Whenever walking or standing, whenever lying down or awake,
Or even when sometimes being somewhat negligent—
Still, an incalculable amount of merit constantly flows to him.

018
Extent of merit matches the number of beings [he vows to rescue]
And it constantly flows to him without the slightest interruption.
Since the cause and the effect develop commensurately,
Realization of bodhi is not difficult to achieve.

019
The period of time, as well as the number of beings—
Bodhi itself, and also the amount of merit—
Because these four are all immeasurable,
The bodhisattva carries on his practice equipped with solid resolve.

020
Although bodhi is itself immeasurable,
The causes in the above four factors being also immeasurable,
As one courses in the two practices of cultivating merit and wisdom,
How could it be difficult to succeed in acquiring them?

d. BODHISATTVA SUFFERINGS ARE MELTED AWAY BY CAUSAL-GROUND PRACTICES

021

The two types of practice in garnering merit and wisdom—
 Due to their being so boundless as this—
 The bodhisattva's physical and mental sufferings
 Are therefore swiftly melted away.

022

As for the wretched destinies, hunger, thirst, and so forth,
 Such physical sufferings are produced from evil karmic actions.
 Since the bodhisattva forever abandons evil
 And cultivates goodness, such suffering ceases to arise in him.

023

Desire, hatefulness, fear, and so forth—
 Such mental sufferings arise from delusion.
 Because he relies on non-dual wisdom,
 The bodhisattva leaves behind the mental sufferings.

024

When one experiences suffering, if it is pressing,
 It becomes difficult to bear. How much the more so if it is excessive.
 When freedom from suffering goes on for a long time,
 One abides in happiness. How could that be difficult?

025

Whilst physical suffering becomes eternally non-existent for them,
 The existence of mental suffering is but a conventional expression.
 It is due to their compassion for the world's two types of suffering
 That they constantly abide within the sphere of birth and death.

e. THE WISE ARE NOT DISCOURAGED BY THE LENGTH OF THE ENDEAVOR

026

Therefore, during that long time leading up to bodhi,
 The mind of the wise person does not sink into discouragement.
 So as to bring about cessation of evil and generation of goodness,
 He cultivates this endeavor unremittingly during this entire time.

f. THE THREE POISONS AND THE EFFECTS OF INDULGING OR ABANDONING THEM

027

Covetousness, hatefulness, and ignorance—
 One prays that you will recognize and abandon them.
 Non-covetousness and the other manifold forms of goodness—
 Once aware of them, one should cultivate them with reverence.

028

Through covetousness, one is reborn in the path of the ghosts.
 Through hatefulness, one falls into the hells.
 Through delusion, one enters the animal realm.
 The opposite of these brings rebirth among men and gods.

029

Relinquishing evil and cultivating goodness—
 These dharmas serve as the causes of happiness.
 As for what serves as the dharma conducing to liberation,
 It is relinquishing through wisdom the two types of attachment.⁹⁴

g. CAUSAL-GROUND BODHISATTVA PRACTICES AND THEIR POSITIVE EFFECTS

1) FACILITATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DHARMA

030

Images of the Buddha as well as *caityas* (shrines)—
 Halls together with monasteries and temples—
 And also numerous superior-quality items presented as offerings—
 You should respectfully see to the establishment of such things.

031

Portraying him sitting atop a precious lotus blossom,
 In subtle and marvelous paintings done in fine colors,
 And in likenesses created using all types of gold and gems—
 You should see to the creation of such images of the Buddha.

032

Regarding right Dharma as well as the community of the Āryas,
 They should, by edict, be materially served and protected.
 Creating pavilions constructed with latticing of gold and jewels,
 One should present these as offerings to cover the *caityas* (shrines).

033

With gold, silver, and the many kinds of blossoms made of jewels—
 With carnelian, crystal, and pearls—
 With *indranīla* sapphires, with *mahānīla* sapphires,
 And with diamonds—make such offerings in tribute to the *caityas*.

034

To those able to proclaim right Dharma,
 Make offerings of the four requisites.
 The six bases of harmonious respectfulness and other such dharmas
 Should be constantly and diligently cultivated.

035

To those who are venerable, one should listen with reverence,
Diligently serving, attending to, and protecting them.
The bodhisattva must certainly carry out
The memorial ceremonies, making offerings then as well.

036

As regards theistic and other non-Buddhist communities,
One should not personally serve them or ceremonially revere them.
Because the unaware might erroneously place faith in them,
One must not render any service to bad spiritual guides.

037

The *āgamas* of the Buddha as well as the treatises
Should be copied, studied, recited, and given to others.
Also, one should bestow with kindness the paper, pens, and ink.
You should cultivate these sorts of meritorious endeavors.

2) FACILITATION OF EDUCATION

038

Erect halls of learning throughout the country,
Hire teachers, contribute grants to scholars,
And promote the establishment of perpetual endowments.
By implementing these things, you will increase your wisdom.

3) PROMOTE MEDICINE, SCIENCE, AGRICULTURE, WELFARE, EMERGENCY SERVICES

039

Promote understanding of medical skills and the calendar,
In all cases work for the establishment of agriculture,
Ease the suffering of the elderly, children, and the sick,
And ensure that rescue services are provided throughout the country.

4) EASING THE HARDSHIP OF TRAVEL

040

Establish *saṅghārāmas* along the roads,⁹⁵
As well as parks, ponds and reservoirs, rest pavilions, and lodging.
Make available therein provisions for the needs of beings,⁹⁶
Including fodder, bedding mats, drink, food, and fuel.

5) ESTABLISHMENT OF TEMPLES, REST PAVILIONS, INNS

041

Throughout the lands of the small and large states,
One should erect temples, rest pavilions, and inns.
On roads across great distances wherein drinking water is scarce,
Establish wells and water ponds providing a chance to drink.

6) AID TO THE SICK, THE POOR, THE LOWER CLASSES

042

For those suffering with illness, the poor with no one to rely on,
The lower classes, those who live in fear, and other such persons—
By resort to kindness and compassion, draw them in, accept them,
And, with diligent concern, establish them in stable circumstances.

7) FOOD OFFERINGS TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY AND THE NEEDY

043

Seasonally fresh foods and beverages,
Fruits, vegetables, and recently-harvested grains—
[Bestow them on] the Great Community and those in need,
Not consuming any yourself until you've first provided for them.⁹⁷

8) STOCKING OF TEMPLES, REST PAVILIONS, AND INNS WITH APPROPRIATE SUPPLIES

044

Sandals, umbrellas, jugs, water-drawing hooks, tweezers,
Needles and thread, fans, and other such items, including
Mosquito netting and accouterments for taking the night's rest—
One should provide these for temples, rest pavilions, and inns.

045

The three types of fruit, the three types of pungent herbs,
Honey, sugar, curds, and eye medicines
Should always be supplied for comfort and relief during calamities,
While one also distributes copies of mantras and medical formulae.

046

Medicinal oils for application on the head and body,
Bathing tubs, lanterns, cereals and fruits,
Water vessels, knives and axes—
These should be provided in rest pavilions and inns.

047

Rice, the grains, sesame, drink, food,
Sugar syrups, and other such provisions—
One should see that they are always placed in shaded, cool locations
Together with containers full of pure water.

9) COMPASSIONATE TREATMENT EVEN OF ANIMALS, INSECTS, GHOSTS, ETC.

048

At the openings of the burrows of insects and rodents,
Place food and drink, grains, sugar, and other such provisions.
May trustworthy people be ordered to take on these tasks
So that, each and every day, these things are widely distributed.