

Buddhist Scriptures

Edited by DONALD S. LOPEZ, JR.

PENGUIN BOOKS

PENGUIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England
Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA
Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia
Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 10 Alcorn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4V 3B2
Penguin Books India (P) Ltd, 11, Community Centre, Parkhead Park, New Delhi - 110 017, India
Penguin Group (NZ), c/o Athorise and Rosedale Roads, Albany, Auckland 1310, New Zealand
Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 44 Starck Avenue, Rosebank 2196, South Africa
Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

www.penguin.com

This collection first published 2004

023

Editorial material copyright © Donald S. Lopez, Jr., 2004

All rights reserved

The moral right of the author has been asserted

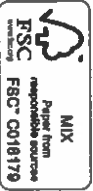
Set in 10.5/12.25 pt PostScript Adobe Sabon

Typeset by Rowland Phototypesetting Ltd, Pury St Edmunds, Suffolk
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Basingstoke, Hampshire

Except in the United States of America, this book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser

ISBN-13: 978-0-14-044758-3

www.greenpenguin.co.uk



Penguin Books is committed to a sustainable future for our business, our readers and our planet. This book is made from Forest Stewardship Council™ certified paper.

Contents

Acknowledgements	ix
Technical Note	x
Introduction: Digesting the Dharma	xi
Further Reading	xliii

THE BUDDHIST UNIVERSE

1 The Realms of Rebirth	3
2 A Call to Practise	19
3 <i>Karma</i> Tales	24
4 A Lesson from a Ghost	34
5 A Scripture that Protects Kings	37
6 One Buddha per Universe	46
7 Two Buddhas Seated Side by Side	51
8 Rebirth in the Land of Bliss	60
9 Avoiding Hell, Gaining Heaven	69
10 A Chinese Pilgrim in India	78
11 A Sacred Peak	84
12 Maitreya Describes the Future	90

THE BUDDHA

13 The Three Jewels	101
14 The Noble Search	105
15 A Life of the Buddha	116
16 Māyā, Mother of the Buddha	129

THE BODHISATTVĀ VOW

A bodhisattva is someone who vows to achieve buddhahood in order to free all beings in the universe from suffering. In the early tradition, the term was used to refer to the Buddha in his millions of lives from the time that he made such a vow himself (see Chapter 15) to his achievement of enlightenment. With the rise of the Mahāyāna, buddhahood, and hence the aspiration of the bodhisattva, became a more universal goal; some sūtras would claim that all beings in the universe would eventually traverse the bodhisattva path and become buddhas. But buddhahood, according to most accounts, was far away; what could be developed now was the aspiration to achieve buddhahood for the sake of all beings. This aspiration was called bodhicitta; it was widely extolled in Mahāyāna texts, and techniques for its cultivation were set out. The development of bodhicitta was considered the essential starting point for the long path to buddhahood; the practice of the bodhisattva path and of the six perfections of giving, patience, ethics, effort, concentration and wisdom could take place only after the aspiration to buddhahood had been created.

But bodhicitta was an attitude, an aspiration, an interior state. It was manifested verbally in the form of a vow. The taking of vows has long been central to Buddhist practice (see Chapter 26), both for the identity of the individual and the identity of the community. In addition to taking refuge in the three jewels, laypeople might take up to five vows: not to kill, not to steal, not to engage in sexual misconduct, not to lie about spiritual attainments and not to use intoxicants. Some laypeople would take eight vows, which they would maintain for two days

or four days each month. Fully ordained monks and nuns held many more vows; under one of the codes, monks held 253 vows, nuns 364. They were to gather each fortnight to confess any infractions.

Similar rituals developed in the Mahāyāna, and people took the bodhisattva vow, promising publicly to achieve buddhahood in order to liberate all beings from saṃsāra. A more formal code of conduct was also developed, derived from a number of sources, with (like the monastic vows) categories of root infractions and secondary infractions. The bodhisattva vows, however, could be taken equally by laypeople and monastics, men and women, and formal ceremonies are set forth in a number of Mahāyāna treatises.

Instructions from one such ceremony appear below. It is taken from a text called Ornament for the Sage's Mind (Munimataīamkāra), perhaps the last great compendium of Indian Buddhist thought and practice, composed by Abhayākaraśrīpa in the eleventh or twelfth century. The text covers a wide range of topics in setting forth the path to enlightenment. It is noteworthy that the text begins with the passage translated below, in which the author explains how to take the bodhisattva vow, whether in a public ceremony from a qualified guru or, if such a teacher is not available, then alone, seated before an image of the Buddha.

It is certain that sentient beings have not lost the good fortune to abandon the two obstructions. Yet, because they lack a virtuous guide, they are mistakenly attached to things that lack intrinsic existence, and as a result, they do not understand the three thoroughly afflicted things – afflictions such as ignorance, action and birth – before, later or in the middle. They naturally descend into the depths of the well of saṃsāra, from the peak of existence to the final Avīci. No matter how they rise through toil, they are saddened each day by the suffering of pain and the suffering of change. They are absorbed in actions and afflictions that are like reflections, and they fall, made destitute by momentary impermanence and by objects whose foundation is like the reflection of the moon in swiftly moving water.

Due to the power of compassion, *bodhisattvas* who have understood the emptiness of intrinsic nature feel destitute themselves [because sentient beings] are made destitute by impermanence. They wish to attain buddhahood, the cause of the arising of the perfect essence of the ambrosia of the excellent doctrine – antidote to all mistaken conceptions – whose nature is one of friendship to all beings. Inspired by that [wish] and not thinking of themselves, they seek only to benefit others. As a result, they undergo great hardship and become completely exhausted in amassing the collections [of merit and wisdom] over a long time.

It is said, "Through engaging in hardship, they completely amass the collections over a long time and are certain to attain the state of omniscience." Therefore, it is said, "Completely gripped by compassion and great compassion – the root of the qualities of a buddha – the blessed buddhas find omniscience and act for the welfare of all beings." Therefore it is great compassion alone that causes the blessed ones not to abide in *nirvāna*. As [the *Madhyamakāvātāra* 1.2] says: 'Just mercy is seen as the seed, as water for growth, and as the ripening to a state of enjoyment for a long time.' The *Pramāṇavarttika* [II.199] says: 'Those with great mercy act only on behalf of others.'

Furthermore, through becoming constantly familiar with all sentient beings who abide in three realms, it [i.e., compassion] will increase. Thus, through the power of cultivating great compassion, you will promise to rescue all sentient beings, thus creating the aspiration to enlightenment [*bodhicitta*]. Because *bodhisattvas*, endowed with great compassion and possessing the lineage of complete, perfect enlightenment, suffer at the suffering of others, Ananda, I say that whoever goes for refuge to the Buddha, *dharma* and *saṅgha* and correctly maintains and fully protects the five bases of practice [not to kill, steal, lie, engage in sexual misconduct, or use intoxicants], the merit of that virtue is inconceivable and immeasurable. I say that *śrāvakas* and *pratyekabuddhas*, even to the point of *nirvāna*, are unable to take its measure.' By hearing of such benefits, great joy is created. 'By saying, "I go for refuge until enlightenment to the Buddha, the *dharma* and the supreme community", one

is saying, "Relying on refuge in the form-body, the truth-body and community of irreversible *bodhisattvas*, I will become a complete and perfect buddha; having extricated everyone in this world from suffering, I will place them in complete and perfect buddhahood." With this brief [statement], those of the sharpest faculties create the nature of the *bodhisattva* vow.

Regarding this vow, beginners and those who follow the customs of laypeople should take the vow from a guru who knows the rite for taking the vow properly. In his absence, one should imagine oneself to be in the presence of the buddhas and *bodhisattvas* and take [the vow]. If it is done in full form, place an image of the *Tathāgata* in front, Ananda, whatsoever, with a mind most clear, makes a *maṇḍala* for the *Tathāgata* in the shape of a square or a half-moon, in the shape of a circle or a chariot, will, in accordance with the number [of offerings] become the lord of Kuru in the north, Videha in the east, Godanīya in the west, and Jambudvīpa in the south. At death, in accordance with the number, one will be born in the heavens of Thirty-Three, Free from Combat, Joyous and Liking Emanation.' By following such statements in the *Katāgāra Sūtra*, anoint the *maṇḍala* and properly offer the five offerings, 'O Ananda, I will protect completely any sentient beings whatsoever who join their palms and make obeisance, saying, "I bow down to the blessed *Tathāgata*." Such benefits are set forth.

Properly create great clarity towards the buddhas and *bodhisattvas* of the ten directions and bow down. Then make a *maṇḍala* and so forth in front of the guru and then humble yourself by sitting or kneeling and joining your palms and then request three times, 'Son of good lineage before me, I wish to receive the *bodhisattva* vow. Therefore, if I am worthy to receive it, because of your mercy for me, please bestow the vow of the *bodhisattva*'s ethics.' To this, the guru says three times, 'Do you aspire to enlightenment?' 'In my presence, will you receive the foundation of training in the ethics of the *bodhisattvas*?' Promise saying, 'I will maintain them.' Repeat after the guru: 'I beseech the blessed buddhas and *bodhisattvas* gathered from the realms of the ten directions to consider me. I beseech the master to consider me. I, so and so, confess all of the sins, no matter how

small, that I have performed, ordered others to perform, or admired, with my body, speech and mind, against the buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, my parents, and other sentient beings, in this lifetime or in another existence. I am aware of them, remember them, and do not conceal them.' Say this three times.

Then say three times: 'I, so-and-so, from this day until the essence of enlightenment, go for refuge to the best of bipeds, the blessed Buddha, endowed with great compassion, the all-knowing, the all-teaching, who has transcended all enemies and all fear, the great being, endowed with an immutable body, endowed with an unsurpassed body. I go for refuge to the *dharmā*, the supreme peace of those who are freed from desire. I go for refuge to the supreme of assemblies, the community of irreversible *bodhisattvas*.' Just as *bodhisattvas* in the past, present, and future create the aspiration to enlightenment and have gone, go, and will go to buddhahood in order to liberate, rescue, and completely protect limitless realms of sentient beings from the sufferings of *samsāra* and in order to establish them in the unsurpassed knowledge of omniscience, and just as all the buddhas know and see with the knowledge of a buddha and the eye of a buddha, which is unobstructed, and just as they have understood and continue to understand the reality of phenomena, so I, so-and-so, through this rite, in the presence of the master so-and-so and in the presence of all the buddhas and *bodhisattvas* create the aspiration to unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment.' Say that three times.

'I dedicate the roots of virtue produced from my confession of sins, going for refuge to the three, and creating the aspiration to enlightenment to unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment. In a world without protection, without refuge, without a home, without friends and without a haven, I will be a protector, a refuge, a home, a friend and a haven. I will free all those sentient beings who have not crossed the ocean of existence. I will take completely beyond sorrow those who have not passed completely beyond sorrow by leading them beyond sorrow to the unobstructed *dharmadhātu*. I will quell the suffering of those whose suffering has not been quelled.' Say that three times. 'I, so-and-so, by creating the aspiration to enlightenment in that

way, will hold each in the realm of limitless sentient beings to be my mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter, relative, or half-brother or sister. Holding them in that way, I will begin to multiply roots of virtue to the limit of my ability, my power and my capacity. From this day forward, no matter how small, I will give gifts, guard ethics, enhance patience, work with effort, enter into concentration, analyse with wisdom and study skilful methods, all for the sake of the welfare, benefit and happiness of all sentient beings. I will follow, in accordance with the Mahāyāna, those endowed with great compassion who, beginning with [the aspiration to] unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment, entered into the great [*bodhisattva*] levels. Therefore, I will train to be a *bodhisattva*. From this day forward, I, called "*bodhisattva*", ask to be cared for by the master.' Say that three times. Thus, in the presence of the image of the *Tathāgata*, bow down and ask all the buddhas and *bodhisattvas* to be aware of your earlier dedication of merit, of your holding beings [to be family members], of your amassing of the collections in order to protect them, and of your following of the Mahāyāna. [The guru] says, 'In my presence, this person has correctly received and holds the vow of the ethics of the *bodhisattva*.'

If you take it yourself without such a guru, leave out, 'I beseech the master to consider me' and 'in the presence of the master named so-and-so' and [instead of saying, 'From this day forward I, the *bodhisattva* so and so beseech the master to care for me'] say, 'From this day forward I, the *bodhisattva* so-and-so, beseech the blessed buddhas and *bodhisattvas* to care for me.' Immediately upon beseeching them, one is praised by the buddhas and *bodhisattvas*. Think about this constantly in order to increase virtue.

Translated by Donald Lopez from the *Mūnimatālanṅkāra* by Abhayākaraṅgupta, Derge edition of the Tibetan canon (Toh. 1908), Dbu ma, vol. 4, 73b6-76b1. *Tibetan Tripitaka, Taipei Edition*, vol. 36 (Taipei: SMC Publishing, 1991), pp. 377/147(6)-378/152(1).