

LETTER FROM A FRIEND (THE SUHRLLEKHA)
Edition One: The Guṇavarman Translation

The Dharma Essentials Verses
Composed by Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva for King Śatakarṇi

Translated by the Kashmiri Tripiṭaka Master Guṇavarman
During the Early Song Dynasty (circa 431 CE)

English Translation by Bhikshu Dharmamitra

龙树菩萨
为禅陀迦王说法要偈
宋_[1]罽宾三藏求那跋摩译

禅陀迦王应当知
生死苦恼多众过
悉为无明所覆障
吾欲为彼兴利益
譬如刻画造佛像
智者见之宜恭敬
我依如来说正法
大王亦应深信受
汝虽先闻牟尼言
今若听受转分别
犹如华池色清淨
月光_[2]垂照逾暉显
佛说六念当修习
所谓三寶施戒天
修行十善淨三業
离酒放逸及邪命
观身命財速危朽
应施福田濟窮乏
施为堅牢無與等
最为第一亲近者

简体字

龍樹菩薩
為禪陀迦王說法要偈
宋_[1]罽賓三藏求那跋摩譯

禪陀迦王應當知
生死苦惱多眾過
悉為無明所覆障
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離酒放逸及邪命
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施為堅牢無與等
最為第一親近者

正體字

LETTER FROM A FRIEND¹

The Dharma Essentials Verses

Composed by Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva for King Śatakarṇī

Translated by the Early Song Kashmiri Tripiṭaka Master Guṇavarman

I. INTRODUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO PAY DUE ATTENTION

1

(T2)

King Śatakarṇī should realize

The many faults associated with birth-and-death's bitter afflictions.

Everyone is covered over and obstructed by ignorance.

I wish for their sakes to allow benefit to flourish.

2

(T2)

Just as when an image of the Buddha made by carving or painting,

Beheld by the wise, appropriately inspires them to reverence,

Just so, as I rely on the Tathāgata to explain right Dharma,

The Great King too should be inspired to deep faith and acceptance.

3

(T3)

Although you may have previously heard the words of the Muni,²

If you now listen and absorb them, your discernment shall increase.

This is comparable to a lotus pool's appearance of purity—

When moonlight falls upon it, it shines forth ever more radiantly.

II. THE MAIN DOCTRINAL SECTION

01. SIX RECOLLECTIONS, TEN GOODS, QUITTING INTOXICANTS AND WRONG LIVELIHOOD

4

(T4-5)

The Buddha declared that one should cultivate the six recollections,³

Namely the Three Jewels,⁴ giving,⁵ moral virtue, and the heavens,

While cultivating ten good deeds,⁶ purifying three types of karma,⁷

And abandoning intoxicants as well as wrong livelihood.

02. THE SIX PERFECTIONS

5

(T6)

Observing that one's physical life and wealth swiftly deteriorate,

One should give to fields of merit and rescue the poor and destitute.⁸

Giving is unmatched in its durability.

It is the foremost among all of one's close companions.⁹

勤修淨戒除瑕穢
 亦莫憊求願諸有
 譬如大地^[3]殖眾物
 戒亦如是生諸善
 修忍柔和舍瞋恚
 佛說是行最無上
 如是精進及禪智
 具此六行超生死
 若能在家孝父母
 此即名為勝福田
 現世流布大名稱
 未來福報轉無量
 殺盜婬欺耽荒酒
 雕床高廣及香熏
 謳歌倡伎過時食
 如斯眾惡宜遠離
 若少時^[4]間修此戒
 必受天樂昇涅槃
 慳嫉貪欲及諂偽
 誑惑顛倒與懈怠
 如此眾惡不善法
 大王當觀速棄捨
 端正尊豪及五欲
 當知危朽若泡沫
 莫恃若斯不堅法
 憍逸自恣生諸苦
 欲長諸善證甘露
 應當遠離如棄毒

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 憍逸自恣生諸苦
 欲長諸善證甘露
 應當遠離如棄毒

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6 (T7)
 Diligently cultivate pure precepts to be rid of faults and defilements.
 Also, do not aspire to abide in any of the realms of existence.
 Just as the great earth supports the birth of the many creatures,
 So too, in like fashion, do moral precepts produce all forms of good.

7 (T8, 15)
 Cultivate gentle harmony with patience, relinquishing hatefulness.
 The Buddha proclaimed this practice as the most superior.¹⁰
 In like fashion, develop vigor as well as dhyāna and wisdom.
 By perfecting these six practices, one steps beyond birth and death.

03. FILIAL RESPECT FOR PARENTS

8 (T9)
 If one is able as a householder to show filial respect for one's parents,
 Then this in itself serves as a supreme field for the growth of merit.¹¹
 In this present life, a great reputation will spread afar
 While future karmic rewards from this merit become incalculable.¹²

04. THE LAYPERSON'S EIGHT-PRECEPT *UPAVĀSA* ABSTINENCE RITE

9 (T10-11)
 Killing, stealing, sexual relations,¹³ deception, indulging intoxicants—
 Sleeping in ornate beds, high and broad, and using perfumes,
 Singing, attending performances, and eating past the correct time—
 It is fitting to abandon the many such unwholesome actions.¹⁴
 If one cultivates these moral precepts even for a short time,¹⁵
 One is surely destined for celestial happiness and ascent to nirvāṇa.¹⁶

05. ABANDONMENT OF FAULTS

10 (T12)
 Miserliness, hatefulness, covetousness, lust, flattery and falseness—
 Deceptiveness, inverted views, and indolence—
 The many sorts of evil and unwholesome dharmas such as these
 Are such as the Great King should reflect upon and swiftly cast off.

11 (T13)
 As for handsomeness, honorable caste, and the five objects of desire,¹⁷
 One should realize those things are as vulnerable to ruin as sea-foam.
 Don't rely on such nondurable dharmas as these,
 For arrogantly indulging them generates all manner of sufferings.
 If one wishes to develop goodness and gain the sweet dew ambrosia,
 One should abandon them just as one would cast aside poison.

有能精勤捨_[5]瞋慢
 譬如除云显秋月
 犹如指鬘与难陀
 亦如差摩贤圣等
 如来说有三种语
 入意真实虚妄言
 入意如花实犹蜜
 虚_[6]妄鄙恶若糞穢
 应当修习前二言
 速宜除断虚妄者
 从明入明四种法
 王当分别谛思惟
 二种入明是应修
 若就痴冥当速舍
 菴婆罗果四种变
 人难分别亦如是
 当以智慧深观察
 若实贤善宜亲近
 虽见女人极端严
 当作己母姊妹想
 设起贪欲染爱心
 应当正修不净观
 是心躁动宜禁制
 如防身命及珍宝
 欲心若起应惊怖
 犹畏刀剑恶兽等

有能精勤捨_[5]瞋慢
 譬如除雲顯秋月
 猶如指鬘與難陀
 亦如差摩賢聖等
 如來說有三種語
 入意真實虛妄言
 入意如花實猶蜜
 虛_[6]妄鄙惡若糞穢
 應當修習前二言
 速宜除斷虛妄者
 從明入明四種法
 王當分別諦思惟
 二種入明是應修
 若就癡冥當速捨
 菴婆羅果四種變
 人難分別亦如是
 當以智慧深觀察
 若實賢善宜親近
 雖見女人極端嚴
 當作己母姊妹想
 設起貪欲染愛心
 應當正修不淨觀
 是心躁動宜禁制
 如防身命及珍寶
 欲心若起應驚怖
 猶畏刀劍惡獸等

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06. DILIGENCE IN DISPENSING WITH HATE AND ARROGANCE

12

(T14)

When able to diligently dispensing with hatefulness and arrogance,
 This compares to when clouds disperse, revealing the autumn moon.
 Such changes are like those of Aṅgulimāla¹⁸ and Sundarananda,¹⁹
 Or like that of Śamā,²⁰ who rivaled even the Worthies and Āryas.²¹

07. THE THREE KINDS OF SPEECH

13

(T18)

The Tathāgata stated that there are three types of discourse:
 That appealing to the mind, the truthful, and that which is false.
 Speech appealing to the mind is like flowers, the true is like honey,
 And the false is base, evil, and comparable to fecal filth.
 One should cultivate the first two kinds of speech
 And, as is fitting, quickly cut off whatever is false.

08. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING BOTH SELF AND PROSPECTIVE ASSOCIATES

A. FOUR TYPES OF PERSONAL DESTINIES LINKED TO BRILLIANCE OR DARKNESS

14

(T19)

The four dharmas involving leaving or proceeding into brilliance
 Are such as the King should distinguish and carefully contemplate.
 One should cultivate the two leading forth into brilliance.
 Those leading into delusion's darkness should be swiftly abandoned.

B. FOUR TYPES OF PERSONS COMPARED TO A MANGO'S RIPENESS

15

(T20)

Just as with the four states found in the ripening of a mango,
 The difficulty of making distinctions among people is much the same.
 One should resort to wisdom and deep contemplative investigation.
 It may be fitting to draw near the genuinely worthy and good.

09. ON DEALING WITH DESIRE

A. ON GUARDING THE MIND

16

(T21)

Although one may behold an extremely beautiful and stately woman,
 One should reflect on her as with one's mother, sister, or daughter.
 If one generates lustful and defiled thoughts,
 One should cultivate correctly the contemplation of impurity.

17

(T22)

If such thoughts become restive, it is fitting to control them
 Just as one would do in guarding one's life or one's precious jewels.
 If desire-ridden thoughts arise, one should be alarmed
 Just as one feels fear encountering drawn swords or dreadful beasts.

欲为无利如怨毒
如此之言牟尼说
生死轮迴过狱缚
应当勤修求解脱

六入躁动驰诸境
应当摄持莫放逸
若能如是摄诸根
胜于勇将摧强敌

是身不净九孔流
无有穷已若河海
薄皮覆蔽似清淨
犹假瓔珞自庄严
诸有智人乃分别
知其虚誑便弃舍

譬如疥者近猛焰
初虽暂悦后增苦
贪欲之想亦复然
始虽乐著终多患

见身实相皆不淨
即是观于空无我
若能修习斯观者
于利益中最无上

虽有色族及多闻
若无戒智犹禽兽
虽处丑贱少闻见
能修戒智名勝^[1]士

欲為無利如怨毒
如此之言牟尼說
生死輪迴過獄縛
應當勤修求解脫

六入躁動馳諸境
應當攝持莫放逸
若能如是攝諸根
勝於勇將摧強敵

是身不淨九孔流
無有窮已若河海
薄皮覆蔽似清淨
猶假瓔珞自莊嚴
諸有智人乃分別
知其虛誑便棄捨

譬如疥者近猛焰
初雖暫悅後增苦
貪欲之想亦復然
始雖樂著終多患

見身實相皆不淨
即是觀於空無我
若能修習斯觀者
於利益中最無上

雖有色族及多聞
若無戒智猶禽獸
雖處醜賤少聞見
能修戒智名勝^[1]士

简体字

正體字

B. ON THE HAZARDS INHERENT IN DESIRE

18

(T23)

Desire is as devoid of beneficial aspects as an enemy or poison.
 Such a declaration was uttered by the Muni himself.
 Entrapment in cyclic birth-and-death is worse than being imprisoned.
 Thus one should diligently cultivate the practices, seeking liberation.

C. ON THE SUPERIOR VALOR IN CONTROLLING DESIRE

19

(T24)

The six sense bases become restive and run to their objective realms.
 One should restrain them. One must not be negligent in this.
 If one is able to restrain the sense faculties in this manner,
 This is superior to a valiant general's crushing of a strong enemy.

D. ON THE UNLOVELINESS OF THE BODY

20

(T25)

This body's impurities flow forth from nine openings,
 Doing so ceaselessly like rivers flowing out to the sea.
 A thin skin hides this, providing the appearance of purity,
 Just as when someone puts on necklaces for personal adornment.
 The wise even then nonetheless distinguish clearly
 And, realizing its deceptiveness, bring forth renunciation.

21

(T26)

As when one with an itching disease approaches flames for relief,²²
 Although there is an initial brief pleasure, suffering later increases.
 So too it is with lust-ridden thoughts:
 Though one is first blissfully attached, the end brings much trouble.²³

10. IN PRAISE OF CONTEMPLATION-BASED INSIGHT, WISDOM, AND MORAL VIRTUE

22

(T27)

If one observes the body's true character, it is all seen as impure,²⁴
 Just then contemplate its emptiness and absence of a self.
 If one is able to cultivate the practice of this contemplation,
 Among all of the beneficial endeavors, this is the most superior.²⁵

23

(T28)

Though one possesses fine physical form, noble birth, and learning,
 If he is bereft of moral virtue and wisdom, he just like an animal.
 Though one is homely, low-born, and of little learning or experience,
 If able to embody moral virtue and wisdom, he is a superior person.

利衰八法莫能免
 若有除断真无匹
 诸有沙门婆罗门
 父母妻子及眷属
 莫为彼意受其言
 广造不善非法行
 设为此等起诸过
 未来大苦唯身受
 夫造众恶不即报
 非如刀剑交伤割
 临终罪相始俱现
 后入地狱婴诸苦
 信戒施闻慧惭愧
 如是七法名圣财
 真实无比牟尼说
 超越世间众珍宝
 大王若集此胜财
 不久亦_[2]证道场果
 博弈饮酣好琴瑟
 懈怠僥逸及恶友
 非时轻躁多动乱
 如斯七法当远离
 知足第一胜诸财
 如此之言世尊说
 知足虽贫可名富
 有财多欲是名贫
 若丰财业增诸苦
 如龙多首益酸毒

简体字

利衰八法莫能免
 若有除斷真無匹
 諸有沙門婆羅門
 父母妻子及眷屬
 莫為彼意受其言
 廣造不善非法行
 設為此等起諸過
 未來大苦唯身受
 夫造眾惡不即報
 非如刀劍交傷割
 臨終罪相始俱現
 後入地獄嬰諸苦
 信戒施聞慧慚愧
 如是七法名聖財
 真實無比牟尼說
 超越世間眾珍寶
 大王若集此勝財
 不久亦_[2]證道場果
 博弈飲酣好琴瑟
 懈怠僥逸及惡友
 非時輕躁多動亂
 如斯(七)[六]法當遠離
 知足第一勝諸財
 如此之言世尊說
 知足雖貧可名富
 有財多欲是名貧
 若豐財業增諸苦
 如龍多首益酸毒

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11. ON AVOIDING THE EIGHT WORLDLY DHARMAS AND OFFENSES INSPIRED BY OTHERS
24 (T29-30)

No one is able to avoid the eight dharmas of gain, loss, and so forth.²⁶
By eliminating [their influence], one becomes truly incomparable.
As for any śramaṇa or brahman,
One's father or mother, one's wife, children, or retinue—

25
Do not, influenced by their ideas or words,
Commit any extensively unwholesome, Dharma-contravening deeds.
If you generate any sort of transgression on behalf of these or others,
You alone must endure the immense future suffering this entails.

12. ON THE DELAYED ARRIVAL OF KARMIC RETRIBUTIONS
26 (T31)

Now, doing many evil deeds does not bring immediate retribution.
It is not like crossing swords and thereupon receiving injurious cuts.
Only starting at the point of death are signs of retribution revealed.
Afterward, one falls into the hells and is then assailed by sufferings.

13. ON THE ĀRYAS' SEVEN FORMS OF WEALTH
27 (T32)

Faith, morality, giving, learning, wisdom, shame, dread of blame—
These seven dharmas are "the wealth of the Āryas."
The Muni declared them to be genuine and incomparable,
Far surpassing the many precious jewels found in the world.
Great King, if one accumulates these superior form of wealth,
He too may before long realize the fruits of the *bodhimāṇḍala*.²⁷

14. ON SIX COARSE FAULTS TO BE ELIMINATED
28 (T33)

Gambling, inebriation, fondness for musical entertainments,
Unrestrained indulgence in indolence, consorting with bad friends,
And rousting about creating disturbances at inappropriate times—
These six dharmas should be abandoned.²⁸

15. IN PRAISE OF BEING EASILY SATISFIED
29 (T34-5)

Being easily satisfied is the most supreme of all forms of wealth.
Words of this sort were uttered by the World Honored One.
When easily satisfied, though poor, one still qualifies as wealthy.
When rich, if one has many desires, this still amounts to poverty.
If one lives the life of abundant wealth, this increases one's sufferings,
Just as a many-headed dragon suffers an increased amount of pain.²⁹

当观美味如毒药
以智慧水灑令淨
为存此身虽应食
勿貪色味長憍慢

于諸欲染當生厭
勤求無上涅槃道
調和此身令安隱
然後宜應修齋戒

一夜分別有五時
于_[3]二時中當眠息
初中後夜觀生死
宜勤求度勿空過

四無量定當修習
是名開於梵天道
若專繫念四禪心
命終必生彼天處

有為遷動皆無常
苦空敗壞不堅固
無我無樂不清淨
如是悉名對治法

若有深觀此法門
未來常處尊豪位
修行五戒斷五邪
是亦大王所應念

當觀美味如毒藥
以智慧水灑令淨
為存此身雖應食
勿貪色味長憍慢

於諸欲染當生厭
勤求無上涅槃道
調和此身令安隱
然後宜應修齋戒

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宜勤求度勿空過

四無量定當修習
是名開於梵天道
若專繫念四禪心
命終必生彼天處

有為遷動皆無常
苦空敗壞不堅固
無我無樂不清淨
如是悉名對治法

若有深觀此法門
未來常處尊豪位
修行五戒斷五邪
是亦大王所應念

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16. ON MODERATION AND SENSIBILITY IN EATING

30

(T38)

One should contemplate even exquisite flavors as like toxic medicines
 On which one sprinkles the waters of wisdom to make them pure.
 Although one should eat for the sake of insuring survival of this body,
 Do not crave food's form or flavor or let it lead to pretentiousness.

17. RENOUNCE DESIRES, SEEK NIRVĀṆA, REGULATE THE BODY, TAKE UP THE UPAVĀSA

31

(TX)

One should generate renunciation for the defilement of the desires
 And should diligently seek the unsurpassed path to nirvāṇa.
 One should train and regulate this body in a way securing its welfare.
 Afterwards, it is fitting to cultivate the abstinence rite precepts.³⁰

18. EXHORTATION TO ENCOURAGE DILIGENCE IN CULTIVATING THE PATH

32

(T39)

A single night is divided into five periods.³¹
 In two of them, one should allow oneself to sleep.
 Contemplate birth-and-death at night's beginning, middle, and end.
 Diligence in seeking liberation is fitting. Do not let time pass emptyly.

19. ON THE FOUR IMMEASURABLE MINDS AND CULTIVATION OF DHYĀNA ABSORPTIONS

33

(T40-1)

One should cultivate the four immeasurables' meditative absorptions.
 These are renowned for opening the path to the Brahma Heavens.³²
 If one focuses mindfulness on the four dhyānas' mind-states,
 At life's end, one will certainly be reborn in those celestial abodes.³³

20. ON THE NECESSITY OF CULTIVATING COUNTERACTIVE DHARMAS

34

(T42)

All which transpires in conditioned existence is impermanent,
 Suffering, empty of inherent existence, destructible, nondurable,
 Devoid of self, devoid of bliss, and impure.
 [Contemplations of] all such concepts serve as counteractive dharmas.

35

If one develops deep contemplations on these gateways to Dharma,
 In the future, he will always abide in esteemed and powerful stations.
 As for five-precepts practice and severance of those five wrong deeds,
 The Great King should be all the more mindful of these.

譬如少盐置恒河
 不能令水有鹹味
 微細之惡遇眾善
 消灭散坏亦如是
 五邪若增劫功德
 王当除灭令莫长
 信等五根眾善源
 是宜修习令增^[4]盛
 生等八苦常熾燃
^[5]当持慧水灑令灭
 欲求天乐及涅槃
 应勤修习正知见
 虽有利智入邪道
 微妙功德永无餘
 四种颠倒害諸善
 是故当观莫令生
 谓色非我我非色
 我中无色色无我
 于色生此四种心
 自餘諸陰皆如是
 是二十心名颠倒
 若能除断为最上
 法不自起冥初生
 非自在作及时有
 皆从無明愛業起
 若无因緣便断坏
 大王既知此等因
 当燃慧灯破痴暗

譬如少鹽置恒河
 不能令水有鹹味
 微細之惡遇眾善
 消滅散壞亦如是
 五邪若增劫功德
 王當除滅令莫長
 信等五根眾善源
 是宜修習令增^[4]盛
 生等八苦常熾燃
^[5]當持慧水灑令滅
 欲求天樂及涅槃
 應勤修習正知見
 雖有利智入邪道
 微妙功德永無餘
 四種顛倒害諸善
 是故當觀莫令生
 謂色非我我非色
 我中無色色無我
 於色生此四種心
 自餘諸陰皆如是
 是二十心名顛倒
 若能除斷為最上
 法不自起冥初生
 非自在作及時有
 皆從無明愛業起
 若无因緣便斷壞
 大王既知此等因
 當燃慧燈破癡闇

简体字

正體字

21. ON THE MITIGATING EFFECT OF PREDOMINANT GOODNESS

36

(T43)

Just as a little salt placed in the Ganges River
Is unable to make its waters salty,
So too, when minor evil encounters abundant goodness,
Its dispersion and dilution is much the same.

22. FIVE WRONG ACTIONS AS THIEVES; FIVE ROOT-FACULTIES AS SOURCES OF GOODNESS

37

(T44-5)

If the five erroneous deeds increase, they steal away one's merit.³⁴
The King should do away with them, preventing them from growing.
The five root-faculties of faith and such are sources of much good.³⁵
It is these one should cultivate and allow to develop abundantly.

23. SUFFERING, ITS ORIGIN, AND NECESSITY OF RIGHT VIEWS TO LIBERATION

A. THE EIGHT SUFFERINGS; THE NECESSITY OF RIGHT VIEWS

38

(T46-7)

The eight sufferings of birth and such are constant in their blazing.³⁶
With the waters of wisdom, one should douse and extinguish them.
Whether one desires to strive for heavenly bliss or for nirvāṇa,
One must diligently cultivate right knowledge and views.

B. THE FOUR INVERTED VIEWS AND THE HARM THEY WREAK

39

(T48)

Though possessing sharp intelligence, if one enters erroneous paths,
One's sublime qualities will disappear forever and leave not a trace.
The four types of inverted views do harm to every form of goodness.
Therefore, one must contemplate them and prevent their arising.

C. RIGHT AND WRONG VIEWS ON THE AGGREGATES

1. THE NONEXISTENCE OF ANY "SELF" ASSOCIATED WITH THE FIVE AGGREGATES

40

(T49)

[The Buddha] has declared that form is not self, self is not form,
There is no form in a self, and there is no self in form.
These four ideas are conceived in relation to the form aggregate.
Any link of a "self" to the other aggregates is in all respects the same.
These twenty ideas are inverted views.
If one can cut them off entirely, this is the most superior [insight].

2. ON THE ORIGINS OF THE AGGREGATES

41

(T50)

Those dharmas arose neither spontaneously nor primordially,
Were not created by the Ísvara god, and were not created by time.
They have all arisen through ignorance, craving, and karmic action.
Absent any specific cause or condition, they are then destroyed.
Great King, having realized the nature of such causes,
One should light wisdom's lamp to dispel darkness of ignorance.³⁷

身见戒取及疑结
 此三能障无漏道
 王若毁坏令散灭
 圣解脱法当现显
 譬如盲人问水相
 百千万劫莫^[6]能了
 欲求涅槃亦如是
 唯自精勤后方证
 欲假眷属及知识
 而得之者甚难^[7]有
 是故大王当^[8]精进
 然后乃可证寂灭
 施戒多闻及禅定
 因是渐近四真谛
 人主故应修慧明
 行斯三法求解脱
 若能修此最上乘
 则摄诸余一切善
 大王当观身念^[9]法
 世尊说为清净道
 若无此念增恶觉
 是故宜应勤修习
 人命短促不久留
 如水上泡起寻灭
 出息入息眠睡间
 念念恒谢常衰^[10]灭

身見戒取及疑結
 此三能障無漏道
 王若毀壞令散滅
 聖解脫法當現顯
 譬如盲人問水相
 百千萬劫莫^[6]能了
 欲求涅槃亦如是
 唯自精勤後方證
 欲假眷屬及知識
 而得之者甚難^[7]有
 是故大王當^[8]精進
 然後乃可證寂滅
 施戒多聞及禪定
 因是漸近四真諦
 人主故應修慧明
 行斯三法求解脫
 若能修此最上乘
 則攝諸餘一切善
 大王當觀身念^[9]法
 世尊說為清淨道
 若無此念增惡覺
 是故宜應勤修習
 人命短促不久留
 如水上泡起尋滅
 出息入息眠睡間
 念念恒謝常衰^[10]滅

简体字

正體字

D. THREE FETTERS IMPEDING LIBERATION

42

(T51)

Viewing body as self, clinging to prohibitions, the fether of doubt—
 These three can block the path to freedom from outflow-impurities.
 If the King destroys them, thus causing them to disappear,
 The Āryas' dharma of liberation will then manifest.

24. THE NECESSITY TO LIBERATION OF SELF-RELIANCE

43

(T52)

As when blind men inquire about the appearance of bodies of water,
 But in a hundred thousand myriad kalpas can never comprehend it,
 So too it is with the striving for nirvāṇa.
 That realization is gained only after one's own diligent efforts.

44

If one wished to rely upon one's retinue or advisors
 As means to gain it, this would be extremely difficult to bring about.
 Therefore the Great King should take up the practice vigorously.
 Then he will subsequently be able to realize quiescent cessation.

25. THE THREE TRAININGS: MORAL VIRTUE; DHYĀNA CONCENTRATION; WISDOM

45

(T53)

Implement moral virtue, much learning, and dhyāna concentration.
 Through these, one gradually draws close to the four truths.
 The ruler among men should therefore cultivate wisdom's clarity
 And practice these three dharmas through which to seek liberation.
 If one is able to cultivate this most supreme of vehicles,
 Then one will thereby subsume all other forms of goodness.

26. THE STATION OF MINDFULNESS WITH RESPECT TO THE BODY

46

(T54)

The Great King should contemplate the body-mindfulness dharmas.
 The World Honored One described them as the path to purification.
 If one is without this mindfulness, one increases unwholesome ideas.
 Therefore it is only fitting that one should diligently cultivate this.

47

(T55)

This human life is brief, hurried, and not retained for long.
 It is like a water bubble which, once arisen, is straightaway destroyed.
 Even as one exhales and then inhales, and even during sleep,
 In each instant, it constantly retreats, always going toward ruination.

不久便当见磨灭
 皮肉臭烂甚可恶
 青瘀胀坏脓血流
 虫蛆啖食至枯竭
 发毛爪齿各分散
 风吹日曝渐_[11]乾尽

当知此身不坚牢
 无量众苦所积聚
 是故贤圣诸智人
 皆观斯过咸弃舍

须弥巨海及江河
 七日并照皆融竭
 如此坚固尚摧毁
 况复若斯危脆身

无常既至无救护
 不可恃怙及追求
 是故大王_[12]常谛观
 速生厌离求胜法

人身难得法难闻
 犹如盲龟遇浮孔
 既获若斯希有身
 宜应勤心听正法

得此妙身造诸恶
 譬如宝器盛众毒
 生处中国遇善友
 专念发心起正愿

久殖功德具诸根
 王今满足此众善
 若复亲近_[13]见知人
 佛说此为净梵行

简体字

不久便當見磨滅
 皮肉臭爛甚可惡
 青瘀脹壞膿血流
 虫蛆啖食至枯竭
 髮毛爪齒各分散
 風吹日曝漸_[11]乾盡

當知此身不堅牢
 無量眾苦所積聚
 是故賢聖諸智人
 皆觀斯過咸棄捨

須彌巨海及江河
 七日並照皆融竭
 如此堅固尚摧毀
 況復若斯危脆身

無常既至無救護
 不可恃怙及追求
 是故大王_[12]常諦觀
 速生厭離求勝法

人身難得法難聞
 猶如盲龜遇浮孔
 既獲若斯希有身
 宜應勤心聽正法

得此妙身造諸惡
 譬如寶器盛眾毒
 生處中國遇善友
 專念發心起正願

久殖功德具諸根
 王今滿足此眾善
 若復親近_[13]見知人
 佛說此為淨梵行

正體字

48

(T56)

It will not be long before it will be worn down and destroyed,
Whereupon skin and flesh smell, rot, and turn extremely loathsome.
It turns stagnant-blood blue, bloats, fissures, and spills pus and blood.
It is eaten at by worms until it becomes withered and dried up.
The body and head hair, nails and teeth each separate and scatter.
Blown by wind, baked by sun, it slowly dries and disappears entirely.

49

One should realize that this body is not solid or durable.
It is the place where the many forms of suffering assemble together.
Therefore the Worthies, the Āryas, and all wise people
Contemplate these faults and thus are moved to renounce it.

50

(T57)

Mount Sumeru, the great seas, and the rivers as well
Will all be melted and dried up when the seven suns shine all at once.
If even such durable phenomena as those are utterly destroyed,
How much the more must that be true of this ever so fragile body?

51

(T58)

Once impermanence arrives, one is beyond rescue or protection.
It cannot be relied upon nor can one find any means of escape in it.
Therefore the Great King should always and truly contemplate this,
Swiftly generate renunciation, and seek out the supreme Dharma.

52

(T59)

The human body is so rarely gained and the Dharma so rarely heard
That meeting them is as rare as a blind turtle's head happening to
poke up into a floating wooden yoke.³⁸
Having obtained a human body in such rare circumstances as these,
It is only right that one diligently obey the dictates of right Dharma.

53

(T60-1)

To gain this marvelous body and yet commit all manner of evil deeds
Is analogous to filling up a jeweled vessel with all sorts of poison.
Having been born in a central land and met a good spiritual friend,³⁹
One should focus the mind, generate resolve, and initiate right vows.

27. ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES REQUISITE FOR CULTIVATING THE PATH

54

(T62)

Through long sowing merit and equipping himself with the faculties,
The King is now able to completely fulfill these many forms of good.
If one is also able to draw close to a man of vision and knowledge—
The Buddha declared that this is the basis of pure brahmin conduct.