

PART ONE:

**THE TREATISE ON THE PROVISIONS
FOR ENLIGHTENMENT**

**Ārya Nāgārjuna's
*BODHISAṂBHĀRA ŚĀSTRA***

111

Be the first to act, taking the lead in good karmic deeds,
Speaking with smooth and sublime words,
Being skillful in discourse guided by right intention,
And having no one above or below to whom gifts are not given.

112

Avoid any harm to the retinue of others.
Instead regard beings with the eye of kindness.
Neither may one course in disapproving thoughts.
Instead treat everyone as a good relative or friend.

113

One should accord with the words he speaks,
Following them straightaway with concordant actions.
If one acts immediately in accordance with his words,
Others will be inclined then to develop faith.

114

One should support and protect the Dharma,
And should discover any instances of neglect,
Even going so far as to build canopies graced by gold and jewels
Spreading over and covering the *caityas*.

115

For those wishing to obtain a maiden mate,
See to her adornment and assist in her presentation.
Speak to the parties about the qualities of the Buddha
And then give prayer beads gleaming in varying hues.

116

Create images of the Buddha
Sitting upright atop supremely fine lotus blossoms
And cultivate common delight and happiness
Through adherence to the six dharmas of community harmony.

117

Of those who may be given offerings, none are not given offerings.
Even for the sake of preserving one's life, one still does not slander
The Dharma spoken by the Buddha
Or the person who expounds the Dharma.

118

Gold and jewels are distributed among teaching masters
 And also among the *caityas* of teaching masters.
 If there are those who forget what is to be recited,
 One assists their remembrance, enabling them to stay free of error.

119

When one has not yet reflected on the right course of action,
 One must not be impulsive and must not simply emulate others.
 As for the non-Buddhists, gods, dragons, and spirits,
 One must not invest one's faith in any of them.

120

One's mind should be like *vajra*,
 Able to penetrate all dharmas.
 One's mind should also be like a mountain,
 Remaining unmoved in any circumstance.

121

Delight in world-transcending discourse
 And do not take pleasure in worldly words.
 Personally adopt all manner of meritorious qualities.
 One should then influence others to adopt them as well.

122

Cultivate the five bases of liberation.
 Cultivate the ten reflections on impurity.
 The eight realizations of great men
 Should also be the focus of analytic contemplation and cultivation.

123

The heavenly ear, the heavenly eye,
 The bases of spiritual powers, the cognition of others' thoughts,
 And the cognition of past lives and abodes—
 One should cultivate purification of these five spiritual abilities.

124

The four bases of spiritual powers comprise their root.
 They are zeal, vigor, mental focus, and contemplative reflection.
 The four immeasurables govern them.
 They are kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

125

The four elements are like poisonous serpents.
 The six sense faculties are like an empty village.
 The five aggregates are like assassins.
 One should contemplate them in this way.

126

Esteem the Dharma and the masters of Dharma
 And also relinquish any stinginess with the Dharma.
 The instructing masters must not be tight-fisted or secretive
 And those listening must not be mentally scattered or confused.

127

Free of arrogance and free of hopes,
 Motivated solely by thoughts of compassion and pity,
 With reverent and respectful mind,
 Expound the Dharma for the community.

128

Be insatiable in learning
 And always recite and retain what has been learned.
 Do not deceive any among the venerable fields of merit.
 Moreover, cause one's instructors to be delighted.

129

One should not pay visits to the houses of others
 With a mind cherishing reverence or offerings.
 One must not take up study and recitation of worldly texts
 For the sake of debating challenging topics.

130

One must not be provoked by hatefulness or anger
 Into defaming any bodhisattva.
 As for dharmas not yet received or learned,
 One must not initiate slanders in those cases either.

131

In order to cut off arrogance and pride,
 One should abide in the four lineage bases of the ārya.
 One must not course in disapproval of others
 And must not allow oneself to become conceited.

132

Whether or not someone has actually committed a transgression,
 One must not reveal his situation to others.
 Do not seek out the errors and faults of anyone else.
 Rather one should become aware of one's own errors.

133

One should refrain from biased judgments and doubting
 In fathoming the Buddha and the Dharma of the Buddhas.
 Even though a dharma may be extremely difficult to believe,
 One should nonetheless maintain faith in it.

134

Even though one might be put to death for speaking the truth,
 Or might be forced to abdicate the throne of a universal monarch,
 Or even that of a king among the gods,
 One should still utter only truthful speech.

135

Even if beaten, cursed, or terrorized with death threats or captivity,
 One must not hate or condemn others, but should instead reflect:
 "This is all the product of my own karmic offenses.
 This has happened as a result of karmic retribution."

136

One should, with the most ultimate respect and affection,
 Provide offerings in support of one's father and mother.
 Also supply the needs of and serve the *upādhyāyas*,
 While extending reverence to the *ācāryas* as well.

137

When, for those who place their faith in the Śrāvaka Vehicle
 Or those dedicated to the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle,
 One discourses on the most profound of dharmas,
 This, for a bodhisattva, is an error.

138

When, for believers in the profound Great-Vehicle teachings,
 One discourses to those beings
 On the Śrāvaka or Pratyekabuddha vehicles,
 This too is an error for him.

139

So too where some superior person comes seeking the Dharma,
 But one delays and fails to provide him with teachings.
 So too where, on the contrary, one takes in wrongdoers
 Or delegates responsibilities to those who are untrustworthy.

140

One must abandon the errors mentioned above.
 As for such herein-described meritorious practices as the *dhūtas*,
 One ought to become knowledgeable about them
 And then incorporate them into one's own practice.

141

Regard all equally in one's thoughts, speak equally for all,
 Be uniformly equal in establishing all others in goodness,
 And influence them all equally to accord with what is right.
 Thus one refrains from making distinctions between any beings.

142

One works for the sake of Dharma and not for self-benefit.
 One works to develop meritorious qualities, not for renown.
 One wishes to liberate beings from suffering
 And does not wish merely to ensure his own happiness.

143

With purposes kept secret, one seeks fruition in one's works.
 When the results of one's merit-generating endeavors come forth,
 Even then, one applies them to the ripening of the many
 While abandoning preoccupation with one's own concerns.

144

Grow close to good spiritual friends,
 Specifically, to the masters of Dharma, to the Buddhas,
 To those who encourage one to leave the home life,
 And to those who are seekers of alms.

145

Those who ground themselves in worldly treatises,
 Those who exclusively seek worldly wealth,
 Those with Pratyekabuddha Vehicle faith and understanding,
 And those devoted to the Śrāvaka Vehicle—

146

As for these four types of unwholesome spiritual friends,
 The bodhisattva should be aware of them as such.
 There are, however, other circumstances one should seek out.
 This refers specifically to the four great treasures:

147

The emergence of buddhas; hearing the perfections explained;
 Being able in the presence of a master of Dharma
 To behold him with unobstructed mind;
 And happily pursuing cultivation in a place of solitude.

148

Abide in a manner comparable to
 Earth, water, fire, wind, and space,
 Remaining thus uniformly equal under all circumstances
 In providing benefit to all beings.

149

One should skillfully reflect upon the meanings
 And diligently progress in the uses of the *dhāraṇīs*.
 One must never create any sort of obstruction
 To those seeking to hear the Dharma.

150

When embroiled in the afflictions, be able to overcome them.
 Relinquish the lesser instances, retaining not a trace.
 Regarding the eight cases involving indolence,
 One should cut all of those off as well.

151

Do not covet what is not one's lot,
 For unprincipled covetousness will not bring satisfaction.
 Influence all who have become estranged to reconcile,
 Whether or not they are one's own relations.

152

The wise must not base their practice
 On getting at the "emptiness" in what is intrinsically empty.
 In the case of one determined to get at that emptiness itself,
 That wrong is even more extreme than viewing the body as a self.

153

By sweeping and finishing floors, by providing adornments,
By furnishing many varieties of drums and music,
And by offering fragrances, flower garlands, and other gifts,
Contribute offerings to the *caityas*.

154

Create all sorts of lantern wheels
As offerings to the *caityas* and their buildings.
Provide canopies as well as sandals,
Horse-drawn carriages, sedan chairs, and the like.

155

One should especially find delight in the Dharma
And be happy knowing what is gained through faith in Buddha.
Delight in providing for and serving the monastic Sangha,
While also finding happiness through listening to right Dharma.

156

They do not arise in the past.
They do not abide in the present.
They do not go forward into the future.
Contemplate all dharmas in this manner.

157

Give to beings whatsoever is fine
And do not wish that they bestow anything fine in return.
One should prefer it be solely oneself who endures suffering
While not favoring oneself in the enjoyment of happiness.

158

Although replete with karmic rewards from immense merit,
The mind should not become lofty or overwhelmed with delight.
Although one may be as poverty-stricken as a hungry ghost,
One should still not become downcast or overcome with distress.

159

Accord the most ultimate degree of esteem
To those already accomplished in learning.
Inspire those as yet unlearned to devote themselves to study.
One should not behave in a manner belittling them.

160

Revere those perfect in observance of the moral precepts
 And influence those who break precepts to take on the precepts.
 Draw close to those perfect in wisdom
 And influence those who act foolishly to abide in wisdom.

161

The sufferings of cyclic existence are of many kinds,
 Involving birth, aging, death, and the wretched destinies.
 One should not be frightened by the fearsomeness of these.
 One must instead subdue demons and knowledge rooted in evil.

162

Amass every form of merit
 In the lands of all the Buddhas.
 Bring forth vows and proceed with vigor
 So that everyone may succeed in reaching them.

163

Even in the midst of all dharmas, one is constant
 In not seizing on them, thus coursing along in equanimity.
 One takes on the burden, wishing to bear it on forth,
 Proceeding in this manner for the sake of all beings.

164

Abide in the right contemplation of all dharmas
 As devoid of self and as devoid of anything belonging to a self.
 Even so, one must not relinquish the great compassion
 Or one's reliance on the great kindness.

165

As for that which is superior even to using every sort of gift
 In making offerings to the Buddha, the Bhagavān,
 What sort of action might that be?
 This refers specifically to making offerings of Dharma.

166

If one preserves the Bodhisattva Canon,
 Even to the point of gaining realization of the *dhāraṇīs*—
 If one enters into and reaches the bottom of Dharma's source—
 This is what constitutes the offering of Dharma.

167

One should rely upon the meaning.
One must not cherish only the various flavors.
In the Path of the profound Dharma
One enters with skill and must not fall prey to negligence.

168

One cultivates these provisions in this manner
For kalpas as numerous as the Ganges' sands,
Doing so sometimes as a monastic, sometimes as a householder.
Thus one will succeed in perfecting the right enlightenment.