

Text of *Letter to a Friend*

This is the printer-friendly version of: http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/sutra/level6_study_major_texts/suhrllekha_letter_friend_nagarjuna/letter_friend.html

(bShes-pa'i springs-yig, Skt. Suhrllekha)
by Nagarjuna

translated by Alexander Berzin, March 2006

(1) O you, with a nature of good qualities, who've become worthy
through constructive deeds,
Please listen to these (verses) in noble meter,
Which I've compiled in short for the sake of (instilling)
An intention for the positive force that comes from (following)
explanations of the Blissfully Gone (Buddha's) speech.

(2) Just as the wise venerate a statue of the Blissfully Gone,
Even out of wood, regardless of how it's been made;
Likewise, although this poetry of mine may be deficient,
please do not scorn it,
Since it's based on expressions of the hallowed Dharma.

(3) Although a profusion of the resonant words
of the Great Sage (Buddha)
May already have entered your heart,
Isn't something made of limestone made even whiter
By the light of a winter's moon?

(4) The Triumphant has proclaimed six (objects)
for continual mindfulness:
The Buddhas, the Dharma, the Sangha,
Generous giving, ethical discipline, and the gods.
Be continually mindful of the mass of good qualities of these.

(5) Always entrust yourself, with body, speech, and mind,
To the ten pathways of constructive karma;
Turn away from intoxicants, and likewise
Delight as well in livelihoods that are constructive.

(6) Having realized that possessions are transient
and lack any essence,
Be generous, in a proper manner, toward
Monks, brahmins, the poor, and your kin;
For the hereafter, there's no better friend besides generosity.

(7) You must entrust yourself to ethical disciplines
that are not compromised,
Not debased, not corrupted, and not transferred.
It's been said that ethical discipline is the foundation

Text of Letter to a Friend

for all good qualities,
As is the earth for everything moving or unmoving.

(8) Generosity, discipline, patience, perseverance, mental stability,
And likewise discriminating awareness
are the immeasurable far-reaching attitudes.
Expand them and make yourself into a Powerful Lord
of the Triumphant
Who has reached the far shore of the ocean of compulsive existence.

(9) Any family in which the father and mother are honored
Will be together with Brahma and together with teachers;
They'll become renowned for honoring them
And afterwards, as well, will attain rebirths of higher status.

(10) When one gives up causing harm, thieving, sexual activity, lying,
Alcohol, and attachment to eating when it's not time,
Delight in high beds and seats,
Songs, dance, and all sorts of jewelry,

(11) And takes on these eight branches that emulate
The ethical discipline of liberated arhats,
(These) one-day precepts will bestow on men and on women
An attractive body of a desire-realm god.

(12) View as enemies stinginess, guile, pretense,
Attachment, lethargy, false pride,
Lust, hatred, and conceit over greatness of caste,
Physique, education, youth, or power.

(13) The Sage has proclaimed that caring is the (mental) stand
for the nectar (of immortality),
While not caring is the stand for death.
Therefore, to boost your constructive Dharma measures,
You need to have a caring attitude, always, through being appreciative.

(14) Anyone who previously didn't care,
And later develops a caring attitude,
Becomes as beautiful as the moon when parted from clouds,
Like Nanda, Angulimala, Ajatashatru, and Udayana.

(15) Thus, since there's no trial equal to patience,
You must never open a chance for anger (to arise).
Buddha has declared that having rid yourself of anger
Brings attainment of a state of non-returning.

(16) By holding a grudge, thinking, "I've been insulted by this one;
stymied and defeated by this one;
My wealth's been plundered by this one,"
Conflicts arise ever more.
Whoever rids himself of grudges goes to sleep at ease.

(17) Know that thoughts may be like figures drawn

On water, on earth, or on stone.

Among them, it's best for those with disturbing emotions
to be like the first;

While those with wishes for the Dharma to be (like) the last.

(18) The Triumphant (Buddha) has proclaimed people's words
to be of three types:

Like honey, (like) flowers, or (like) excrement -

(Namely,) those that fall (easily) on the heart, those that are truthful,
or those that convey what's false.

Out of these, rid yourself of the last.

(19) There are four (types of) persons: those who from light,

End up in light; those who from darkness, end up in darkness;

Those who from light, end up in darkness;

and those who from darkness,

End up in light. Be like the first of these.

(20) People are like mango fruits: unripe, but seemingly ripe;

Ripe, but seemingly unripe; unripe appearing unripe;

And ripe appearing as ripe.

Understand (them) to be like that.

(21) Do not look at others' wives; but if you happen to see (them),

Generate recognition (of them), in accord with (their) age,

As your mother, your daughter, or your sister. Should lust arise,

Think thoroughly about (their bodies having) the nature of filth.

(22) Hold your mind tightly when it (starts to) rove, as though it were

Like your learning, similar to your child, resembling a treasure,
or comparable to your life.

Recoil from the pleasures of sensory objects, as though they were like
Venom, poison, a weapon, an enemy, or fire.

(23) Sensory objects bring ruination! The Lord of the Triumphant

Has said that they're like the kimpaka fruit -

(sweet on the outside, bitter within).

Abandon them! By their iron chains,

Worldly people are bound in the prison of recurring samsara.

(24) Of those who triumph over the objects

Of the ever-inconstant, roving six senses,

And those over a host of foes in battle,

The wise favor the first to be the best heroes.

(25) Look at the body of a young woman, separate on its own:

With a foul smell, it resembles a vessel for all filthy matter,

Leaking out from nine holes, difficult to be filled, and covered with skin,

And then (look) at its ornaments also, separate on their own.

Text of Letter to a Friend

(26) Realize, as well, that lust in those with desire (for sensory objects)
Is like (what happens with) a leper, tormented by maggots,
Who relies on a fire for the sake of some comfort,
And yet gets no relief.

(27) (So,) for the sake of seeing the deepest (truth), make it a habit
To pay attention to phenomena correctly.
No other preventive measure exists at all
That has such good qualities as that.

(28) Although a person may have a (good) caste, physique,
and education,
If he lacks discriminating awareness and ethical discipline,
he's unworthy of esteem.
That being so, anyone having these two qualities,
Is to be honored, even if he lacks the other good qualities.

(29) O Realizer of the Transitory World. Don't have
as objects of your mind
The eight transitory things of the world:
Namely, material gain and no gain, happiness and unhappiness,
Things nice to hear and not nice to hear, or praise and scorn.
Be indifferent (toward them).

(30) You mustn't commit any negative acts,
Even for the sake of a brahmin, a monk, a god, or a guest,
Or your father, your mother, your child, your queen,
or your retinue.
They will not partake of even a share of their hellish ripening.

(31) Although any commitment of negative karmic acts
May not cut (you) immediately afterwards like a sword;
Nevertheless, when the time of death comes,
Whatever karmic results there will be will become manifest.

(32) The Sage (Buddha) has said that belief in fact,
ethical self-discipline, generous giving, listening,
Moral self-dignity, care for how your actions reflect on others,
And discriminating awareness are the seven stainless (arya) gems.
Understand that other, ordinary gems have no meaning.

(33) Gambling with dice, looking for (meaningless) gatherings,
Laziness, relying on misleading friends,
Intoxicants, and roaming around at night
Bring about worse rebirth states and your fame to decline.
Abandon these six.

(34) It has been excellently said by the Teacher of Gods and Men
That among all wealth, contentment is the best.
(So) be fully content. If you know contentment,

Text of Letter to a Friend

Even if you possess no wealth, you'll be perfectly rich.

(35) Good sir, just as those with many possessions have problems,
That isn't the case with those whose desires are few.
As many heads as the foremost nagas have,
That many problems arise from (the gems that they wear on) them.

(36) Avoid (taking) these three (types of) wives,
Those whose natures are: to associate with your enemies,
like assassins,
To be contemptuous of their husbands, like baronesses,
Or to rob and steal even little things, like thieves.

(37) But one who, like a sister, is compatible (with you),
Or like a female friend, goes straight to your heart,
Or like a mother, wishes for your welfare,
Or like a maid, is obedient - honor her like a family deity.

(38) Rely on food in the proper (measure), like a medicine,
Without greed or repulsion,
Not out of vanity, and not because of showing off,
And not because of obsession with health, but merely for the sake
of maintaining the body.

(39) O Lord of Propriety, having passed the whole day
And the first and last periods of the night (in constructive deeds),
Go to sleep with mindfulness in between these two (periods),
Without making your sleeping time fruitless.

(40) Always meditate properly on love,
Compassion, joy, and equanimity.
Even if you do not receive, like that, the highest (goal, nirvana),
You will (at least) attain a Brahma realm's bliss.

(41) By means of the four dhyana states of mental stability,
Which rid you of the experience of desire realm (objects), physical joy,
mental bliss, and suffering,
You achieve fortune equal to the gods of the celestial realms
of the Brahmas,
Brilliant Light, Full Virtue, and the Greatest Fruit.

(42) The mightiness of karmic actions,
whether constructive or destructive,
derives from five aspects:
Their frequency, (the motivating emotion) adhering to them,
the absence of opposing forces,
(The benefit or harm created by) the basis (at whom they're aimed),
and the major good qualities possessed (by that basis).
Therefore, make effort in constructive behavior (having these five).

(43) Just as a few grams of salt can transform the taste

of a small quantity of water,
But not that of the Ganges River,
Realize that minor negative karmic actions are, in fact, like that
With respect to vast roots of constructive force.

(44) Flightiness of mind and regret, ill will, foggymindedness
and sleepiness,
Desirous intents, and indecisive wavering -
Realize that these five obstacles are the thieves
That plunder the gems of constructive (behavior).

(45) Belief in fact, joyful perseverance, and mindfulness,
Absorbed concentration, and discriminating awareness
are the five supreme Dharma measures.
Strive after them. These are known as the forces and the powers,
And also what brings you to the peak.

(46) "I have not gone beyond sickness, old age, or death,
or being parted from what's pleasing,
Or beyond what my karma will do to me."
Through the gateway of its antidote,
repeatedly thinking like that,
You won't become smug.

(47) If you desire higher rebirth status or liberation,
Make into a habit a correct view.
For persons having a distorted view, even good deeds
Will all have unbearable ripened (results).

(48) Know that people, in actuality, have no happiness,
Are not permanent, do not have a self, and are not clean.
Those not having (these four) close placements of mindfulness
Regard (people) in the four reverse (ways)
and (thereby) are devastated.

(49) It has been said that forms are not the self,
The self is not the possessor of forms,
A self does not abide in forms,
and forms do not abide in a self.
Like that, understand that the remaining four aggregates
are (also) devoid (of an impossible self).

(50) The aggregates (come) not from a triumph of wishing,
not from (permanent) time,
Not from primal matter, not from an essential nature,
Not from the Powerful Creator Ishvara, and not from having no cause.
Know that they arise from unawareness, karmic actions, and craving.

(51) Holding deluded morality or conduct as supreme,
Viewing one's body in a reverse way, and indecisive wavering -
Realize that these three yokes are barriers

Text of Letter to a Friend

Across the gateway to the city of liberation.

(52) Liberation depends on oneself. In this,
Since there's nothing (to be gained) through assistance from others,
Make effort in (realizing) the four truths
Through (gaining) possession of listening, discipline,
and stability of mind.

(53) Always train in higher ethical discipline,
higher discriminating awareness,
And higher mental (concentration).
The hundred plus (a hundred) and fifty plus (three)
(monastic) trainings (constitute) the first (higher training),
And the three (higher trainings) are fully gathered in it.

(54) O Powerful Lord, the Blissfully Gone (Buddha) has indicated that
Mindfulness of the characteristic (behavior) of the body
is the singular path to traverse.
Holding it tightly, safeguard it (well).
Through a decline in mindfulness, all Dharma measures fall apart.

(55) Many things can damage your life: it's more impermanent
Than a bubble on a river, tossed by the wind.
Any respite (from death) you may have --
to breathe out (after) breathing in,
And to awaken from having fallen asleep - that's utterly amazing.

(56) The endpoint of the body is to wind up as ashes, or to wind up
dried out or putrefied,
Or in the end (to become) excrement. Realize that,
Having no essence, it's something that'll be consumed,
Desiccate, rot, or be chewed into bits.

(57) If even the earth, Mount Meru, and the oceans -
these (physical) bodies -
Will burn up through the shining of seven suns,
So that not even their ashes will remain,
What need is there to mention something extremely frail
like (the body of) a man?

(58) Thus, all these are impermanent, without a solid "soul,"
They're not a refuge, not a protector, and not a resting place.
Therefore, Highest of Men, you must develop disgust
For recurring samsara: it has no essence, (like) a plantain tree.

(59) Since even more difficult than the meeting of a turtle
And the hole in a solitary yoke located on the ocean
Is the attainment of a human state from that of a creeping creature,
Make that (attainment) with human faculties be fruitful
through practicing the hallowed Dharma.

Text of Letter to a Friend

(60) Even more foolish than someone who uses
A golden vessel adorned with gems to collect his vomit,
Is someone who, having been born as a human,
Performs negative deeds.

(61) (Now,) you possess the four great wheels:
You live in a land that's conducive (for Dharma),
You rely on hallowed beings, by nature you're prayerful,
And in the past, as well, you've built up positive force.

(62) Sage (Buddha) has said that reliance on a spiritual master
(Brings) complete fulfillment of a spiritual life.
Therefore, rely on hallowed beings.
So many have attained the peace (of nirvana)
by having relied on the Triumphant Ones.

(63) Rebirth as someone holding a distorted, antagonistic outlook,
As a creeping creature, a clutching ghost, or in a joyless realm,
Or rebirth where the words of the Triumphant are absent,
or as a barbarian
In a savage border region, or stupid and dumb,

(64) Or as a long-lived god - rebirths as any (of these)
Are the eight faulty states that have no leisure.
Having found leisure, being parted from them,
Make effort for the sake of turning away from (further) rebirth.

(65) Good sir, develop disgust for recurring samsara,
The source of manifold sufferings, (such as) a poverty
of (getting) the things that you want,
Death, sickness, old age, and more.
Listen to even just some of its faults.

(66) Since a father (can be reborn) with the status of a son;
a mother, with the status of a wife;
Those who had been enemies, with the status of friends;
And the reverse situation can occur (as well),
Because of that, there's no certainty at all in samsaric states.

(67) Each (being) has drunk more milk than in (all) the four oceans,
And still, with the succeeding samsaric
(Rebirths) of ordinary beings,
There's a much greater amount than that to be drunk.

(68) For each (being), the pile of their own bones
would have been an amount
Equal to Mount Meru or would have surpassed (it).
And, with pellets merely the size of the stone of a juniper berry,
There's not enough earth, in fact, for counting (how many times
each being has been each member of each one's) maternal lines.

Text of Letter to a Friend

(69) Having become an Indra, fit to be honored by the world,
You fall back again upon the earth through the power of karma.
Even having changed to the status of a Universal Chakravartin King,
You transform into someone with the rank of a servant
in samsaric states.

(70) Having for a long time experienced the pleasure of the touch
Of the breasts and hips of maidens of the higher rebirth realms,
Once again you'll have to entrust yourself to the unbearable touch
Of the implements for crushing, cutting, and subjugating in the hells.

(71) Having dwelled for long on the heights of Mount Meru,
With the (most) bearable pleasure of bouncing at the touch of your feet,
Once again, you'll be struck with the unbearable pain
Of wading through smoldering embers and a putrefying swamp.
Think about that!

(72) Having been served by maidens of higher rebirths,
And having frolicked, staying in pleasurable and beautiful groves,
Once again you'll get your legs, arms, ears, and nose cut off
Through grove-like places having leaves like swords.

(73) Having basked, with celestial maidens having beautiful faces,
In Gently Flowing (Heavenly Rivers) having lotuses of gold,
Once again you'll be plunged into Uncrossable Infernal Rivers
With intolerably caustic boiling waters.

(74) Having attained the extremely great pleasures of
the desirable sense objects of the celestial realms,
And the pleasures of the state of a Brahma,
which are free of attachment, You'll have to entrust yourself,
once again, to an unbroken continuum of sufferings
From having become the fuel of the flames
of (a joyless realm of) unrelenting pain.

(75) Having attained the state of a sun or a moon,
With the light of your body illuminating countless worlds,
Once again you'll have arrived in the gloom of darkness,
And then won't see even your outstretched hand.

(76) (So,) let the positive force from (knowing that samsara)
has come to have faults like those
Make the light of the lamp of your threefold (practice) advance,
(Otherwise,) you'll be plunged all alone in an infinite darkness
That can't be stamped out by the sun or the moon.

(77) For limited beings who commit faulty acts
There'll be the constant suffering in joyless realms:
(Known as) reviving, black thread, intensely heating,
Crushing, howling, pain unrelenting, and the likes.

Text of Letter to a Friend

(78) Some are pressed like sesame, and likewise others
Are ground into powder like the finest flour.
Some are cut up with saws, and likewise others
Are split with unbearable sharp-bladed axes.

(79) Likewise, some are made to drink, till completely filled,
Flaming broths of melted, boiling liquid (iron);
And some are impaled straight through
On barbed iron stakes, blazing with flames.

(80) Some are overpowered by ferocious dogs having iron fangs
And throw their hands up to the sky;
And others, powerless, have ravens, with sharp iron beaks
And unbearable claws, peck out (their eyes).

(81) Some, by having maggots, assorted bugs, horseflies,
And tens of thousands of black hornets tremendously inflict
The kinds of wounds that are unbearable to be touched,
Are eaten up and, pillaged, cry out with screams.

(82) Some are burned in a mass of blazing coals, without relent,
Their mouths just gaping open;
And some are boiled in great cauldrons made from iron,
(Tumbling) topsy-turvy, like dumplings of rice.

(83) Anyone with negative karmic force, who's not terrified,
in a thousand ways,
From hearing about the immeasurable sufferings in the joyless realms
That they are cut off from by merely the stopping of a single breath,
Must have a nature (as hard) as a diamond.

(84) (Because,) if even seeing paintings of the joyless realms,
Hearing (about them), holding (images of them) in your mind,
Reading about or (watching) physical enactments (of them)
makes you generate terror,
What need to mention when you'd actually have to experience (them)
as the unbearable ripening (of your negative karma)?

(85) Just as, from among all pleasures, that of the depletion of craving
Is set as the overlord of pleasures;
So too, from among all sufferings, the sufferings of the joyless realms
Of unrelenting pain are the most unbearable.

(86) However much suffering there might be in this (world)
From being violently stabbed for a day with three hundred spears,
That doesn't even roughly (approach), it doesn't even match a fraction
Of the tiniest sufferings in the joyless realms.

(87) Even if you experience extremely unbearable sufferings like that
For hundreds of millions of years,
So long as your destructive force has not been depleted,

Text of Letter to a Friend

You'll not be parted from (that) life for that long.

(88) The seeds of these fruits of destructive force
Are the faulty actions of your body, speech, and mind.
(So,) with all your strength, make effort such that
You'll not have had even a speck of them from anything whatsoever.

(89) Even when in the state of an animal rebirth,
there are all sorts of sufferings:
Being slaughtered, tied up, being beaten, and so on.
For those who've had to give up (the ability for) constructive behavior
leading to (a state of) peace,
There's the extremely unbearable devouring of one another.

(90) Some are killed for the sake of (their) pearls or wool,
Or bones, meat, or pelts;
While others, being powerless, are forced into servitude,
Beaten with kicks, fists, or whips, or with hooks or with prods.

(91) Clutching ghosts also have an unbroken stream of sufferings,
Which flow from their being starved of what they long for.
They must entrust themselves to the extremely unbearable (state)
That builds up from being hungry, thirsty, cold, hot, and scared.

(92) Some, with bellies as (huge) in size as a mountain,
(Connected) to mouths, the mere eye of a needle,
Are tortured by hunger, not having the capacity
To eat even the tiniest lump of filth thrown away.

(93) Some, with bodies (just) skin and bones, and naked,
Are like the withered trunk-tops of palmyra palm trees;
While some blaze (flames) from their mouths in the sphere of the night,
Having to eat blazing sand as their food, poured into their mouths.

(94) Several lower classes cannot find even filth,
Such as pus, or excrement, or blood, or the likes;
They beat each other in the face and gobble down the oozing pus
That drips out from goiters on their necks.

(95) For them, in summertime, even the moon seems hot,
And in the winter, even the sun seems cold;
Trees seem to become barren of fruit,
by their merely having glanced (at them),
And rivers seem to become dried up.

(96) Some having bodies tightly bound
By the grappling rope of the karma of their faulty deeds
That have made them entrust themselves to sufferings, unbroken,
Never come to die for five thousand or ten thousand years.

(97) Whatever various sufferings there are, (all) of one taste,

Text of Letter to a Friend

That the clutching ghosts have received like those,
The cause for them is delighting in stinginess as a human;
And Buddha has said that misers are ignoble.

(98) Even though higher status (celestial beings have) great bliss,
The level of suffering at their death
and shift-down is much greater than that.
Having considered like that, respectable people would never crave after
Exhaustible higher status rebirth.

(99) "The color of your body turns ugly;
There's no delight in your seat; your flower garlands wilt;
Your clothes become smelly; and sweat comes out on your body,
Which it never did before,"

(100) (These) five early signs that herald your death and shift-down
from a higher status
Appear to celestials in higher status rebirth states,
Just as signs of death (appear) to humans on earth,
Heralding impending death.

(101) If, at the shift-down from the celestial worlds,
they've no remainder
Left at all of constructive force, they transform, thereafter,
Without control, to a rebirth state as a creeping creature,
a clutching ghost,
Or a being trapped in a joyless realm, whichever it may be.

(102) The would-be divine also have great mental suffering
Because of hostility, by nature, toward the glory of the celestial ones.
Although having intelligence, they cannot see the truth
Because of obscurations of (their) rebirth state.

(103) Since recurring samsara's like that, there's no wonderful rebirth
As a celestial, a human, a joyless realm being, a clutching ghost,
or a creeping creature.
So know that rebirth is something that turns out to be
(No more than) a vessel for numerous harms.

(104) So, even if a fire has suddenly broken out on your head
or your clothing,
Give up trying to cast them off, and make effort instead
For the sake of trying to extinguish further compulsive rebirth.
There's no other necessity more superior than that.

(105) With ethical self-disciplines, discriminating awareness,
and mental stability,
Attain a high state of nirvana, pacified, tamed, and without any stains,
With no aging, no dying, and never depleting,
Parted from earth, water, fire, and wind, sun, and moon.

Text of Letter to a Friend

(106) Mindfulness, differentiating-awareness of phenomena,
perseverance,
Joy, a sense of fitness, absorbed concentration, and equanimity -
These seven are the branch (causes) for a purified state:
They're the network of constructive factors to bring about
an attainment of nirvana.

(107) Without discriminating awareness,
there can be no mental stability;
And without mental stability, as well,
there can be no discriminating awareness.
But, anyone having both of them will be able to make the ocean
of (their) compulsive existence
Like (a puddle in) the hoof print of an ox.

(108) (Buddha,) the Kinsman of the Sun, has declared that there are
Fourteen (questions for which) he wouldn't specify (an answer)
to the world.
Whatever they are, don't think about them.
A mind (that's concerned) about them
isn't one that can pacify (suffering).

(109) From unawareness, karmic impulses come forth;
From them, consciousness; from that, name and form;
From them, the cognitive stimulators are caused;
And from them, contacting awareness, the Able Sage has declared.

(110) From contacting awareness,
feelings (of a level of happiness) originate;
On the basis of feelings, craving comes to arise;
From craving, an obtainer emotion or attitude comes to develop;
From that, an impulse for further existence;
and from an impulse for further existence, rebirth.

(111) When rebirth has occurred, then an extremely great mass
Of sufferings will have arisen, such as sorrow, sickness, aging,
Deprivation of what we desire, and fear of death;
But, by stopping rebirth, all of these (sufferings) will have been stopped.

(112) This dependent arising,
the (most) cherished (gem) in the treasure
Of the Triumphant One's proclamations, is profound;
Whoever sees it correctly sees the Buddha,
The supreme Knower of Reality.

(113) Right view and livelihood and effort,
Mindfulness and absorbed concentration,
speech and boundary of actions,
And right thought are the eight branches of a pathway mind:
You need to meditate on them for the sake of bringing yourself
the peace (of nirvana).

(114) This rebirth is suffering; that which is called craving
Is the wide-ranging originator of that;
The stopping of this is liberation; and the pathway mind
For the attainment of that is eightfold:
those branches of an arya's pathway mind.

(115) With it being like that, you need always to strive
For the sake of seeing the four truths of the aryas.
Even householders, in whose laps rest glory,
Can, with awareness, ford cross the rivers
of the disturbing emotions.

(116) Whoever's made the Dharma manifest (in themselves) -
They're not, in fact, (beings) who've fallen from the sky;
They aren't (beings) who've sprung up, like crops,
from the womb of the earth;
They were merely (ordinary) people before, who were dependent
on their disturbing emotions; and so,

(117) What need to counsel (you) more, Fearless One?
The (most) important advice that's of benefit is this:
Tame your mind! The Vanquishing Master has proclaimed,
"Mind is the root of (all preventive measures) of Dharma."

(118) Whatever guidelines there are for you in those words
Would be difficult even for a monk to carry out perfectly.
(So, try to make as) the essential nature of your conduct
whatever (aspects) of these (that you can),
And by entrusting (yourself) to the good qualities (coming) from that,
make (this) lifetime meaningful.

(119) (Then,) having rejoiced in all the constructive (deeds) of everyone
And dedicated fully, for the sake of attaining the state of a Buddha,
The three aspects of your own good conduct as well;
And then, with this stockpile of positive (force) from that,

(120) You've mastered all the yogas, in countless rebirths
In the worlds of the gods and of men,
And have nurtured numerous wretched beings
With the conduct of an Arya Avalokiteshvara,

(121) (Then,) having taken a (final) rebirth, and rid yourself
Of sickness, old age, desire, and anger,
Make (that) lifetime immeasurably (long) as a guardian for the world,
Like the Vanquishing Master Amitabha in (his) Buddha-field.

(122, 123) (Then,) having spread throughout the celestial realms, space,
and on the face of the earth
The stainless great fame of discriminating awareness, ethical discipline,
and generous giving,

Text of Letter to a Friend

And subsequently, having attained the powerful state
of a Triumphant One -
Which, for men on the earth and celestials in higher status realms,
Completely and definitively quiets down their taking delight
in pleasures with outstanding young maidens and (other) delights,

In other words, which, for the masses of limited beings,
wretched through their disturbing emotions,
Quells their fears, their births and their deaths -
Then attain the high rank which is beyond the perishable world:
Name-only, fearless in its peace, unaging, never possessing a flaw.