

The Aspiration for the Good Life



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The Aspiration for the Good Life

The Bhadra-cari-praṇidhāna is one of the most important of the Mahāyāna texts, which is recited on a daily basis in many temples and homes throughout East Asia. It is found at the end of the Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra, which is the final section of the Avataṃsakasūtra, a huge work, or collection of works, which is one of the most influential texts in the Mahāyāna tradition. It is also found as a separate text and is then seen as summarising the greater work.

Then the Awakening Being, the Great Being, Samantabhadra, explaining in this way the succession of world elements, spoken of and not spoken of, equal (in number) to the supremely small atoms in a Buddha field, through aeons after aeons, went on to make his aspiration by reciting these verses:

1. As many Lions of Men as there are in the worlds, in the ten directions, in all three times, faithfully I worship them all, without exception, with body, speech and mind.
2. I make a salutation to all Victors with a measure of bodies the same as there are atoms in a (Buddha) field, with a mind directed towards all Victors, with the strength of (my) Aspiration for the Good Life.
3. On the tip of each single atom, Buddhas, like atoms, sit in the midst of the Sons of Buddhas; (and) so I am totally and completely intent on the Dharma Element which is filled with Victors.
4. With a voice having an ocean of intonations, an ocean of letters and syllables, speaking of the virtues all Victors, I praise all the Fortunate Ones.
5. With the best flowers, with the best garlands, with the best umbrellas, creams and musical instruments, with the best lamps, with the best incense, I honour the Victors.
6. With the best vestments, with the best fragrances, with powders and compounds similar to (Mount) Meru, and with the best array of all excellent (things), I honour the Victors.
7. Whatever unsurpassed and exalted offerings there are, I intend those for all Victors; with the strength and determination for the good life, I worship and honour all Victors.
8. Whatever wickedness may have been done by me, through delusion, hatred and passion, I confess all of it in the same way with body, speech and mind.
9. Whatever merit beings have in the ten directions, from trainees, those beyond training, Independent Buddhas, Sons of Buddhas and also all Victors, I rejoice in it all.
10. Those Lights of the World in the ten directions, having awakened to Awakening, having attained non-attachment, I ask all those Lords to turn the unsurpassed Wheel (of Dharma).

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11. Those who desire to realise cessation, I request, with my hands folded, to remain for as many aeons as there are atoms in a (Buddha) field, for the happiness and welfare of all beings.
12. Through worship, honouring, teaching, through requesting, asking and rejoicing: whatever good has been accumulated by me I offer it all for (the attainment of) Awakening.
13. May the Buddhas of the past be honoured, and those existing in the world in the ten directions, may the (Buddhas) of the future quickly fulfil their desire to awaken to Awakening.
14. As many (Buddha) fields as there are in the ten directions may they be purified and exalted, may they be filled with Sons of Buddhas, and with Victors who have come to the lordly Bodhi trees.
15. As many beings as there are in the ten directions may they always be happy and healthy, and may the Dharma purpose and desire to pay respect of all beings be successful.
16. May I, walking in the life of Awakening, remember my births in all destinies; and in all births, fallings away and rebirths, may I always go forth.
17. Training in the way of all Victors, fulfilling the good life, may I always live, unbroken and faultlessly, a virtuous life, stainless and pure.
18. With the voices of gods, with the voices of *nāgas*, with the voices of *yakṣas*, *khumbāṇḍas* and humans, with whatever voices there are of all beings, may I teach the Dharma with all (these) voices.
19. May the skilful mind devoted to the perfections and Awakening never be bewildered; and whatever wicked obstructions there are, may they be destroyed without remainder.
20. May I in all worldly states live liberated from Māra's paths, from defilements and from (bad) deeds, like a lotus undefiled by water, (like) the sun and the moon unobstructed by the sky.
21. Pacifying all suffering in the lower worlds, establishing the happiness of all beings, may I live for the benefit of all beings, in as many directions as there are paths in the (Buddha) fields.
22. Serving the life of (all) beings, fulfilling the life of Awakening, increasing the good life: may I live (like this) in all future aeons.
23. With those who share my life may I always be in harmony; through body, speech and mind may I live focused on my aspiration.
24. With those friends who, desiring my benefit, point to the good life, may I always be in harmony, and may I never alienate them.

The Aspiration for the Good Life – 3

25. May I always see the Victors face to face, those Lords in the midst of the Sons of Buddhas, may I pay exalted honour to them, unbrokenly throughout all future aeons.
26. Upholding the Good Dharma of the Victors, explaining the life of Awakening, purifying the good life: may I live (like this) in all future aeons.
27. Wandering through all existences, with merit, with knowledge, having attained the imperishable, with wisdom, skill in means, concentrations and liberations, and with all virtue, may I be an indestructible vessel.
28. The tip of one atom is like a (Buddha) field (full) of atoms, in these inconceivable (Buddha) fields may I see Buddhas sat in the middle of Sons of Buddhas, while living out the life of Awakening.
29. In all directions without exception, (even) in the ways of the foolish, for the duration of the three times, (like) an ocean of Buddhas, may I plunge into oceans of (Buddha) fields, wandering through oceans of aeons.
30. Together with the voice of an ocean of singular intonations, the pure intonation of all Victors, may I always plunge into the Buddhas' speech, sounds made according to the intentions of all Victors.
31. Through those voices having the indestructible sounds of the Victors throughout all three times, rolling the systematic Wheel (of Dharma), may I attain (Awakening) through the strength of (my) intelligence.
32. May I enter into all future aeons in an instant, and having reached the end of that instant, may I live through whatever aeons there are for the duration of the three times.
33. May I see in an instant whatever Lions of Men there are throughout the three times, always plunging into their range through the magical power of the liberations.
34. Having realised in the tip of one atom those arrays of good (Buddha) fields in the three times, may I plunge into the array of the Victors' fields in all directions without exception.
35. Having understood the Wheel-rollings of all these future Lights of the World, continuing insight into cessation, peaceful, I approach all Lords.
36. Through the strength of spiritual power, quick all-round, through the strength of the (Great) Vehicle, entering all-round, through the strength of conduct, virtuous all-round, through the strength of loving-kindness, established all-round,
37. through the strength of merit, lovely all-round, through the strength of knowledge, established in non-attachment, through the strength of concentrations, means and wisdom, I am perfecting the strength of Awakening.
38. Purifying the strength of deeds, crushing the strength of defilements, making powerless the strength of Māra, may I fulfil all the strengths of the good life.

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39. Purifying an ocean of (Buddha) fields, liberating an ocean of beings, having insight into an ocean of Dharma (teachings), penetrating an ocean of knowledges,
40. purifying an ocean of (good) conduct, fulfilling an ocean of aspirations, honouring an ocean of Buddhas, may I live through an unbroken ocean of aeons.
41. May I fulfil, completely and without remainder, the special aspiration to the life of Awakening of those Victors of the three times, and through the good life may I awaken to Awakening.
42. The eldest son of all the Victors, who is known as Samantabhadra: may I offer all of this wholesomeness to this wise one.
43. Purified through body, speech and mind, then having pure conduct, a pure field (of action), may I be similar to the wise one, who is known as good.
44. May I live the aspiration of Mañjuśrī, in a good life, beautiful all-round, and through all future aeons, unbroken, may I fulfil all (good) deeds without remainder.
45. May there be no measure to this life, may there be no measure to these virtues, having established this immeasurable life, may I know all their transformations.
46. For as long as the sky continues, (and) beings without remainder continue, as long as defiled deeds continue, for that long my aspiration will continue.
47. May I give decorated jewels to the Victors in the endless (Buddha) fields in the ten directions, may I give special comfort to gods and humans for as many aeons as there are atoms in the (Buddha) fields.
48. May he, having heard this King of complete fulfilment, understand at once; determined, desiring the noble Awakening, may this merit be special and prominent.
49. Warding off the lower worlds through this, warding off bad friends through this, quickly see Amitābhā, having this Aspiration for the Good Life.
50. For these the good life and (true) gains are easily obtained, they are born in a good state as a human, through that they become in no long time similar to Samantabhadra.
51. The five wicked (crimes having retribution) immediately (after this life), performed through ignorance, he can quickly destroy through reciting the Good Life (verses found here).
52. He will be endowed with knowledge, (good) form, characteristics, class, lineage; he will be uncrushed by the legions of Māras and heretics, (and) honoured throughout the three worlds.
53. Quickly he goes to the Lord of Bodhi trees, and after going, he sits (there) for the benefit of (all) beings, realising Awakening, he can turn the (Dharma) Wheel, and can overpower Māra and his entire army.

The Aspiration for the Good Life – 5

54. The Buddha knows him who remembers, recites and teaches this Aspiration for the Good Life, the result of which is the excellent Awakening, do not have (any) doubt.

55. Just as the hero Mañjuśrī knows, so also does Samantabhadra, training in these (practices) I offer all this wholesomeness (to them).

56. Complete fulfilment has been praised as the pinnacle by the Victors throughout all three times, I offer (to them) all the wholesomeness of this noble and good life.

57. When I am dying may I remove all obstacles, and may I go to the Sukhāvati land and see Amitābhā face to face.

58. Having gone there, may all these aspirations be present and complete, having fulfilled them without remainder, I will work for the welfare of as many beings as there are in the world.

59. May I delight in the midst of the circle of Victors, (then) reborn on a splendid and noble lotus, may I gain there the prediction (of Awakening), face to face with the Victor Amitābhā.

60. Having received the prediction there, may I, through the power of intelligence, perform abundant benefits for beings in the ten directions, through tens of billions of magical creations.

61. Having recited this Aspiration for the Good Life, whatever wholesomeness has been accumulated, through that in an instant may all good aspirations beings have be accomplished.

62. By completely fulfilling the good life, whatever endless, excellent merit has been obtained, through that may beings, overcome and immersed in the flood of misfortunes, go to the noble city of Amitābhā.