TWO AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PRAISES

THE EIGHTH KARMAPA
MIKYÖ DORJE

Dharma Ebooks
CONTENTS

Autobiographical Verses of Karmapa Mikyö Dorje
Called “Good Deeds”

The Praise “He Searched Thoroughly...”
To those with unrivaled compassion — the Three Jewels
And gurus — I pay homage with respect.

Great beings would see nothing wondrous here,
But some childish beings might enjoy these words.
A few high masters’ have encouraged me
By saying that it would be meaningful
If I recounted some of my good deeds.
Since I know best what I experienced, I’ll relate a few.

* Including Drikung Rinpoche and Panchen Dorgyal.
Once I had gained a human life with leisures and resources, I dared not squander it pointlessly. With single-minded focus, I did all I could to practice dharma just as the Buddha taught. I subjugated forcefully any wrong thought that arose. I think of this as one of my good deeds.

Without disdaining inauthentic gurus and companions or following them along the paths they taught, I did all I could to overcome the thoughts of the three poisons — Impediments to reaching the dharma’s culmination. I think of this as one of my good deeds.
(3) When I saw that the Mahayana masters were unmistaken, 
I became captivated by their excellent qualities 
And acted in harmony with all of their august examples. 
The great beings therefore granted me their blessings with delight. 
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(4) When I developed certainty from the bottom of my heart 
That ordinary distractions are merely ways to waste this life, 
I cast away all commonplace diversions. 
My awareness became clear; I found conviction in the Jewels. 
I think of this as one of my good deeds.
(5) I saw that everyone high and low must die, 
Like a river rushing, naked and empty-handed. 
When I reflected, how could thoughts of the eight concerns 
Have any chance to arise, even in dreams? 
   I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(6) Besides the true protector, the Three Jewels,  
No other refuge gave me confidence. 
The Jewels know all joys and woes; I had not a whit 
Of any dependence or hope in anyone else. 
   I think of this as one of my good deeds.
(7) Once I knew that all suffering that occurs is the result of my own wrongs, I could not complete in full unvirtuous acts with preparation, deed, and aftermath. I have not completed an unvirtuous act in this life.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(8) Unless we fully cross the ocean of birth and death, nowhere in the three realms are pleasures and riches permanent. I wondered, when will I liberate forever all beings throughout space from the three realms of samsara? I think of this as one of my good deeds.
All beings, without distinction, are the same as my parents.
It is illogical to group them into factions of friend and foe.
With uncontrived love for beings in intolerable states,
I thought, when can I bring them the benefit of true enlightenment?
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

Benefiting others depends at root on giving away
Your happiness to others and taking their pains upon yourself.
I gave without a trace of ego-clinging
My body, possessions, and virtue to wandering beings.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.
Although I gave without attachment to beings,
When combative people responded to that with harm,
I thought to myself, “This purifies bad karma!”
And felt as much delight as a beggar finding treasure.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

When others unreasonably repaid kindness with harm,
I'd think, “May the results all ripen on me,
To never be experienced by this person,”
And dedicated all the virtue to them.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.
(13) To bring benefit and happiness to everyone throughout space,
I spoke kind words distinguishing what to do and what to reject.*
How could I ever, in any situation, say harsh words
That would make myself and others circle in confusion?
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(14) Virtuous acts and results done with the hope of a return,
Like speaking nicely hoping for sweet words,†
Cannot be for the sake of true enlightenment.
How is it possible to cling to virtue and its result as mine?
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

* This is called venerable speech.
† In giving up deceiving others through craft and fraud, this lord seems to have shown us
a necessary example.
(15) Unreasonable, intolerable, unbearable though they were,
The more I experienced karmic results,
The more I became convinced that what the Buddha taught is true.
I gained conviction in the importance of taking adversity as the path.
    I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(16) How could I bring all beings throughout space
    The inferior and provisional benefits
    And pleasures of existence and peace instead
    Of the benefit of true enlightenment?
    I think of this as one of my good deeds.
(17) To gain enlightenment to benefit oneself and others,
One must leave self-disparagement, despair,
Anxiety, and weariness far behind
And strengthen one’s unstoppable diligence.
How could I, in this life, let my practice fluctuate?
    I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(18) Infinite are the kinds of barbaric beings.
When things go well, since things are going well,
They’re ignorant of the means for liberation.
When things go badly, since things are going badly,
They’re ignorant of the means for liberation.
I could not bear the thought of their deluded acts.
    I think of this as one of my good deeds.
Although I couldn’t bear it, I did not scorn
Suffering sentient beings for being vile.
The faults and obscurations are their nature.
Knowing this made it even less tolerable.

I think of this as one of my good deeds.

Since time without beginning, samsaric birth and death
Have, with their agonies, wearied my body and mind.
Therefore I strove in order that I might have
A strong body and mind forever until enlightenment.

I think of this as one of my good deeds.
(21) With the clear eye of intelligence, I saw
That phenomena have been pacified from the beginning.
The one who is benefited, the one who benefits,
And what brings benefit are like combining space with space.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(22) Although inferior material supplies cannot be established
As wealth that can be grasped as “mine,” when the understanding
Of selflessness had permeated my being, to enrich my mothers,
I gathered all that could be desired in infinite amounts.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.
(23) For virtuous actions such as offering and giving
To become causes of perfect buddhahood,
They must be guided along the path of the fine ways of virtue.
I acted in harmony with the codes the Buddha taught.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(24) In both causes and results, the Buddha’s words
Are easy to practice at first and have great purpose in the end.
Since practicing them is not a source of harm,
I practiced patience toward the Tathagata’s teachings.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.
Knowing that weak intentions and actions do not suffice
For reaching the vast kayas and the profound dharmakaya,
With body and mind continually for untold aeons,
I've kept my commitment to achieve the kayas of a bhagavan.
   I think of this as one of my good deeds.

I applied antidotes to all the subtle and coarse afflictions,
For they are not conducive to inspiring myself to virtue.
Beside focusing one-pointedly on the causes and results
Of perfect buddhahood, how could I think of anything else?
   I think of this as one of my good deeds.
(27) As long as you hang on to your intractable character,  
You will not tame the mind streams of your followers.  
So I focused on my own accumulation and purification  
To increase accumulation and purification among my students.  
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(28) Therefore, since all the activities of entering  
The ways of enlightenment are inconceivable,  
I made the prayer to follow in harmony  
With the deeds of all the bodhisattvas.  
I think of this as one of my good deeds.
In a degenerate age, few are they who serve
The Buddha’s teachings, and those to be served
Have not entered the teachings properly.
Seeing that, I tried even harder to tame myself.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

The Teacher himself highly praised acts of virtue
Done in the time of the final five hundred years
For sake of the mere reflection of the teachings,
So I worked for the sangha of scholars and meditators.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.
(31) But to avoid the turbulence this might bring
Or conflict among communities, I made rules
To keep to isolated places, reliant upon
A beggar’s food and robes made out of rags.
    I think of this as one of my good deeds.

(32) Some people have had pure perceptions of me
Because I resolved that my guru, whom I trusted first of all,
In essence is the Three Jewels and understood
That he has the three kayas and five wisdoms.
    I think of this as one of my good deeds.
Someone who does not have the clairvoyance of
Exhausting defilements cannot benefit students,
So I perfected accumulation and purification
And developed a zest for benefiting beings throughout space.
I think of this as one of my good deeds.

I dedicate all the defiled and undefiled virtue
I have accumulated and the virtue
Of all the buddhas and beings throughout space
To dispelling the obscurations of all limitless beings
So they may achieve the kayas of supreme enlightenment,
The perfection of the two accumulations,
And reach completely perfect buddhahood.
On the encouragement of some great masters, I wrote this to tell of my experience.

Just as I had the strong desire and aspiration to train in the infinite conduct of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, all you who wish to follow me, train in their deeds and examples of achieving buddhahood for the sake of your countless mothers.
THE PRAISE “HE SEARCHED THOROUGHLY...”

(1) He searched thoroughly for the unerring essence
Of the teachings of the unrivaled Teacher,
Had the discipline that leads to the true ways,
And practiced the teachings in full — to him I pray.

(2) Seeing that those who try to make pseudodharma
Of the disobedient and naturally unwholesome
Into true dharma remain outside, like a husk,
He taught the fine meaning well — to him I pray.
When he realized that all wishes for here and the everlasting
Come from the holder of all, the spiritual friend,
Irreversible longing swelled to perfection.
His faith became transcendent — to him I pray.

He realized from his heart — not just in words —
How this life’s wealth and fame are devoid of meaning.
He exemplified revulsion and a lack of craving
And recalled the futility — to him I pray.
His mind never free from love and pangs of compassion,
His wish for emancipation was utterly pure.
He always despaired of suffering and its causes
And pondered impermanence — to him I pray.

He never gave afflictions or evil thoughts a moment’s chance
And built a dam of antidotes in case they arose.
Never letting go of the good ways of virtue,
He was a friend who brought benefit — to him I pray.

He meditated impartially on the scriptures’ meaning.
Instead of chasing nonsense, he would explain
With prajna distinguishing the expedient and definitive
The exalted definitive meaning — to him I pray.
He wished with love to exchange himself for those thought to be great
And created connections with them through pure aspirations,
Making dedications to rouse their intelligence
For engaging in virtue — to him I pray.

By the virtue thus gained by stating his qualities,
May expressing the qualities of him who has qualities
Lead to a meaningful body and mind, perfected and purified,
And fulfill the intentions of the Karmapa.