

## **THE OMNIPRESENT GATEWAY OF AVALOKITASVARA**

### **The Bodhisattva Guan-yin, Regarder of the Cries of the World**

At that time the Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intent rose from his seat and bared his right shoulder, facing the Buddha with his palms pressed together when he said, "World-Honored One, why is Avalokitasvara thus named Avalokitasvara?" The Buddha said to Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intent: "Good man, suppose there are immeasurable hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, millions of sentient beings who are trapped in all manifestations of afflictions. If they hear of this Bodhisattva and wholeheartedly repeat his name, then at once He will perceive the sounds of their cries and deliver them from

their suffering. If someone, holding fast to the name of Avalokitasvara, should enter a great fire, the fire could not even burn him. This miracle happens because of the Bodhisattva's awesome power. If one was washed away by a great flood and calls upon his name, one would immediately find himself in a shallow place. Suppose there were a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a billion sentient beings who, seeking for treasures such as gold, silver, lapis lazuli, giant seashell, agate, coral, amber, pearls, and other treasures, set out on the great sea. And a fierce wind should blow their ship off course, carrying it to the land of the rakshasa demons. Suppose amongst those people should even just one person call upon the name of Avalokitasvara, then all of them will be delivered from their troubles with the rakshasas. This is why he

is called Avalokitasvara. If a person who faced imminent threat of attack calls upon the Bodhisattva's name, then the swords and staves wielded by his attackers would instantly shatter into many fragmented pieces and he would be delivered. Although enough yakshas and rakshasas filling an entire chiliocosm (*Tri-sahasra-mahā-sahasralokadhātu*, a boundless universe) might try to harass a person, if they hear him calling upon Avalokitasvara's name, then these evil demons won't even be able to gaze at him with their evil stares, much less harm him. Suppose a person who, regardless of innocence or guilt, had had his body imprisoned in cangue, shackles and fetters. If he calls upon the Bodhisattva's name, then all his shackles would snap and he would be delivered at once. Suppose

in a great chiliocosm densely filled with murderous bandits, a merchant chief was leading a band of fellow tradesmen carrying valuable treasures through a perilous road, and amongst them one man spoke out, “My good fellow tradesmen, do not be afraid! You must all single-mindedly call on the name of Avalokitasvara. This Bodhisattva can grant fearlessness to all sentient beings. If you call His name, you would be delivered immediately from these murderous bandits.” Upon hearing this, all the tradesmen in the band cried out, “We want to take refuge in Avalokitasvara!” Calling upon the Bodhisattva’s name, they were all, at once, delivered. Inexhaustible Intent, the awesome great powers of Avalokitasvara the Mahasattva are as mighty as this! Should there be some sentient beings who are beset by carnal

desires, if they will constantly think with great reverence of Bodhisattva Avalokitasvara, then they can shed their desires. Should they have great wrath, let them think with constant reverence of Avalokitasvara, then they can shed their anger. Should they have great ignorance and stupidity, let them think with constant reverence of Avalokitasvara and they can rid themselves of stupidity. Inexhaustible Intent, it is Avalokitasvara that possesses such awesome and great powers, and can confer many benefits. For this reason, all sentient beings should constantly think of him. If a woman wishes to give birth to a male child, and she piously pays homage and makes offerings to Avalokitasvara, then she shall bear a son blessed with merit, virtue, and wisdom. And if she wishes to bear a daughter, then she shall bear one with all the

markings of comeliness, one who is blessed with predestined virtues and is loved and widely respected by others. Inexhaustible Intent, Avalokitasvara has such great powers. If sentient beings piously pay homage and make offerings to him, they will consequently be rewarded in due time. Therefore, all sentient beings should always uphold this Bodhisattva's name. Inexhaustible Intent, suppose a person, throughout his entire life, continuously upholds the names of as many bodhisattvas as there are sands in sixty-two million Ganges, and to those same bodhisattvas make offerings of food and drink, clothing, bedding and medicines. What is your opinion, would this good man or good woman indeed gain a multitude of merits?" Inexhaustible Intent replied, "The merits would be tremendous, World Honored One."

The Buddha said, “Meanwhile, suppose that another person upholds the name of Avalokitasvara and has only made offerings to Him for a short period. The blessings gained by these two persons would be exactly equal and without difference. Furthermore, even as a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, a billion kalpas pass, these merits could not ever be exhausted.”

Inexhaustible Intent, upholding Bodhisattva Avalokitasvara’s name would be rewarded with such advantages of merits and blessings as immeasurable and boundless as this. The Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intent said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, how does Avalokitasvara travel around in this saha world? And how does he convey the Dharma to the sentient beings? How does he convey

His teachings so adequately and expediently?" The Buddha said to Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intent: "Good man, if there are sentient beings in any realm who need salvation from samsara in the form of a buddha, Avalokitasvara would manifest himself in the form of a buddha and preach the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of a pratyekabuddha, the Bodhisattva would appear as a pratyekabuddha and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of a sravaka, he appears as a sravaka and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of Brahma, he appears as a Brahma and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of Śakro devānām indraḥ, he appears as Śakro devānām indraḥ and preaches the Dharma to



them. To those who need to be saved in the form of Ishvara, immediately he becomes Ishvara and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of Maheshvara, he appears as Maheshvara and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of a great divine general, he appears as a great divine general and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of Vaishravana, he appears as Vaishravana and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of a minor king, he appears as a minor king and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of an elder, he appears as an elder and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of a layman, he appears as a layman and preaches

the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of minister of state, he appears as a minister of state and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of a Brahman, he appears as a Brahman and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of respectively, bhikshu, bhikshuni, upasaka, or upasika, he appears as bhikshu, bhikshuni, upasaka, or upasika, respectively, and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of the wife of an elder, layman, minister of state, or Brahman, he appears as a woman and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of a virgin boy or girl, he appears as a virgin boy or girl and preaches the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of respectively, deva (god),

nagas (dragon), yaka, ganharva, asura, gauds, kinara, mahoraga, humans or, nonhumans, he would appear as all of these, respectively, and preach the Dharma to them. To those who need to be saved in the form of a Vajra-holder deity (Dharma defender), he appears as a deva-holder of the vajra and preaches the Dharma to them.” Inexhaustible Intent, Avalokitasvara has succeeded in acquiring such merits as these and, manifesting himself in various incarnations, goes about amongst all realms enlightening sentient beings. For this reason, you and all beings should single-mindedly make offerings to Avalokitasvara. This Bodhisattva Mahasattva can bestow fearlessness on those who are in fearful, pressing or difficult circumstances. That is why in this saha world he is widely recognized and addressed to as “The One

That Bestows Fearlessness.”

The Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intent said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, now I would like to offer alms to Avalokitasvara.” Then he took from his neck a necklace adorned with numerous precious gems, worth a hundred or a thousand taels of gold, and presented it to Avalokitasvara, saying, “Benevolent Sir, please take this necklace of precious gems as a Dharma offering.” At that time Avalokitasvara declined this offering. Inexhaustible Intent spoke once more to Avalokitasvara, “Benevolent Sir, please have mercy on us and accept this offering of necklace?”

Thus the Buddha said to Avalokitasvara, “Out of mercifulness for this Bodhisattva

Inexhaustible Intent and for the Four Varga (bhiksu, bhiksuni, upasaka and upasika), the heavenly beings, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans and nonhumans and others, you should accept this necklace.”

Thereupon Avalokitasvara, out of mercifulness for the Four Varga and the heavenly beings, dragons, humans and nonhumans and others, subsequently accepted the gem necklace as offering and, dividing it into two parts, presented one part to the Shakyamuni Buddha and presented the other to the Stupa of the Buddha Prabhūtaratna.

The Buddha said, “Inexhaustible Intent, these are the freely exercised supernatural powers that Avalokitasvara displays in his comings and goings in the saha world.”

At that time Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intent raised this question in verse form:

World-Honored One replete with magnificent features, I now ask you once more:

For what reason that this Buddha's disciple is named Avalokitasvara?

World-Honored One replete with magnificent features replied to Inexhaustible Intent in verse:

Listen to the vows and deeds of the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin, how aptly he responds in various situations.

His vast oath is deep as the ocean;

Inconceivable throughout kalpas.

Attending many thousands and millions of

buddhas, sitting forth his great pure vow. I would summarize his deeds for you:

Hear his name and observe his body, and continuously contemplate on Him.

All these endeavors will not be done in vain, for he can remove all sufferings of dependent origination.

If someone should conceive an intent to harm you, should push you into a great pit of fire.

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name and the pit of fire will change into a pond.

Should you be cast adrift on the vast ocean, menaced by dragons, giant fish and various demons,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name and waves cannot drown you.

If you are on the peak of Mount Sumeru and someone pushes you off,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name

and you will hang in midair like the sun!

If you are chased by evil men, who wish to  
throw you down from Mount Diamond,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name  
and not a hair of yours shall be injured!

If you are surrounded by hostile bandits, each  
brandishing a knife to wound you,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name  
and all their hearts turn to kindness.

If you encounter suffering by royal command,  
facing the execution,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name  
and the executioner's sword will break into  
bits.

If you are imprisoned in cangue and lock,  
hands and feet bound by fetters and shackles,  
Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name  
and those bondage would snap and you are  
freed.



If with incantations and various poisons  
someone should try to injure you,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name  
and the injury will turn back to the originator.

If you encounter evil rakshasas, poisonous  
dragons and various demons,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name  
and none will dare to harm you.

If evil beasts should encircle you, their sharp  
fangs and claws inspiring terror,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name  
and they will scamper away in boundless  
retreat.

If lizards, snakes, vipers, scorpions threaten  
you with poisonous breath that sears like  
flame,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name, at  
once they flee and disappear.

If clouds should bring thunder, and lightening

should strike,

If hail pelts or drenching rain comes down,  
Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name  
and instantly they vanish.

If sentient beings are trapped and troubled in  
various afflictions and sufferings,  
The power of Guan-Yin's inconceivable  
wisdom can save them all from worldly  
sufferings.

He is endowed with transcendental powers  
And widely practices the expedient means of  
wisdom.

Throughout the realms in the ten directions,  
there are no regions where he cannot manifest  
himself.

In all the evil realms:

Hell, Hungry Spirits or Beasts,  
the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness  
and death—all these he incrementally

extinguishes.

His views are therefore true and pure,  
The view of great and encompassing wisdom,  
The view of pity and compassion, constantly  
and reverently shall we aspire and aim toward  
them all.

His pure luminance, free of blemish,  
a sun of wisdom dispelling all darkness and  
ignorance.

It can quell the wind and fire of misfortune  
and everywhere bring light to the world.

The precepts from his compassion is like a  
great cloud,

Sending down the sweet dew, the Dharma  
rain,

to quench the flames of earthly desires.

When lawsuit brings you before the officials,  
or when terror-stricken in midst an infantry of  
war,

Just call the Bodhisattva Guan-Yin's name  
and hatred in all its forms will dissipate.  
Inconceivable voice of perfect wisdom,  
and the voice which perceives the world's  
sufferings,  
Holy voice, and the tidal voice—  
they surpass all worldly voices:  
therefore, you should constantly evoke them!  
Repeat his name whole-heartedly  
and never shall you doubt it!  
For Avalokitasvara, the holy saint—  
to those in suffering, in danger of death,  
He is always their refuge.  
Endowed with all merits,  
He watches over all sentient beings with  
encompassing compassionate eyes.  
His accumulated blessings are as immeasurable  
and boundless as the sea; therefore, you should  
prostrate yourself to him.

At that time the Bodhisattva Earth Holder immediately rose from his seat, advanced, and said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, if there are sentient beings who hear this chapter on Avalokitasvara, on his deeds of freely exercised supernatural powers, his manifestations of omnipresent gateway and his ubiquitous supernatural powers, let it be known that the merits which these persons gain are tremendous!”

As such, when the Buddha preached this chapter on the Omnipresent Gateway, a multitude of eighty-four thousand people thus all cultivated a determination to attain the unparalleled state of anuttara-samyaksambodhi (the ultimate Buddhahood of perfect wisdom).