

The Benefits of Saving Lives

By Chatral Sangye Dorje

*I bow before the lama – Buddha Amitāyus,
– together with the bodhisattva disciples!*

I will briefly explain here the benefits
of ransoming and saving the lives of beings.
A necessary and important practice
for all followers of Lord Buddha
is, with pure motivation and action,
to save animals from slaughter or from any mortal danger.
Its benefits are extensively explained
in many sūtras, tantras and shastras.
Countless learned and accomplished Indian and Tibetan masters
extolled this way of helping others.
This is the main training of bodhisattvas on the Mahāyāna path,
and certainly, Hinayāna followers renounce harming others.
In Secret Mantra, it is also a principal samaya of the *ratna* family.
The main reason is because in this world
nothing is more precious than life,
so there is no greater sin than killing,
and there is no greater merit
than the conditioned virtue generated by saving and ransoming lives.
So if you desire happiness and goodness,
strive on this peerless path,
which is established on the basis of scripture and reasoning,
and is without obstacles and pitfalls.
Taking your own body as an example
is the way to avoid doing anything that might harm others.
Do not kill birds, fish, wild and domestic animals,
or even tiny insects, but instead free the lives of these beings
and offer them protection from fear.
The benefits of doing this are unfathomable.
It is the supreme longevity practice,
and the most virtuous practice for the living and deceased.
This is my principal way of benefitting sentient beings.
It dispels hindrances and outer and inner obstacles,
and effortlessly and spontaneously brings harmonious conditions.

When this practice is sealed with a genuine altruistic intention
and completed with pure dedication and aspirations,
it leads to perfect awakening.

This accomplishes the benefit of self and others;

There is no need to have any doubt about it.

Those drawn to meritorious and virtuous activity
should prohibit hunting and fishing.

When flocks of migratory birds such as geese and cranes,
are driven by karma to fly south in autumn and north in spring,
at times some of them become exhausted or lose their way.

Then with distress, fear and anxiety
they need to land on the ground.

Particularly, at these times do not throw stones or shoot at them,
nor kill or harm them in any way.

Protect them and place them back into proper flight.

Glorious Atiśa said that the one who kindly and lovingly
assists the destitute and poor
and the one who meditates on emptiness with compassion as its essence
enjoy equal merit.

Lamas, officials, ordained and laymen and women
should endeavor as much as possible
in the practice of saving and ransoming lives,
in their respective countries according to their capacities.

Please encourage others to do the same.

Where this is done, epidemics and infectious diseases
among humans and animals everywhere will be pacified.

Crops and harvests will be plentiful.

Life will be long, and abundant joy and happiness will well forth.

Death will be free from acute pain and confused perceptions,
and all will obtain excellent rebirths and happiness in future lives.

There is no doubt that this practice easily brings attainment
of the peerless state of perfect awakening.

*Offering a stainless silk offering scarf and one hundred rupees,
Amchi Dordrak supplicated me to write this,
and I, the one known as Chatral Sangye Dorje,
put into words whatever came to mind
regarding constantly endeavoring in the practice of saving lives.
By this virtue, may all sentient beings engage in bodhisattva activity!
Ma Ma Ko Ling Samanta!*