The Bhaktamar Stotra

English translation: Rajib K. Doogar and Jayendra P. Vora,

General notes on interpretation:
hero = teacher, one who is to be emulated; face = teaching; feet = path = teachings; light = knowledge, darkness = ignorance.

I bow respectfully to the one who has shown the path out of the eternal cycle of suffering. Reverence for him enlightens the minds of those who desire true immortality and destroys their sins just as the glory of his feet brightens the luster of the crowns of the immortals who bow to him. ||1||

Indra, the Lord of Heaven, whose comprehension of the essence of all the shastras renders his intelligence beyond compare, has praised you in verses which captivate and delight the hearts of the three worlds. I too sing my praise of you the first Lord of the Jinas. ||2||

I am ignorant while you are the object of worship of the wise. Impudently I come to praise you, though it is beyond my abilities just as who but a child would try to catch the moon’s reflection in water? ||3||

Who can describe your virtues, bright as the moon, O ocean of virtues? (Not even) one wise as the teacher of the devas, Lord Brihaspati. Who can swim the world-ending gale whipped, crocodile-infested ocean with bare arms? ||4||

O Lord of Ascetics, inspired by devotion, I will compose verses (of praise) though it be beyond my powers, just as an emboldened doe forgets her weakness and to protect her offspring, does not fear the lion. ||5||

Little learned, the object of ridicule of the learned, my devotion to you gives me the strength to speak, just as the cuckoo’s spring song is sweetened by the taste of newly sprouted mango buds. ||6||

Reciting your praise instantly destroys sins bodily beings have accumulated over countless births: just as the sun’s rays instantly dispel the darkness that envelops the world at night, blue-black as a bee. ||7||

Thus believing, O Lord, under your benevolent influence, I, though of limited intelligence, start this hymn in the hope that it will please noble souls just as a drop of water, when resting on a lotus leaf, shines like a pearl. ||8||

Faithfully reciting your praise destroys all faults. Merely uttering your name destroys the sins of worldly beings, just as the influence of the distant sun causes the lotus in the lake to blossom. ||9||
O Lord of existence, ornament of the world, it is not surprising that one who is devoted to the contemplation of your virtues becomes like you: who would seek the protection of a master that does not make the protégé his own equal? ||10||

Nothing else pleases the eyes that have gazed on you: having drunk of the milk-ocean, bright as moonlight, who would want to drink salty brine? ||11||

O ornament of the three worlds! All the atoms of peace, beauty and harmony in the world have been used up in creating you, for there is no other like you. ||12||

Your face delights the eyes of gods, men and underworld dwellers, it transcends all analogies in the three worlds. How can it be likened to the moon, dull, pale and spotted as an autumn leaf? ||13||

Your virtues permeate the three worlds, brighter than the light of the full moon, for O Lord of the three realms, who can confine the passage of those who have sought refuge in you, the one true Lord? ||14||

Why should it be surprising that heavenly nymphs could not distract your mind in the slightest? Can even the world-ending gale ever sway the peak of Mount Sumeru? ||15||

Smokeless, needing no oil, you enlighten the three worlds yet the gale that moves immovables has no effect on you. O Lord! Light of the world! you are an incomparable lamp, ||16||

Never setting, never eclipsed, never obscured by clouds, clarifying the universe all at once, O Monk among monks, your glory, transcends that of the sun. ||17||

Ever present, destroying the great darkness of attachment, unlike the moon, never eclipsed, never beclouded, the brilliance of your lotus-like face lights the world incomparably. ||18||

O Lord, what use are the daytime sun or the moon at night when the light of your face is there to dispel darkness? Of what use are rain-bearing clouds in this world once the crop is ripe in the fields? ||19||

The knowledge you have laid down is your glory. It is not to be found in other heroes, just as the brilliance and luster of jewels shining in sunlight is not to be found in pieces of ordinary glass. ||20||

I am glad to have seen Vishnu, Shiva and like Gods. Having seen them, my heart finds satisfaction in you. Having seen you, my mind cannot, in any future birth, be beguiled by anything else O Lord. ||21||

Hundreds of women give birth to hundreds of sons, but none has borne one like you: all directions bear innumerable stars but only the east gives birth to the sun. ||22||

Ascetics consider you to be the supreme human: bright as the sun, flawless, and having conquered darkness. One who, with equanimity, comprehends you, conquers death: O Lord of Ascetics, there
is no other auspicious path to moksha. ||23||

The wise ones speak of you as indestructible, all knowing, transcendental, infinite, original, eternally blissful, majestic, endless, karma destroying, the lord of ascetics, learned in asceticism, multifaceted, unique, omniscient and without fault. ||24||

O worshipped by the wise! You are buddha for you have attained omniscience. You are shankar, for you have propagated peace in the three worlds. O Steadfast One! You are the creator for you are the propounder of the path to liberation. O Venerable One! You are manifestly supreme among beings. ||25||

O Lord, deliverer from the miseries of the three worlds, I bow to you. O Flawless Ornament of the world, I bow to you. O Supreme Lord of the three realms, I bow to you. I bow to you O Jina! O Devourer of the Ocean of Existence! ||26||

Why should it be surprising that all the virtues in the world have sought refuge in you leaving no room for flaws, O Lord of Ascetics! Faults flee elsewhere for they cannot even dream of approaching you. ||27||

Sheltered under a tall Ashoka tree, your countenance, bright and flawless, is incomparably radiant: like clear sunlight rending the darkness of the clouds surrounding the disk of the sun. ||28||

Resplendent on a bejeweled throne, your body, gleaming like gold, resembles the rising sun seen atop a mountain peak, spreading its bright rays across the surrounding sky. ||29||

Like white flowers, the snow-white flywhisks flanking you reflect the golden aura of your body just as the waters of the streams sprung from the twin peaks of Mount Sumeru, clear as moonlight, reflect the golden glow of the mountain itself. ||30||

A three-tiered canopy, fringed with pearls, unfurled high above your luminous presence stops the suns rays and proclaims your Lordship of the three realms. ||31||

Deep and resonant, filling all directions, the sound of drums spreads the news of the victory of your path and your fame and invites the beings of the three worlds to join the auspicious path you have propounded. ||32||

The Gods shower the world with flowers of Mandar, Sundar, Nameru, Suparijat, Santanak and other divine trees when you speak. Their sweet scent wafting in the gentle breeze, the falling flowers resemble the words falling from your lips. ||33||

Your radiance is more luminous than all the glories of the three worlds: brighter than many suns, yet calm and soothing as darkness dispelling moonlight. ||34||

The path to liberation is set out in your wondrous speech which clearly explains the mystery of the world to the inhabitants of three realms in all tongues, in words apt to their true nature and in
accordance with their innate ability to comprehend. ||35||

Nails sparkling with light, your feet glow like freshly blossomed golden lotuses. Wherever your feet wander, O Lord of Jinas, there the Gods cause lotuses to appear. ||36||

O Lord, the glories manifested when you discourse on the Law are not manifested elsewhere. The blaze of light with which the sun strikes at the darkness cannot be equaled by twinkling stars and planets. ||37||

Confronted with a rampaging elephant, large as Airavat, intoxicated by desire and enraged by the buzzing of the bees hovering around a forehead dripping with secretions, one who has sought refuge in you is not scared. ||38||

Even an enraged lion which has ripped open and shattered the forehead of an elephant, scattering bright pearls of bone dripping with blood onto the ground does not attack one who has sought the shelter of your feet. ||39||

The world-ending-gale-whipped fire which scatters burning embers into the skies and threatens to engulf the whole world is extinguished in an instant by the recital of your name. ||40||

With your snake-subjugating name in one’s heart, a person can fearlessly traverse an approaching snake, its eyes like red jewels, its body black as the throat of a cuckoo, its hood raised in rage. ||41||

The recital of your name instantly destroys enemies powerful as a king with an army of neighing horses and roaring elephants, as darkness is pierced by the tips of the rays of the rising sun. ||42||

Great warriors rush about, wending their way amidst rivers of blood flowing from the bodies of elephants pierced by the tips of enemy spears: even in such fierce battle, one who has sought shelter in your lotus feet prevails over an invincible enemy. ||43||

In an ocean infested with hungry, ferocious bands of crocodiles and sharks, fearing marine fire, in a craft tossed about on the crest of agitated waves, recalling you dispells anxieties and delivers to safety. ||44||

Ill with dropsy, disfigured, despairing of recovery or even of survival, one who anoints himself with the dust of your lotus feet is restored to health, rivaling the God of Love in appearance. ||45||

Tied from foot to neck in thick chains, fettered thighs covered with blood, one who recites your name continuously, frees himself from the bonds of fear. ||46||

Enraged elephants, lions, fire, conflict, snakes, disease and bondage: all these fears are instantly destroyed and flee from one who recites this hymn to you. ||47||

O Lord of Jinas, I have composed these verses describing your virtues like a beautiful garland of colorful flowers. Whosoever recites this endlessly will win the favor of Lakshmi. ||48||