

**THE BODHISATVA'S PRECEPTS**  
**GOLDEN ORNAMENT OF THE FORTUNATE ONES,**  
**PLEASING ALL SENTIENT BEINGS**

From the Holy Speech of the Great Guru and Bodhisattva, Tenzin Gyatso, "If one desires to benefit others, one should cultivate Bodhicitta; if one desires to benefit oneself, if one desires the happy path, also one should cultivate the Bodhicitta."

GURU SHAKYAMUNI



THE COMPASSIONATE

Therefore, it is worthwhile and necessary, while we have this precious chance, to train the mind in Bodhicitta.

From the profound Text, Bodhipathapradipa, by the Great Bodhisattva, Atisa, "The man of great level of motivation is one who realises the endless sufferings he is going through and becomes disgusted and tired of these sufferings. He also has sympathy for others who are experiencing the same sufferings, and he sees that others want happiness just as he does. He realises that Liberation just for himself is unfair, so he has the Bodhicitta Wish to attain Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. By taking the Bodhicitta vows, fulfilling the wishing state of Bodhicitta is more effective, one's practice is strengthened and it plants the seed of Bodhicitta in the minds of others as it has been planted in one's own. If one wishes to benefit himself and others he must take these Vows."

From the Holy Speech of the Compassionate Guru, Geshe Ngawang Dargay, "The Bodhicitta Vows will develop only if you take the Vows after you have already had some experience in the practice of Bodhicitta, from having taken special care in contemplating each section of the Mahayana Bodhicitta Meditation. Then if you take the Bodhicitta Vows from an especially qualified and realised Guru, it is certain that taking the Vows will cause you to develop the Enlightened attitude of Bodhicitta."

From the Pure Golden Speech of Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, "Once you have taken the Bodhicitta Vows from the Guru, you should repeat the Bodhicitta Prayer every day." And, "The Bodhicitta Prayer should be repeated consciously, to prevent the mind from forgetting the Vows you have taken. The feeling is more powerful if you know the eighteen Root Vows and the forty-six Auxiliary Vows. By knowing, one makes the promise. The Prayer also reminds you of the Vows you have broken; by not remembering, you don't confess." The Prayer includes the Vows for both the development of the Bodhicitta Will and for the development of entering into the action of a Bodhisattva, which will bring you to Enlightenment.

To recite the Bodhicitta Prayer, visualise your Root Guru in the center of a tree surrounded by the Infinite Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Arhants, the Protecting Deities and all the Holy Gurus in the direct and indirect Lineage of the Teachings, who act as witnesses. Repeat the prayer three times after your Root Guru, who speaks to you from the tree. With each repetition you feel as if your whole body has been filled with the Vows.

"Guru, Buddhas, Sons and All, please give me your attention. As the previous Transcendental Beings generated Bodhicitta and gradually performed the Bodhisattva's Deeds, I will generate the Bodhicitta and practise gradually the Bodhisattva's deeds in order to benefit all sentient beings." ( Deeds means the Bodhisattva's Vows. )

To keep the Vows purely without causing them to decrease, you must follow the commitments of having taken the Vows for the development of the Bodhicitta Will and the commitments of the Vows for the development of entering into the action of a Bodhisattva.

The commitments of the Vows for the development of the Bodhicitta Will include advice as to how to prevent it from decreasing during this lifetime :

1 ) You must remember the advantages of developing Bodhicitta. The Great Bodhisattva, Atisa, said, "If the advantages of the wishing state of Bodhicitta had physical form, any space would be too small to contain those advantages. The merits gained are far greater than offering precious gems in the amount of the sands of the Ganges River."

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2 ) You must take the Vows three times each morning and three times each evening in order to reaffirm and increase your development of Bodhicitta and not to give it up.

3 ) You must counter any arising of the negative attitude not to work for the sake of liberating harmful sentient beings from their sufferings by remembering your Bodhicitta Will.

4 ) You must accumulate merits in order to increase your development of Bodhicitta.

You should also follow the advice as to how cause your development of the Bodhicitta Will not to be lost in all future lives by abandoning the Four Black Dharmas and practising the Four White Dharmas.

The Four Black Dharmas are actions which produce negative karmic results:

1. Confusing your Guru with lies.
2. Discouraging others from practising virtuous actions, and causing them to regret those virtuous actions which they have already done.
3. Abusing and insulting Bodhisattvas with anger.
4. Having ulterior motives, that is, motives other than the pure, unselfish wish to attain Enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.

The Four White Dharmas are actions which act as opponents to the Four Black Dharmas and produce positive karmic results.

1. Abandoning consciously telling lies.
2. Being unbiased, helping all sentient beings in their Dharma practice without having any selfish motives.
3. Recognising all sentient beings as Buddhas, and never seeking their faults.
4. Letting the responsibility ripen on yourself to lead all mother sentient beings to Enlightenment.

If any of the Root Vows are broken one loses all of them, and you should retake them as soon as possible. You can retake them by yourself in front of an image of the Buddha, visualising the image as your Guru and repeating the Bodhicitta Prayer.

There are four conditions needed to completely break the Root Vows, except for numbers nine and eighteen, which do not need any conditions. The conditions are:

1. Thinking that the action of breaking the Vow won't have any negative results ( ignorance ).
2. Wishing to act like this in the future.
3. Being pleased and having admiration for acting like this.
- 4 Not having shame for acting like this.

If you break any of these Bodhicitta Vows you must invoke the Four Powerful Remedies, declaration of negative actions, in order to avoid the negative results. Then you must retake the Bodhicitta Vows at an appropriate ceremony.

From the Holy Speech of the Great Guru, Geshe Ngawang Dargay, "Those who live according to these Teachings are truly practising the Dharma."

## THE EIGHTEEN ROOT VOWS

1. The root vow to abandon praising yourself and belittling others because of your attachment to receiving offerings, being respected and venerated as a teacher, and gaining profit in general.

2. The root vow to abandon not giving material aid or teaching the Dharma to those who are pained with suffering and without a protector because of your being under the influence of miserliness, and wanting to amass knowledge just for yourself.

3. The root vow to abandon not listening to a disciple who has previously offended you, but who declares his offence and begs forgiveness, and holding a grudge against him.

4. The root vow to abandon teaching that the Bodhicitta Teachings are not the Teachings of the Buddha.

5. The root vow to abandon taking offerings to the Three Jewels of Refuge for yourself by means of either sneakily stealing at night, robbing by force or using clever means such as embezzling.

6. The root vow to abandon despising the Tripitaka and saying that these Texts are not the Teachings of the Buddha.



7. The root vow to abandon evicting monks from a monastery, casting monks out of the Sangha, or causing them to take off their robes, even if they have broken their vows, because of not forgiving them.

8. The root vow to abandon committing any of the five heinous crimes of killing your mother, killing your father, killing an Arhant, drawing blood intentionally from a Buddha, and causing division in the Sangha by supporting and spreading sectarian views.

9. The root vow to abandon holding views contrary to the Teachings of the Buddha, such as sectarianism, disbelief in the Three Jewels of Refuge, the Law of Cause and Effect, etc.

10. The root vow to abandon destroying any place or city completely, such as by fire, bombs, pollution, black magic, etc.

11. The root vow to abandon teaching Sunyata to those who are not yet ready to understand it.

12. The root vow to abandon turning people away, working for the full Enlightenment of Buddhahood and encouraging them to work just for their own Nirvana alone.

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13. The root vow to abandon encouraging people, especially Theravadin monks, to abandon their keeping of the Vinaya rules of discipline.

14. The root vow to abandon causing others to hold the incorrect views which you might hold about the Theravadin Teachings, as well as belittling the Theravadin Teachings and saying that they do not lead to Nirvana.

15. The root vow to abandon telling others, even though you have very little or no understanding of Sunyata, that if they get as profound an understanding as you have, they will become as great and as high as you are.

16. The root vow to abandon taking gifts from others and encouraging others to give you things, such as monk's robes, which were confiscated by the adjudicator.

17. The root vow to abandon taking anything away from those monks who are practising meditation and giving it to those who are just reciting texts.

18. The root vow to abandon giving up Bodhicitta.

## THE FORTY-SIX AUXILIARY VOWS

1. The auxiliary vow to abandon not making offerings every day to the Three Jewels of Refuge with your body, speech and mind by making prostrations, offering praises and doing meditation on their good qualities in order to develop faith and confidence in them.

2. The auxiliary vow to abandon following and acting out thoughts with which you desire to grasp and possess things because of discontent.

3. The auxiliary vow to abandon not showing respect to older monks who are Bodhisattvas or who have higher knowledge.

4. The auxiliary vow to abandon not answering questions which are asked sincerely, due to your laziness.

5. The auxiliary vow to abandon not accepting invitations from others because of either anger ( wanting to hurt the other person's feelings), pride ( considering yourself of too high a rank to be with more humble people ), or jealousy ( thinking that other people of higher rank than yourself will look down on you if you are with humble people ).

6. The auxiliary vow to abandon not accepting gifts of money etc. from others because of either anger, pride or jealousy.

7. The auxiliary vow to abandon not teaching the Dharma to those who wish to learn it.

8. The auxiliary vow to abandon ignoring, not forgiving and not helping those who have broken their Sila, discipline of moral self-control.

9. The auxiliary vow to abandon not teaching someone another aspect of the Dharma which they wish to learn and which you are qualified to teach, but which is not your own personal practice or interest.

10. The auxiliary vow to abandon not committing one of the seven non-virtuous actions of the body and speech with the Bodhicitta motivation if circumstances deem it necessary, by saying that to do so would be against the Vinaya rules of vowed discipline.

11. The auxiliary vow to abandon not committing one of the seven non-virtuous actions of the body and speech with the Bodhicitta motivation if circumstances deem it necessary, because of lack of compassion.

12. The auxiliary vow to abandon accepting things from others who have obtained them by one of the five wrong livelihoods:

- A. Using flattery or praise in order to gain something for yourself.
- B. Pressuring someone to give you something by hinting ( saying that he had given you something previously and that it was so beneficial.)
- C. Misusing your power and position for self-profit (inventing penalties, debts, etc., and using them for yourself.)
- D. Bribing ( giving something small in order to receive something great in return. )
- E. Correcting and changing your usual actions to make a good impression ( e. g. arranging your altar beautifully when your sponsor comes to visit.)

13. The auxiliary vow to abandon having your main interest in frivolous activities such as entertainment, sports, drinking, being silly, etc., which cause your mind to wander and you to waste your time limitlessly, which you could be using more constructively for the practice of Dharma.

14. The auxiliary vow to abandon holding the attitude of wishing to escape from Samsara by yourself alone.
15. The auxiliary vow to abandon not correcting the cause of your bad reputation, which hinders your work for others.
16. The auxiliary vow to abandon not dispelling another's vices with wrathful methods which you know will be effective. And also, if you have broken one of your vows because of klesa, not doing the virtuous actions which the proctor assigns to you, as part of the Four Powerful Remedies of Confession, in order to counteract the black karmic consequences.
17. The auxiliary vow to abandon still getting angry while you are practising virtue, and retaliating under the following four circumstances: if you are hit, if you are scolded, if you are called a bad name, or if you are the object of someone's anger.
18. The auxiliary vow to abandon neglecting to help those who are angry with you.
19. The auxiliary vow to abandon refusing to accept the apology of others who admit that they have wronged you.
20. The auxiliary vow to abandon following and acting out thoughts of anger.
21. The auxiliary vow to abandon gathering a circle of disciples and followers because of wishing to obtain profit, praise, love, security, etc. from them.

22. The auxiliary vow to abandon not eliminating from yourself such things as laziness, procrastination, delusions of incapability, wasting your time and energy on trivial matters of Samsara, etc.

23. The auxiliary vow to abandon being addicted to frivolous talk about sex, drinks, drugs, gossip, people etc., because of attachment and desire towards them.

24. The auxiliary vow to abandon not making an effort to study the means for attaining Samadhi, single-minded concentration.

25. The auxiliary vow to abandon not eliminating the distractions which block your meditation.

26. The auxiliary vow to abandon seeing the exhilarating good feelings and other advantages you get from meditation as ends in themselves, and finding them as great knowledge.

27. The auxiliary vow to abandon ignoring to study the Theravadin Teachings and saying that this is not necessary for Bodhisattvas.

28. The auxiliary vow to abandon turning to another means of practice when you are already following an effective means yourself, for this would be like changing teachers and vehicles in mid-stream once you are on a steady and sure course to Enlightenment.

29. The auxiliary vow to abandon spending all your time on reading non-Buddhist teachings which, although permitted and even advantageous for being able to understand and help others, you should not exert your entire time and energy on to the neglect of studying the Buddhist Teachings.

30. The auxiliary vow to abandon favoring and becoming attached to non-Buddhist teachings even when just reading about them.

31. The auxiliary vow to abandon rejecting any of the Mahayana Teachings.

32. The auxiliary vow to abandon praising yourself and belittling others in general, either out of arrogance or out of anger. 16

33. The auxiliary vow to abandon not attending religious discourses, meetings, pujas, ceremonies, due to laziness or pride.

34. The auxiliary vow to abandon despising your Guru and not relying on his words.

35. The auxiliary vow to abandon not giving help due to anger or pride, when your help would be beneficial.

36. The auxiliary vow to abandon avoiding taking care of sick people.

37. The auxiliary vow to abandon not working to alleviate the physical suffering of others.



38. The auxiliary vow to abandon not showing Teachings of the Dharma to those who are unaware of them and who work only for this life.

39. The auxiliary vow to abandon not repaying the kindness that others have shown you.

40. The auxiliary vow to abandon not working to console the mental grief of others.

41. The auxiliary vow to abandon not giving material aid to the poor and needy due to miserliness or laziness.

42. The auxiliary vow to abandon not taking care of your circle of disciples, relatives, attendants and friends by giving them Teachings and material aid.

43. The auxiliary vow to abandon not encouraging and supporting the practice of Dharma and virtuous actions of others according to their minds.

44. The auxiliary vow to abandon not praising and encouraging others who deserve praise.

45. The auxiliary vow to abandon not preventing those who are committing harmful actions in general, and specifically those who are a menace to the Dharma, from continuing their harm by whatever means are deemed necessary by circumstances.

46. The auxiliary vow to abandon, if you possess psychic powers, not using them at a time of need.

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