

The Way of the Bodhisattva by Shantideva
Verses for Study
Translated from Tibetan by Anam Thubten

Chapter 1. Excellence of Bodhicitta

9. At the moment when bodhicitta is born in them,
even those weak ones who are bound in the prison of samsara
will be called the heirs of the Sugatas and
will be worthy to receive prostrations from gods and humans.
15. In brief, bodhicitta
is to be understood as having two aspects:
the bodhicitta of aspiration
and the bodhicitta of engagement.
16. Just like knowing the difference
between wanting to go and going,
so the wise one knows
the difference between the two [bodhicittas].
21. If even having the thought
of dispelling the headache of sentient beings
with such altruism
gives inconceivable merit,
22. then there is no need to speak about
the desire to dispel the inconceivable suffering of each sentient being
and bring about inconceivable goodness
to each of their lives.
28. Even though beings have the desire to get rid of their suffering,
they run to the suffering.
Even though they desire happiness, by the power of ignorance,
they destroy their own happiness as if it were an enemy.
36. I pay homage to those who have developed
this noble precious heart.
I take refuge in that source of joy
who brings happiness even to those who harm the noble one.

Chapter 2 – Confession

26. Until reaching the heart of awakening
I go for refuge in the Buddhas.
Likewise, I go for refuge
in the Dharma and the assembly of bodhisattvas

27. To all the samyaksambuddhas and bodhisattvas
from all directions,
who have great compassion,
I join my hands and pray:
28. In the samsara that has no beginning,
whether in this lifetime or another lifetime,
all the unwholesome deeds that I have committed
incited others to do the same.
29. Out of being enslaved by ignorance and delusion,
I rejoiced in them.
Now I see all these faults
and I confess wholeheartedly in the presence of the protectors.

65. All the guides, please embrace me,
with all my faults.
Since all these actions are unwholesome,
I vow not to do them from now on.

Chapter 3: Taking Hold of Bodhicitta

8. As long as beings are sick,
until their illness is healed,
may I become the medicine and the physician,
and may I serve them.

18. May I become the protector for those who are helpless.
May I become a guide for those who are travelling.
For those who want to cross the water,
may I become a boat, ship, and bridge.

22. All the realms of sentient beings
reaching as far as the limits of sky,
until they all go beyond sorrow,
may I become the source of benefit to them.

23. Just as all the Buddhas of the past
embraced the awakened mind,
and abided and trained in the precepts
of the Bodhisattvas step by step,
24. likewise, for the benefit of all beings,
I shall give rise to the awakened mind,
and continuously train
in the way of the Bodhisattvas

28. The blind find in the midst of dirt
a precious gem.
In the same way, due to good fortune,
Bodhicitta has arisen in me.

Chapter 4: Carefulness

28. Enemies such as hatred and craving--
even though they don't have arms and legs,
and are neither courageous nor clever--
how have they enslaved me?
29. They turn my mind into their home,
and at their pleasure, they harm me.
I tolerate them without anger.
Such tolerance is not noble.
- 41 . Even though I have vowed to free all beings--
throughout the ten directions reaching to the limit of the sky --
from their kleshas,
yet I myself was not free from the kleshas.
42. Not knowing my limits,
how crazy it is to make such a declaration.
Therefore, in order to vanquish my kleshas,
I never shall stop practicing the antidote.
47. Kleshas do not reside in the external objects nor in the sensory faculties, nor
between them.
They do not reside in any other place, yet they harm beings wherever they
reside.
They are like an illusion. Therefore, let go of the fear from your heart
and exert effort in order to know their nature.
Why do I want to let myself suffer in the lower realms for no good reason?

Chapter 5 – Vigilant Introspection

3. If, by the rope of vigilance,
the elephant of the mind is tied up,
all fears will go away,
all the virtue will come to you.

12. Hostile beings are everywhere, as the sky.
It would be impossible to conquer all of them.
Yet conquering this angry mind
would be like conquering all the enemies.

16. Recitations and austerities,
even though one practices them for a long period,
if one's mind is distracted during them,
then the Buddha said all these are futile.

48. Whenever in my mind the urge arises
For desire or anger,
Don't do anything. Don't say anything.
Remain as a log of wood.

104. All the sutras taught the training.
Therefore one shall read the sutras.
The Sutra of Akashagarbha –
one should study that in the beginning.

109. All these must be practiced in action
How can they be actualized just by uttering the words?
By reading the medical texts,
can a sick person be healed?

Chapter 6 – Patience

1. Generosity and offerings to the Sugatas and so forth,
all those good deeds accumulated
for a thousand eons
can be destroyed by one single moment of anger.

- 9 No matter whatever the cost,
I shall not disturb my happy state of mind.
Being unhappy would not accomplish my goals anyway
and would decrease all my virtues.

10. If you can change something,
why should you be unhappy?
If you cannot change it,
then it's pointless to be unhappy.

(Or, as Mickey Rivers, Texas Rangers outfielder, said, quoted in *Voices of Baseball*)

“Ain’t no sense in worrying about things you got control over ‘cause if you got control over them, ain’t no sense in worrying. And there ain’t no sense in worrying about things you got no control over, ‘cause if you got no control over them, ain’t no sense in worrying.”

107. Without going through any hardships
a treasure is discovered at home,
just like that, my adversary becomes an ally for my bodhisattva path,
so I should rejoice in them.

Chapter 7 – Diligence

1. Exert diligence with patience,
for enlightenment lies in diligence.
Without wind there's no movement.
Just like that, there would not be merit without diligence.
2. Diligence is the love of virtue.
Let's talk about its opposite:
Laziness, attachment to the unwholesome,
cowardliness, and disparaging one's self.
14. By relying on the boat of human life,
one will cross the great river of suffering.
It would be hard to find this boat again;
you ignorant one, do not fall asleep.
40. Root of all virtue,
Buddha said, is devotion.
The root of devotion is
the constant meditation on the fruition of actions.
70. Sending someone with a container filled with sesame-oil,
with a person standing next to him with a sword,
[he is] afraid that the person will kill him if it spills.
Likewise, the yogi always concentrates on bodhicitta.

Chapter 8 – Meditation

4. Through vipashyana accompanied by shamata,
the kleshas will be utterly conquered. Knowing that,
in the beginning one should seek shamata.
It is actualized by those who are free from attachment to the world.

25. In the forest, with the wild animals and birds,
trees would not utter unpleasant words.
There is joy in their company.
When would such a place be my abode?

120. Those who have a desire
for the immediate liberation for self and others
must exchange self and other
and practice such a holy secret.

135. Until one lets go of oneself completely,
suffering would not be alleviated,
just like unless one lets go of fire,
one would not be free of being burned.

186. Just like the compassionate bodhisattvas,
I will bear with what I have to take on.
If I do not exert myself day and night,
When would I reach the end of my sorrows?

Chapter 9 – Wisdom

2. The relative and the ultimate--
These are regarded as two truths.
The ultimate truth is not in the domain of the mind.
The mind itself is regarded as the relative.
3. There are two worlds--
that of the yogi and that of ordinary people.
The ordinary world is challenged
by the world of the yogi.
32. By training in the habit of emptiness,
one removes the habit of reification.
After being familiar with negation,
that is also transcended.
34. When real and non-real
are absent in the mind,
then there is not another mental image.
Rest at peace without any reference point.

Chapter 10 – Dedication

1. By all the virtues
from my engaging with the way of the Bodhisattva,
may all living beings
engage with the way of the bodhisattva.
2. In every direction,
those who are ill with suffering physically or mentally,
by my merit
may they all obtain the sea of the joy.
37. May all living beings
hear the sound of Dharma ceaselessly
from the birds, tree,
rays of light, and the sky.
44. May the bhikshunis find sustenance.
May they be free from conflict and harm.
Likewise, may all the renunciants
not break their precepts.
55. As long as space remains,
as long as sentient beings exist,
may I remain till then
and be able to dispel the sorrow of beings.