

## The Bodhicitta Vows

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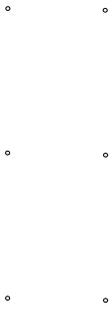
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## THE EIGHTEEN ROOT BODHICITTA VOWS

- 1. 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. 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, wanting to amass knowledge for yourself alone.
- 3. Not listening to someone who has previously offended you but who declares his offence and begs forgiveness, and holding a grudge against him.
- 4. Condemning the teachings of Buddha and teaching distorted views.
- 5. Taking offerings to the Three Jewels of Refuge for yourself by such means as stealth, robbery or devious schemes.
- 6. Despising the Tripitaka and saying that these texts are not the teachings of Buddha.
- 7. Evicting monks from a monastery or casting them out of the Sangha even if they have broken their vows, because of not forgiving them.
- 8. Committing any of the five heinous crimes of killing your mother, your father, an Arhat, drawing blood intentionally from a Buddha or causing division in the Sangha by supporting and spreading sectarian views.
- 9. Holding views contrary to the teachings of Buddha such as sectarianism, disbelief in the Three Jewels of Refuge, the law of cause and effect and so forth.
- 10. Completely destroying any place by such means as fire, bombs, pollution and black magic.
- 11. Teaching Sunyata to those who are not yet ready to understand it.
- 12. Turning people away from working for the Full Enlightenment of Buddhahood and encouraging them to work merely for their own Liberation from suffering.
- 13. Encouraging people to abandon their vowed rules of moral conduct.

- 14. Causing others to hold the distorted views you might hold about the Hinayana teachings, as well as belittling the Hinayana teachings and saying that their practice does not lead to Nirvana.
- 15. Practising, supporting or teaching the Dharma for financial profit and fame while saying that your motives are pure and that only others are pursuing Dharma for such base aims.
- 16. Telling others, even though you may have very little or no understanding of Sunyata, that if they obtain as profound an understanding as you have, that then they will become as great and as highly realised as you are.
- 17. Taking gifts from others and encouraging others to give you things originally intended as offerings to the Three jewels of Refuge.
- 18. Taking anything away from those monks who are practising meditation and giving it to those who are merely reciting texts.



The forty-six auxiliary vows are to abandon the following actions:

- 1. 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 respectful belief and confidence in them.
- 2. Following and acting out thoughts with which you desire to grasp and possess things because of discontent.
- 3. Not showing respect to older monks who may be Bodhisattvas.
- 4. Not answering questions you are capable of answering.
- 5. Not accepting invitations from others because of either anger, wanting to hurt the other person's feelings; pride, considering yourself of too exalted a rank to be with more humble people; or jealousy, thinking other people of more respected rank than yourself will look down on you if you are seen with humble people.
- 6. Not accepting gifts of money and so forth from others because of either anger, pride or jealousy.



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Produced by  
**Dharma Therapy Trust**  
 under the guidance of  
**Venerable Geshé Damchö Yönten**

March 1998

- 7. Not teaching the Dharma to those who wish to learn it.
- 8. Ignoring, not forgiving and not helping those who have broken their discipline of moral self-control.
- 9. Not teaching someone another aspect of the Dharma which he wishes to learn and which you are qualified to teach, but which is not your own personal practice or interest.
- 10. Not committing one of the seven non-virtuous actions of the body and speech with a Bodhicitta motivation, if circumstances deem it necessary, by saying that to do so would be against the vowed rules of moral conduct.
- 11. Not committing one of the seven non-virtuous actions of the body and speech with a Bodhicitta motivation, if circumstances deem it necessary, because of lack of compassion.
- 12. Accepting things from others who have obtained them by one of the five wrong livelihoods, namely flattery, extortion or blackmail, contrivance, bribery or deceit.
- 13. Having your main interest be in frivolous activities such as entertainment, sports, drinking, being silly and so forth, causing your mind to wander and you to waste your time limitlessly, which you could be using more constructively for the practice of Dharma.
- 14. Holding an attitude of wishing to escape from samsara by yourself alone.
- 15. Not keeping these Bodhicitta vows because you think this will make you unpopular.
- 16. If you have broken one of your vows because of defilements, not doing opponent virtuous actions assigned to you.
- 17. Still becoming angry, while you are practising virtue, and retaliating if you are hit, scolded, called a derogatory name or are the object of someone's anger.
- 18. Neglecting to help those who are angry with you.
- 19. Refusing to accept the apology of others who admit they have wronged you.
- 20. Following and acting out thoughts of anger.

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21. Gathering a circle of disciples and followers because you wish to obtain such things as profit, praise, love and security from them.
22. Not eliminating from yourself such obstacles as laziness, procrastination, delusions of incapability and wasting your time and energy on trivial matters of samsara.
23. Being addicted to frivolous talk and gossip about sex, drinks, drugs, sectarianism and so forth because of your attachment and desire for them.
24. Not making an effort to study the means for attaining single-minded concentration.
25. Not eliminating the distractions that block your meditation.
26. Seeing the exhilarating good feelings and other benefits you obtain from meditation as being ends in themselves, and being attached to them.
27. Neglecting to study the Hinayana teachings.
28. Turning to another means of practice when you already are 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. Spending all your time and energy on reading non-Buddhist teachings which, although permitted and even beneficial for enabling you to understand and help others, should not be pursued to the neglect of studying the Dharma.
30. Favouring and becoming attached to non-Buddhist teachings even when merely reading about them.
31. Rejecting the Mahayana teachings.
32. Praising yourself and belittling others in general because of arrogance or anger.
33. Not attending religious discourses, meetings, pujas, ceremonies and so forth.
34. Despising your Guru and not relying on his words.
35. Not giving help to those who need it,
36. Avoiding taking care of sick people.
37. Not working to alleviate the physical suffering of others.
38. Not showing the teachings of the Dharma to those who are unaware of them and who work only for this life.

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39. Not repaying the kindness others have shown you.
40. Not working to relieve the mental grief of others.
41. Not giving material aid to the poor and needy.
42. Not taking care of your circle of disciples, relatives, attendants and friends by giving them teachings and material aid.
43. Not encouraging and supporting the practice of Dharma and the virtuous actions of others.
44. Not praising and encouraging others who deserve praise.
45. 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. If you possess extra-physical powers, not using them at a time of need.

There are four attitudes that must all be present in transgressing any vow for a vow to be broken completely. With the first attitude, you do not regard what you have done as being a mistake. With the second, you do not turn away from thinking to repeat this action. With the third, you rejoice and are happy about what you have done. And with the fourth attitude, being shameless and inconsiderate, you do not care about the consequences of your action for yourself and for others.

If you break any of these Bodhicitta vows, you must invoke the four opponent powers of declaring your previously committed non-virtuous actions in order to avoid experiencing their black karmic consequences. Then you must retake the Bodhicitta vows at an appropriate ceremony.

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