

Verses and Short Teachings on Bodhicitta

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The process of going beyond suffering and helping others do the same is the way of the Bodhisattva.

- Chagdud Tulku

One may be born in chaotic times when people's lives are difficult; one wants to help but does not have much power to provide relief. Investigating this in depth, one knows that only by studying Buddhism and becoming a Buddha can one really save sentient beings from suffering. One thus has great compassion that leads one to seek enlightenment and to save all.

- From *The Way to Buddhahood*, by the Venerable Yin-Shun

From The Mahayana Motivation is Like Aiming to Become a Doctor

We can go to the doctor, to a clinic or hospital for any of a number of reasons. If it's some small, temporary problem, we would go to be treated for that. If it is something more serious, or chronic, we could go for example for an operation, or to a treatment facility for an extended period of time, until we were fully cured.

We could also go to a doctor, to or healer, or to a teaching hospital with the aim of becoming a doctor. Following the footsteps of those who cared for us, and being inspired by them, we can determine to support them, and to learn from them how to help others in the same way.

This has its parallel in the different reasons why a person would approach Buddhist study and practice. We can be seeking relief from some temporary problem or suffering of body or mind. This can be likened to taking refuge, practicing the precepts and meditation. Its purpose is to relieve the sufferings we experience, and to restore peace and harmony in our lives.

We can also approach Buddhist practice with an aim to become free from all suffering and its causes. This is a different level of motivation that may arise from the first. Not content with suffering repeatedly, time and again, across lifetimes, once we hear that liberation is possible, and have some faith that freedom from all suffering could be attained, we commit ourselves to that, out of far reaching compassion for ourselves. We renounce samsara, and practice the unified path of ethics, meditation, and wisdom to accomplish our aims.

As it is with someone receiving treatment for an extended period of time, this level of concern and commitment is deeper, it goes much further, and is more focussed. It becomes our priority, excluding other matters for as long as needed.

We can also approach Buddhism to accomplish this path and help others in the same way. This is the Mahayana motivation. We see the necessity of becoming a capable and loving person in the world. What distinguishes the Buddha and all those with realization in any tradition is that they have the living knowledge of how to become free from suffering and to realize true health, peace and fulfillment, and this is what they give impartially...

Why light a small stick of incense,
or softly ring a bell in sanctuary
if these are here so briefly,
and then
are simply gone

but this song is eternal,
moving like a river
and our lives are woven
with this light

these are small gestures
that speak at times of consolation
and at times
as words and signs
that reveal gifts

'til these fields are turned again,
and all new worlds begin

It amazes me
how prayer is like a river,
always new, and enlivening

We may write words down,
or carve them in granite, but these fade
and the original impulse alone remains

building monasteries and temples,
churches, mosques, and synagogues,
crafting statutes and thankas,
and writing scriptures in gold

rousing people from their bed,
lighting their lamp,
cooking their food,
giving us strength for each new day,
and song, and consolation

This is manna, to be trusted in,
sign and substance,
The ground of our faith

Oh, wonder of wonders

It is there in the warmth of every touch that renews,
in every voice crying out,
and in every gentle voice that goes to meet them

{I am amazed to see all this today,
and how we are part of it, and it is part of us...}

From this day forward, wherever you are,
give praise to the Bodhisattva Vow -

And wherever you go,
encourage yourself and others to take it up,
and bring it to fulfillment

Then, whatever body and land you are born into,
whatever the conditions,
your work will be the same as all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

- Based on a verse by Shinran

What is it that gives the bodhisattva this strength by which he excels all the rest? It is his capacity to sustain the comprehension of the true nature of things, his capacity to bear with every circumstance devoid of fear and anxiety, and his ability to meet every situation with unimpeded insight and unbounded compassion.

- K. Venkata Ramanan, Nagarjuna's Philosophy

As quoted in Jung's Psychology and Tibetan Buddhism, by Radmila Moacanin

An incomparable spark of divinity is to be found in the heart of each human being, waiting to radiate love and wisdom everywhere, because that is its nature. Amazing!

- Eknath Easwaran

Dwelling deep within our hearts, and the hearts of all beings without exception is an inexhaustible source of love and wisdom. And the ultimate purpose of all spiritual practices, whether they are called Buddhist or not, is to make contact with this essentially pure nature.

- Lama Thubten Yeshe

From Practicing the One Vehicle - Accomplishing All Purposes

There are times when we need to focus on our own liberation, before we can be receptive to the needs of others, and respond to them well. When we take care of ourselves with the Dharma, we find that much more is included in it than our own personal freedom. Another term for this is becoming a fully capable person...

Our nature is *already* Mahayana. It is already, by itself, naturally, selfless love. It just needs to be revealed...

In An Explanation of the Vajra Verse Supplication, it's said of Guru Rinpoche that,

through his realization, he liberates himself, and through his loving care he liberates others...

Reconciling the vehicle of individual liberation and that of our dedication to all others is found in practicing the one vehicle, the Buddhayana, the vehicle of awakening...

The bases from which bodhichitta can arise, by Mindrolling Jetsün
Khandro Rinpoche

There are four primary conditions upon which bodhichitta can be based and generated.

Number one: bodhichitta - whether you call it good-heartedness, loving kindness, enlightened heart, or awakened heart - is able to arise from innate wakefulness.

If you are someone with an innate power of reflection or thoughtfulness, gentleness, and quietness; if you are able, without depending on any external supports, to wake up to the feeling that bodhichitta resonates in your mind, - this is one way that bodhichitta can be generated. Virtue is about using your senses in a way that is responsive to the needs of others.

Second, bodhichitta is generated through the strength of a virtuous life, which means one's virtuous attitude and conduct. Such virtue is nothing profound. It means being mindful and consciously aware of how your actions and speech affect others. When you go to a restaurant, for example, and some wonderful person holds the door open so you can pass through, that is a simple gesture of virtue.

Virtue is about decency; it's about respect. Virtue is about using your senses in a way that is responsive to the needs of others. If that kind of virtue is naturally strong in you - even if you cannot say the Sanskrit word - you can be sure that bodhichitta resides in your heart.

Third, bodhichitta is said to arise from the strength of meditation and contemplation. Through the power of meditating and contemplating, you may meet with the inner wisdom awareness. That very simple “clicking-in” brings the awareness that the actions of your body, speech, and mind do impact the lives of others. You cannot be careless with your attitude or actions, because this is not - as many of us believe - just your life.

Our lives do depend on others; in the same way, many lives do depend on us. What I say and do, my personality, mannerisms and behavior, my likes and dislikes all have an immense impact on the lives of my family and friends, the people I work with, my community, society, and the world at large. When that awareness arises as the resultant state of contemplation, meditation, or reflection that is also a point where bodhichitta can arise.

The fourth basis from which bodhichitta can arise is what you are experiencing by being in the presence of an enlightened spiritual master, whose very life is an inspiration to cultivate bodhichitta. This is the fourth way one may be inspired to meet with bodhichitta. Then you don't have to spend so much time philosophizing about one of the most simple, beautiful, and most cherished qualities of human nature: loving kindness, which is bodhichitta.

It is very helpful to explore these four: innate wakefulness, the strength of virtue, the strength of meditation, and being in the presence of great beings who exemplify great compassion and loving kindness.

These are the bases from which bodhichitta can arise.

*With the thought to awaken the life
that is of the most benefit to others,
consider each activity, including taking care of yourself
as the actual practice of benefiting others.
Generate a parent's love.*

*A great many are with you now, this moment,
and the entirety of this vast field
will be reached, both now and in the future
by the life you live today*

*For all the uncontrollable suffering,
have mercy
generate a life that can heal every sorrow
and end, at last, the trains of hurt that have
been passed on...*

Seeing the world of sentient beings,
so full of afflictions,
bodhisattvas arouse their energy,
thinking,

‘I should rescue and liberate these beings;
I should purify and emancipate them;

I should lead them,
direct them,

make them happy,
develop them,
and cause them to reach perfect peace.’

Thus dedicated to the salvation of all beings,
the bodhisattva reflects thus,

‘By what means can these beings,
fallen as they are into such misery,
be lifted out of it?’

and it occurs to these bodhisattvas,

‘The means to do this is nowhere else
but in the knowledge of liberation...’

The bodhisattvas thus devote themselves

to their realization of the Buddha's Way,

From The Avatamsaka Sutra - 722

From the teachings of Ringu Tulku Rinpoche I

Taking Refuge and then renouncing samsara is the expression of compassion for ourselves, with clear wisdom;

Bodhicitta is a natural extension of Refuge - the same happiness, health and peace we want for ourselves, we wish for all others as well. We dedicate ourselves to that aim.

Bodhicitta exalts our sense of refuge. We understand that all beings are ensnared in the predicament of samsara. When we pray for protection, we pray that they likewise will find safety and refuge. When we pray for enlightenment, we pray that we can guide them to that same state. We include all beings in our practice...

- Chagdud Tulku

The relationship between liberating wisdom and compassion

When the Dalai Lama was asked

What is the relationship between shunyata (the wisdom perceiving emptiness) and compassion?

he answered:

The idea of shunyata, I think, brings the aim, the possibility of the cessation of suffering, so that is an immense help for compassion, because compassion is a desire to get rid of the suffering of other beings. So once you see the possibility of the cessation of suffering, your concern for their suffering becomes something realistic, otherwise it's just wishful thinking. So that's the connection...

From Thrangu Rinpoche I

Essentially love consists of wanting others to be happy, and compassion consists of wanting others not to suffer. These two attitudes, of course, are excellent. But if they are present without any way to bring about what you wish - if your love is without any way to bring about the happiness of beings and your compassion is devoid of any way to remove the sufferings of beings - then they will actually become a cause of greater suffering and sadness for you. You will be more sensitive to the sufferings of others because of your attitude, but will feel unable to help. And so, instead of just the other being suffering, two beings will suffer - you will suffer as well.

If, however, the attitudes of love and compassion include *the understanding of how you can actually bring about happiness and freedom from suffering*, then these attitudes do not become sources of depression. Therefore we expand the attitude of love from “*may all beings be happy*” to “*may all beings be happy and possess causes of happiness,*” and expand the attitude of compassion from “*may all beings be free from suffering*” to “*may all beings be free from suffering and free from causes of suffering.*”

Compassion with Wisdom, by Ringu Tulku

From his commentary on Gampopa's Great Teaching to the Assembly

Bodhicitta is usually thought of as compassion, but it is more than compassion - it is compassion inseparable from wisdom. Bodhicitta focuses on two things: on sentient beings, and on liberation.

Ordinarily, when we feel compassion we focus only on sentient beings. We see that people have problems, we feel very sad about that, and we strongly wish for them to be free from suffering. Usually, it doesn't go further than this.

The problem with just focusing on the suffering of others though is that this kind of compassion can be painful for us as well...

Therefore, bodhicitta also focuses on liberation. When you have *compassion with wisdom*, not only do you see the suffering of others and want it to end, you also know there is a way out. This makes bodhicitta a hopeful, optimistic kind of compassion. Your enthusiasm comes from knowing there is a path out of suffering.

With bodhicitta as a basis, whatever you do is for the benefit of all beings. Inspired by compassion with wisdom, you act with enthusiasm and purpose. Bodhicitta gives you a clear vision. Your compassion becomes focussed, directed, and optimistic...

From A Summary of the Stages of the Path Teachings

When one has great love and compassion for all that lives, together with the thought that enlightened understanding and activity is both possible, and is the highest good for all, so greatly needed in these times, *these are the causes* for the bodhisattva motivation, which is the aim to live an awakened life in order to bring the greatest benefit to all sentient beings, and the practice of the Perfections, *and the result is enlightenment.*

Ringu Tulku III

A bodhisattva is someone who says from the depth of his or her heart, “I want to be liberated and find ways to overcome all the problems of the world. I want to help all my fellow beings to do likewise. I long to attain the highest state of everlasting peace and happiness, in which all suffering has ceased, and I want to do so for myself and for all sentient beings.”

According to the Buddha’s teaching, anyone who makes this firm and heartfelt commitment is a bodhisattva. We become bodhisattvas from the moment we have this vast and open heart, called bodhichitta, the mind intent on bringing lasting happiness to all sentient beings.

I carry within me
medicine for the whole world,
but if I don't take it myself,
I'm not going to make it

To recover my sight, and strength,
to be able to continue on this road
to the fulfillment of my purpose

What I would share with all,
I need to practice, and realize

Everything you do, you do for everyone. That is the meaning of Mahayana.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

From A Guide to Walking Meditation, by Thich Nhat Hanh

Practicing meditation gives you a lot of joy, peace, and helps you to see things deeply, and clearly, and the benefit will be for all of us.

You know, during the war in Vietnam, many people lost their limbs - they cannot practice walking meditation. And, at Plum Village, last year there was one person who came to practice, but she did not have one leg, and so she could not practice walking meditation.

I asked her to sit on a chair, and identify herself with someone that she considered to be doing walking meditation in the best way, and identify herself with that person, and follow each step of that person, as if she walks herself.

And sitting on a chair, she practiced walking meditation - someone is walking for her, and she identified herself with that person. And after five minutes I saw tears running down her cheeks...

You know that today we have our feet intact. We can practice walking meditation. We should be able to do it. You do it for her. *You do it for those who have no occasion, no time for practice.*

From Steps on the Path to Enlightenment, Volume Two, by Geshe Sopa

Bodhicitta means wanting to attain the highest goal of buddhahood in order to help other sentient beings. You want to help them because you see how they are trapped in a seemingly endless cycle of misery, which is perpetuated by their own misunderstanding, attachment, and hatred. You see how these mental afflictions produce wrong action, and how this cycle of afflictions and harmful action causes their lives of misery to go on and on.

You empathize with these suffering sentient beings and you want to help them. In order to rescue them from the mire of cyclic existence, you want to lead them to perfect buddhahood. In order to do that, you know that you yourself must first obtain liberation and enlightenment.

This is what bodhicitta means: wanting to save all other living beings, and in order to do that, wanting to quickly become a perfect being oneself, wanting to attain the perfect wisdom, perfect compassion, and perfect power of a buddha. Once you have completed these qualities of a buddha, you can be of immeasurable benefit to all beings...

Bodhicitta is the wish to lead all beings to freedom from all misery. It is the wish to quickly obtain enlightenment for that purpose. Such an attitude of course has great power.

Quotes on how much we need realized people in this world

Because sentient beings are suffering and need our help, we need to actualize dharmakaya right now

With this realization you can perfectly guide sentient beings with perfect methods all the time, without the slightest mistake.

The quicker we achieve enlightened understanding and activity, the quicker we actualize it through the practice of Dharma, the quicker we can guide sentient beings, and the shorter they suffer. The longer it takes, the longer other sentient beings have to suffer, and even one sentient being suffering is too much.

- LZR

{For a Mahayanist} this desire to gain liberation comes from unbearable compassion for others. We realize that the longer it takes us to achieve enlightenment, the longer everyone we could help will have to wait.

The strong intention comes from the wish to help others as much as possible, as quickly as possible.

- LTY

This is a matter of great urgency, of great urgency.

Here we are talking about liberating ourselves from all suffering, but our reason for taking refuge doesn't finish right there. Numberless sentient beings are suffering like ourselves and in order to free all of them from all those oceans of samsaric suffering and its causes, we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, who have the qualities and the power to liberate us and all sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and its cause, delusion and karma.

With this vast understanding, this deep understanding of suffering and the cause - of your own and numberless sentient beings' suffering - you generate compassion toward them, then rely upon Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. With that, you recite the prayer. Then the words and your heart go together.

It's important for you to practice Dharma as much as possible yourself, to actualize the path, and to help other people, those sentient beings who have human bodies, understand Dharma; to get others to practice Dharma. Actually, it's unbelievably urgent...

- LZR

That which naturally takes a long time to accomplish can be shortened by the intensity of action.

- Swami Vivekananda

You should not give in to the ignorance grasping at true existence anymore. Dispel this darkness of ignorance from your mind and the minds of all dear mother sentient beings by sharing this light of the wisdom of emptiness with others.

It is better that we do not waste our precious time and rather engage in the urgent mission of bringing unconditional happiness and peace to all our mothers and to ourselves.

Concluding the day with a meditation on emptiness and sealing the day's virtuous practices with prayers will be profoundly helpful.

- Geshe Dorji Damdul

This life is precious, may I use it well...

May I see the truth of impermanence, and use this understanding well...

Actions bring results according to their cause,

and there is no lasting happiness in any of the realms of samsara...

Understanding this much,

I take refuge the Buddha, the Light of the World,

the Great Compassionate Teacher,

I take refuge in the Dharma, in all the Liberating Teachings

and I take refuge in the Noble Sangha,

the Accomplished Spiritual Community,

the Great Assembly of Saints and Bodhisattvas

May all share in these blessings

Especially now, may I think of all beings with great love and compassion,
and generate the supreme awakening mind...

May I think of them all as my family,
and care for them all as my own...

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta,
arise where it has not yet arisen,
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish,
May it ever grow and flourish...

May I accomplish this one path,
and may all temporal and ultimate aims be fulfilled

Verses for generating the mind of enlightenment

May I think all beings with great love and compassion,
and generate the supreme awakening mind...

May I think of them all as my family,
and care for them all as my own.

May all beings have happiness
and all the causes of true happiness flourishing...

May all beings be completely and permanently free of all suffering
and all the causes of suffering...

I celebrate all that is beautiful and right in the world,
I rejoice in all kindness, virtue, positive actions and intentions,
and in all success, happiness, and good fortune...

and abide in impartial love...

Seeing the world of sentient beings,
so full of suffering, I will follow the bodhisattva's way.

May I clearly see that what I and all others so urgently need
is complete liberation of mind, perfect peace and freedom,
and that in taking care of myself, I am taking care of all of us
With an understanding of the Noble Truths,

may my love and compassion become the dedication to helping others
through my realization of this path

May I always cherish all living beings,
with the determination to accomplish for them this highest good
that is more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel

An Awakened One has appeared in this world.
He has taught the way to freedom,
and generations of his followers to this day have realized his teachings.

Homage!

{The Bodhisattva Vow}

Just as all previous Buddhas first awakened the precious bodhimind,
and just as they then carefully followed each of the requisite stages of the
Bodhisattva disciplines,
in the same way, for the sake of living beings,
I will awaken and cultivate the bodhimind,
this all embracing intention,
and then train in every one of the essential disciplines of a Bodhisattva.

I take refuge in the Buddha, the Light of the World,
the Great Compassionate Teacher
I take refuge in the Dharma, in all the Liberating Teachings
and I take refuge in the Noble Sangha, the Accomplished Spiritual
Community, the Great Assembly of Saints and Bodhisattvas

By the merit I have accumulated by practicing Generosity, and other
 Virtues, {Ethics, Patience, Joyful Effort, Meditation, and Wisdom...}
 May I accomplish each of the stages of liberation and enlightened
 understanding and activity,
 and help bring all others, without a single exception,
 to these very same states.

With my heart going out with great compassion
 in whatever direction these most precious teachings and their result
 have not yet spread,
 or, once spread, have declined,
 there may I bring this treasure of happiness and aid!

Limitless is the extent of space,
 and limitless is the number of sentient beings
 Limitless are the karmas and delusions of beings
 Such then are the limits of my aspirations!

For as long as space endures,
 and for as long as living beings remain,
 until then, may I too abide,
 to dispel the misery of the world

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta,
 arise where it has not yet arisen,
 Where it has arisen, may it not diminish,
 May it ever grow and flourish...

However many species of living beings there are, we must lead all these beings to perfect peace and freedom; And when this innumerable, immeasurable, infinite number of beings has become liberated, we do not, in truth, think that a single being has been liberated...

Why is this so? If a bodhisattva holds on to the idea that a self, a person, a living being, or a life span exists, that person is not a bodhisattva {someone who is both willing and able to lead others to freedom}

{The Diamond Sutra, verse 3}

If no beings exist [in ultimate reality], toward whom should we have compassion? To attain the result [of buddhahood, which is to be achieved only through the awakening of both great compassion and wisdom], one should direct one's compassion toward whatever it is that unenlightened beings call 'beings. {Shantideva}

On the conventional level of reality, beings do not exist as they see themselves or as they are seen by other unenlightened beings. The bodhisattva realizes that, in ultimate reality, there are no beings who exist as unenlightened beings think, but he directs his mind toward those beings as they perceive themselves.

On the ultimate level, he sees no beings, but he realizes that on the conventional level, beings think they exist and do experience suffering. Out of objectless compassion, therefore, he directs his mind toward them. {Deshung Rinpoche}

So, Subhuti, all the bodhisattva mahasattvas should give rise to a pure and clear intention in this spirit... They should give rise to an intention with their minds not dwelling anywhere...

{The Diamond Sutra, verse 10}

Taking Responsibility

Adapted from *A Monastic's Mind*, by the Venerable Thubten Chodron

As we remain connected to the tradition and to these teachings longer and longer, we come to understand how our behavior affects other people, and we begin to feel some responsibility for the continuity of the teachings.

These precious teachings, which have helped us so much, began with the Buddha. They were then passed down through lineages of practitioners over the centuries, and because those people practiced well and remained together in communities, we are fortunate enough to receive so much positive energy...

When we receive ordination, and connect with this tradition, it's like we are on the crest of this wave, and receiving the virtue that all the Sangha before us have created for over 2,500 years.

After some time, we begin to think,

I've got to contribute some virtue so that future generations can meet the Dharma and so that other people around me can benefit.

We begin to feel more responsible for the existence and spread of the teachings.

After some time we begin to say,

What can I give to the community?

How can I help the Sangha?

What can I give to the individuals in the community?

What can I give to the laity?

What can I give?

As monastics and as lay practitioners we can ask ourselves,

What can I give to this 2,500 year-old community?

How can I help the Sangha and the individuals in it so that they can continue to benefit in the future?

Orienting ourselves this way, not only will we feel more content inside ourselves as we change our attitude, but we'll also be able to make a positive contribution to the welfare of sentient beings.

To make a positive contribution we don't need to be important or famous... We shouldn't make a big deal... if we just try to work on our own mind, be kind to other people, support them in their practice, and listen to them because we care about them, then slowly a transformation will occur within ourselves. Who we are as a person will change.

Adapted from *The Ceremony Praising Ancestral Teachers*, by Thich Nhat Hanh

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Homage to the Ancestral Teachers of all ages!

With whole-hearted aspiration, I bow my head and request all generations of Ancestral Teachers to bear compassionate witness to my words:

I am aware that just as trees have their roots, and water has its source, the Buddha and all generations of Ancestral Teachers are my source;

I am the continuation of you, my ancestors, and these are my aspirations:

To receive the awakened understanding, compassion, peace, joy, and healing energy that the Buddha and the Ancestral Teachers transmit to us...

To maintain these and to help them grow, never allowing this precious spiritual inheritance to come to an end...

To continue to realize your aspiration to help all beings...

To transform my own suffering, and to help the people of this time to transform their suffering...

To open Dharma doors for this and future generations which are appropriate, and that can help them to apply the teachings of Buddhism in all fields of life...

And to practice to live happily and peacefully in the present moment, to nourish solidity and freedom in myself, in order to help those around me

I call upon my teachers and spiritual ancestors

May we all receive your blessings

May we all receive your light, inspiration, and strength

From *Ceaseless Echoes of The Great Silence*, by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

The enlightened being, the bodhisattva, must be courageous because he no longer exists merely for himself and his family and friends. He has dedicated the activities of this body, speech and mind to bringing joy and happiness to all sentient beings- not just ten or a hundred, a few thousand or a hundred thousand, but to sentient beings as limitless in number as space itself. According to the Buddha, the bodhisattva's courage has to be equally infinite in scope, making neither exceptions nor discriminations.

The duration of this courage too, must be infinite, if you are to work for all of them. It must continue on for hundreds and hundreds of aeons, equal to the infinity of sentient beings who are suffering. Courage must, too, remain changeless and indestructible as a mountain. Like the earth, which remains earth regardless of what is built upon it, or a bridge which remains a bridge regardless of the people or cars that traffic upon it, the bodhisattva must help others with perfect and pure intensity.

There will inevitably be some who do not recognize what you are doing; they might be mean or stubborn towards you. Never be bored or upset, just continuously radiate courage until sentient beings are free from suffering. Then you will be known as a bodhisattva.

When the actual process of enlightenment was examined, the Mahayana found that it consisted of two definite steps.

In the beginning it was necessary to create for the sake of others an urgent longing for enlightenment, and then the attainment of the final goal would be possible.

The longing was just as important and full of meaning as the attainment itself, for the latter was impossible without the former; indeed the latter determined the former in every way,

That is, the time, strength, efficacy, etc., of enlightenment entirely depended upon the quality of the initiative will-power raised for the attainment of the final object.

The motive determined the course, character, and power of the conduct. The desire for enlightenment intensely stirred meant, indeed, that the greater and more difficult part of the work was already achieved.

- D.T. Suzuki

From The Life of Shabkar

The core of Shabkar's practice was the Great Perfection, Atiyoga, the summit of the nine vehicles, the extraordinary treasure of the Nyingma tradition. Yet his realization of the Great Perfection was firmly grounded in the impeccable precepts of the Kadampa masters, which inspire practitioners to have few needs and desires; authentic feelings of renunciation, humility and inner calm, loving-kindness, compassion and, above all, the precious Bodhicitta - the intense resolve to bring all sentient beings to the perfect freedom of enlightenment.

Adapted from Chapter Five of the Lotus Sutra

The Buddha appears in this world
and teaches in varied ways,
according to the needs of beings.

He is like a great cloud
that rises above this parched world,
reaching everywhere -

A beneficent cloud that brings gladness and ease to all,
with brilliant flashes that illumine,
and a voice like thunder that can be heard from afar.

This cloud
lowers and spreads,
and the sun's scorching rays are veiled,
and the earth is cooled

And then its rain everywhere equally descends,
streaming, and pouring without stint,
enriching all the land.

On mountains, beside rivers, in steep valleys,
in hidden places,
there grow the plants, trees, and herbs -

Trees, big and small,

shoots of ripening grain,
sugar cane, and grapevine -
all are nourished by the rain,
each according to their need

The dry ground is all soaked,
and all the various kinds of herbs and trees flourish together.

The Buddha is just like this.
He appears in our world as a great blessing
as a great cloud, heavy with rain

And having appeared in the world,
for the sake of all living beings,
he teaches in varying ways

To free all from suffering
and so attain the joy of peace,
Joy in this world,
and the joy of nirvana.

He proclaims to humans, and to heavenly beings, and to all
Here is the Dharma, pure as sweet dew
the Dharma with one taste
of freedom and nirvana.

The Buddha looks upon all with equal eyes,

and teaches
Going or coming,
sitting, standing, or lying down,
pouring abundantly upon the world,
enriching everywhere.

To the eminent, and to the humble,
to the high and to the low,
those who keep the precepts, and to those who break them,
to those of admirable character, and to those of imperfect character

to those with right views and those with wrong views,
to the quick-witted, and to the dull-witted,
neglecting none,
equally there rains the rain of the Dharma

The one bounteous and delightful Dharma rain
enriches humans like blossoms,
so each will bear good fruit.

And just as with the plants and with the trees,
that each take what they need to grow and flourish,
everyone receives it as they will

Like this, the Buddha skillfully reveals his methods,
so that, practicing step-by-step,
all can gain the fruit of the way.

Know that the way in which you all walk
is the Bodhisattva-way,
and that by gradually practicing and learning,
you will all become Buddhas!

Based on the translations by Kato et al and Reeves, abridged and adapted
by Ratnaprabha, and by J. Espada, in June of 2024

Vow

From this point forward,
I dedicate myself to removing the suffering of all living beings,
and to bringing them happiness

I dedicate myself fully to their healing and awakening;
to their all having comfort,
strength of body, mind, and spirit,
most excellent nourishment, health, longevity
every level of protection,
shelter, food, clothing,
the best of all medicines, education,
leisure, joy, and wisdom

In order to accomplish the needs of living beings
in the most effective way,
I will develop my wisdom and compassion
just as my teachers before me have done
I aim to become free of all faults, and complete in all qualities
and, day by day, hour by hour
to always offer as much help as I can

In this way, I will make a gift of my life
In this way, my own life will be fulfilled

I dedicate myself fully, leaving nothing out,
to the complete healing, fulfillment and enlightenment

of all living beings

No matter how long it takes
no matter how difficult it may be
no matter what it costs

With all my heart and with all my strength,
I vow to always serve all living beings
in every way that is necessary for them
and in every way that will bring each and every one of them
true and lasting health and happiness

Fearlessness is the most prominent characteristic of all bodhisattvas and all who tread the bodhisattva path. For them, life has lost its terrors and suffering its sting. Instead of scorning earthly existence, or condemning its 'imperfection', they fill it with a new meaning.

- Lama Anagorika Govinda

A Verse by Arya Nagarjuna

If the rest of humanity and I wish to attain unsurpassed awakening
{so needed for all our sake}
the basis for this is bodhicitta, as stable as the King of Mountains
Compassion, which touches everything,
and pristine wisdom, which does not rely on duality.

How can I fathom the depths of the goodness of this jewel of the mind,
the panacea that relieves the world of pain,
and is the source of all its joy?

- Shantideva, Chapter I, Verse 26

* * *

Strive to give the taste of bliss to others.

* * *

Moment by moment, try to give happiness to others. That way, you will
develop bodhicitta.

- From a Tibetan Buddhist teaching

The ideal compassion or ideal bodhicitta is said to have four types of excellence:

The first excellence is that I wish to extend this wish for beings to be free from suffering to all and every kind of suffering: the gross sufferings, the subtle dissatisfactions, and all the kind of things like that, freedom from all kinds of sufferings;

The second supreme quality is that the wish is extended to every being, not limited to a certain number or certain groups or certain types of being. The wish is extended to every type of being without leaving anybody out;

The third way bodichitta is supreme is that I not only wish all these beings to be completely free from all types of sufferings, that is not enough. I also wish each and every sentient being the highest kind of joy and peace that is possible. I wish that for every being;

And lastly, I wish this for all beings for all time, that they have lasting peace and happiness.

- Ringu Tulku, from Journey from Head to Heart

From At this time

So much more than for my own sake alone, then,
millions of times, billions of times more,
uncountable times more than for my own sake alone,

for all my family, who are precious to me,
for those who have never even heard of liberation and enlightenment,
for those who have heard but who have no opportunity to practice,
and for those who practice, but who have not yet attained the full result

for all of their sake, because of all their suffering now
and the possibility of all their suffering in the future,
due to their not having completely realized their true nature,

and because of all their potential for happiness,
that is not yet realized, and that would otherwise go unrealized,
it is most urgent,

To be able to fulfill their needs,
May I realize the Teachings,
and my prayers
to do all I can
to accomplish the aims of living beings

From Thangu Rinpoche II

The idea behind generating bodhicitta is to recollect that all beings without exception wish to be happy in exactly the same way and to exactly the same degree as we do. If you bring that to mind fully, then your aspiration to attain freedom for yourself will expand and become an aspiration to bring all beings to that same freedom.

This aspiration has to be a long-term aspiration. It is not enough simply to aspire to free beings from a certain type of suffering, or to free them from the suffering they are undergoing now, or to free them from this year's suffering. For it to be the aspiration of bodhicitta, which is the fullest and most extensive motivation, you must have the attitude of wishing to establish beings in a state that will *permanently* free them from *all* suffering.

Now, the only way that you can actually make beings permanently happy is to bring them to a state of full awakening, to buddhahood...

{May it be so, and, may I be the cause of that.}

Mahayana practitioners take upon themselves the great responsibility of freeing all beings from suffering and leading them to happiness.

The emphasis in all Buddhist practice, especially in Mahayana Buddhism, is to think about our problems, the causes of those problems, and how to resolve them...

You consider, "How is it that I am miserable? What are the causes for my unhappiness?"

The Mahayana then extends that analysis to look at all other sentient beings in the same light.

"How is it that they are physically and mentally suffering? What are the causes and conditions of that misery?"

Thinking about the conditions of others, you try to generate a sympathetic attitude. If you have sympathy, the wish to help others will naturally arise. Then you will genuinely and sincerely take on the responsibility to help other beings...

* * *

Bodhicitta is called the mind of enlightenment because you want to quickly attain the high state of the buddhas and bodhisattvas in order to help all other sentient beings...

Mahayana means the Great Vehicle. The name indicates that your attitude and behavior take on a great scope. A practice with great scope includes all other sentient beings' (temporary and ultimate) welfare in addition to your own.

In this context bodhicitta refers to the bodhisattva's special determination to attain buddhahood- to actualize the Body, Speech, Mind, Qualities, and Activities of the Buddhas- in order to help other sentient beings.

This attitude dominates and guides all bodhisattvas' actions and practice of the path.

They realize, "If I can accomplish this practice, I will be able to benefit other sentient beings. Those others are in a low position. They can't help themselves; they need my help."

Bodhicitta is the attitude of wanting to accomplish each of the stages of liberation and enlightenment, in order to help others to be free from suffering, and to have lasting peace, health, and happiness.

- Geshe Sopa, revised

Seeing how difficult it is to practice a spiritual path and attain any lasting positive results at all can bring even greater determination.

Compassion arises as this strength to accomplish the path, and then to care for, support, and encourage others in every way that is needed.

The purpose of the spiritual path is to relieve suffering, initially our own, and then that of others. We begin by having compassion for ourselves, for our own suffering, for if we cannot help ourselves, how can we help others?

The Buddha said, Be gentle to yourself.

Once we develop compassion for ourselves, we begin to feel compassion for others... our heart opens, and we see and feel how we are all interconnected and interdependent.

We could say that opening the heart in this way, to embrace all sentient beings, to experience oneness, is the essential practice of Buddhism.

- Zasep Rinpoche

May I clearly see that what I and all others need
is ultimate liberation of mind, perfect peace and freedom,
and that in taking care of myself, I am taking care of all of us
With an understanding of the Noble Truths,
may my love and compassion become the dedication to helping others
through my realization of this path

From Pabonkha Rinpoche's outline of The Three Principal Aspects of the Path

In short, when your reflection on the suffering of sentient beings has made it impossible for you to not act on their behalf, and the aspiration for enlightenment for their sake arises without effort, then you have realized the supreme precious awakening mind

A Prayer

May all the suffering we are aware of
only clarify and strengthen our vows

May it cause us to give rise to even greater courage and commitment,
fearlessness in the face of delusion, and affliction,
and power to our limbs and to our thoughts and prayers

May it cause each of us to awaken to the preciousness of this time,
and every life,
and work day and night to heal the sick,
to rescue the lost,
to comfort the stricken,
to encourage the fearful,
to give to the hungry,

to clothe those exposed to bitter elements,
to liberate those caught in addictions of all kinds
to hold a mirror to the beauty of the world
to be a song of remembrance
to rekindle the sense of our innate dignity,
our belonging,
and our joy

May the fullness of love and wisdom manifest in each of us now

May we receive the gifts of our spiritual ancestors

May all our prayers for each other pour forth
May we find every action meaningful,
and may we create the world that from within longs to be born

Tirelessly, compassionately, for all who struggle and are lost,
for all who are closed in on themselves,
and for all those who know only violence,
whose world is already hell

May I go there without hesitation,
forever,
and lead them out

For all who do not know the treasures we hold within
or who do not know the beauty of our children, and our elders,
and our brothers and our sisters everywhere -

May there be nothing less than a full awakening for them

With gratitude for all my family
and for all my near and distant relations

With abundant gratitude for our teachers,
and for all the healers of the world,
for our ancestors,
and for this our natural home

I too dedicate all positive energy today
to the comfort and healing of all who need it.

May peace awaken.

May greater love awaken in me,
and in all my family and friends,
and in all the world.

You do not need to ask,

Seeing the stranger, will you let him in?

Seeing the wounded, the outcast,
will you tend to him?

All the hungry families, and children,
our flowing rivers, our breath moving over this earth -

Already I have answered you

Already my decision has been made

Let there be no doubt -

Let the others exclude,
Let them turn their backs,
amuse and indulge themselves endlessly -
no matter

They don't yet have the eyes to see
or the ears to hear the cries of the world

but some few are here for just that purpose

to carry those too weak to walk, or to stand

to shelter the homeless,

to clothe and feed the poor close to them
and however far the need may reach

to lift up the downcast,
and forge a way out of the wilderness

and everyone healed becomes a worker in time

(and everyone healed becomes a worker in time)

These are settled matters for some

They need no convincing

They are the first ones out the door in the morning,
or else they are those

who keep a clear, unwavering lamp burning throughout the night

Though we've not met face to face,

we delight in each other's company,

we lend strength and encouragement to each other

We partake of the feast together at harvest time,

invisible to some, but including all the world

For the sake of all who struggle and suffer,
all those who have not yet reached the highest state of freedom and peace,
to relieve their suffering and to bring them happiness,

I take refuge in the Buddha,
the Great Compassionate Teacher,
I take refuge in the Dharma,
in all the Liberating Teachings,
and I take refuge in the Noble Sangha,
the Accomplished Spiritual Community,
the Great Assembly of Saints and Bodhisattvas

By this practice,
just as my teachers before me have done,
May I realize the state of Peace,
Perfect Freedom, and happiness,
and Great Love, ~ the Mind of Enlightenment,
and may I bring all others to that very same state

The concerns of others are my concerns,
is that not so?

For their sake, then

May I accomplish this Path,

and,

May all temporal and ultimate aims be fulfilled

For this brief moment of time,
my life intersects with these infinitely precious ones,
who are without a guiding friend
May I serve them well

May the Supreme Jewel, bodhicitta
arise where it has not yet arisen
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish
May it ever grow and flourish

Lama Lodro Rinpoche described the depth of dedication of the Bodhisattva, saying:

A Bodhisattva would go to be born one million times in hell to help one sentient being. One million times he would go, and not complain- he would enjoy that, actually. Beings need help, and he enjoys helping. That's the Bodhisattva motivation.

Two selections from His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso

The Awakening mind is like a seed for the attainment of Buddhahood.

It is like a field in which to cultivate all positive qualities.

It is like the ground on which everything rests.

It is like the god of wealth who removes all poverty.

It is like a father protecting all bodhisattvas.

It is like a wish-fulfilling jewel.

It is like a miraculous vase fulfilling all your wishes.

It is like a spear vanquishing the foe of disturbing emotions.

It is like armor shielding you from improper thoughts.

It is like a sword beheading the disturbing emotions.

It is like an ax felling the tree of disturbing emotions.

It is like a weapon staving off all kinds of attack.

It is like a hook to draw you out of the waters of the cycle of existence.

It is like the whirlwind that scatters all mental obstacles and their sources.

It is like the concentrated teaching encompassing all the bodhisattvas' prayers and activities...

* * *

There is no more powerful mind than bodhicitta.

There is no more joyous mind than bodhicitta.

For the accomplishment of one's own ultimate purpose,
the awakening mind is supreme,
and to accomplish the purpose of all other living beings
there is nothing superior to bodhicitta.

The awakening mind is the unsurpassable way to collect merit.

To purify obstacles bodhicitta is supreme.

For protection from interferences bodhicitta is supreme.

It is the unique, all-encompassing method.

Every kind of ordinary and supra-mundane power
can be accomplished through bodhicitta.

Thus, it is absolutely precious.

You should try to meditate regularly on death and impermanence and thus become a spiritual practitioner of initial scope.

Then you should develop the meditations on the unsatisfactory nature of samsara and the three higher trainings [ethics, concentration and wisdom] and thus become a practitioner of medium scope.

Finally, you should give birth to love, compassion, universal responsibility and bodhicitta and thus enter the path of the practitioner of great scope, the Mahayana, which has full buddhahood as its goal.

Relying on the guidance of a spiritual master, you should cultivate the seeds of bodhicitta in connection with the wisdom of emptiness and, for the sake of all that lives, quickly actualize buddhahood.

This may not be an easy task, but it has ultimate perfection as its fruit.

- Ling Rinpoche

May I lead all beings to happiness

For however long I have left to live,
May I be devoted to the Dharma from the very core of my being,
And may whatever I do, say or think,
Be directed only to beings' good,
Never entangled in selfish desires!

May I set out upon the path to liberation,
And, mounting the steed of bodhicitta,
May I lead all beings to happiness!

- Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö

The self-arisen wisdom, by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

The self-arisen wisdom, which is also called bodhichitta, is not something that has been fabricated, a new product created by the conjunction of causes and conditions. It never has changed, never changes, and never will change. The absolute nature remains what it is, perfectly pure, at all times. Even if it appears obscured for impure beings at the start of the path, it has never actually been obscured. If it seems to be a mixture of pure and impure during the course of the path, it in fact always remains pure. And at the time of the result, perfect enlightenment, it is simply the same ground nature made evident and not something new that was not there before. Through all conditions, the kinglike bodhichitta that is the doer-of-everything will never be stained or dampened.

On the relative level, bodhicitta is the strong, sustained motivation to awaken; to liberate oneself; in order to live a life of freedom, joy, and the greatest possible helpful action. It is also our true nature, of clarity, love, and compassion. Practiced together, it is aligning ourselves with the motivation to be of universal benefit.

Three Quotes on Bodhicitta, from the perspective of the Great Perfection Teachings

From *The Buddhist Path*, by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

Bodhichitta is the root or the seed from which enlightenment develops. Bodhichitta is not found externally, but it is within your own mind. Although all of us have experienced love and compassion, these qualities need to be developed further. One way to increase them is to do the Dzogchen meditation of resting the mind in its own nature.

And, From *A Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems*, by Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche

Nyoshul Khenpo would explain the specifically Dzogchen understanding of bodhichitta motivation:

What is arousing bodhichitta according to the uncommon approach of Dzogchen? This is something that is not even mentioned in the other vehicles.

It is summoning forth or evoking mind as wisdom.

Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche describing the origin and reference point of the different paths in Buddhism:

Let us consider all the teachings of the buddhas - all that the buddhas of the past have ever given, all that the buddhas of the future will give, and all that the buddhas of the present are giving.

All of this sublime speech of the buddhas can be divided into two kinds of approach:

There is the approach in which the path is based on the ordinary mind, which refers to the eight graded vehicles, and there is the single approach that transcends ordinary mind, which is the path of Dzogchen.

Gyalwa Longchen Rabjam stated that the teachings of the buddhas fall into these two categories: those conferred by the dharmakaya, in which the path is forged with primordial wisdom, and those conferred by the rupakaya, in which the path is forged with the ordinary mind.

From The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana

The True Mind of all sentient beings
leads and guides each sentient being

Genuine compassion is egoless. It is the inherent essence expressed, inseparable from awareness. This natural essence, which is genuine compassion, does not need to be formulated or even expressed as something like “compassion.” We see this exemplified in our great teachers. Their genuine compassion does not require phrases and expressions or even actions. Just their presence, who they are, is nothing other than the quintessence of compassion.

We, in contrast, have to invent and demonstrate compassion. Our {ego} contaminated compassion still requires effort and deliberation. That is conventional or general compassion. The good thing about the use of deliberate or conventional compassion is that it matures the mind so that ego-grasping diminishes. It definitely has that effect and is therefore a skillful method for developing awareness compassion.

~ Khandro Rinpoche

From *Uprooting Clinging*, by Khenpo Palden Sherab Rinpoche

Compassion and wisdom don't come from the outside; they can't be gathered up and collected. They are the innate, enlightened qualities of mind- our most precious buddha-nature.

By applying the teachings of the Buddha, it becomes possible to reveal the innate wisdom and compassion of our true nature.

* * *

By overcoming karmic obscurations and ego-clinging, all good qualities spontaneously arise without effort. Previously hidden qualities of pure love and compassion will radiate in every directions for all sentient beings.

As your understanding and realization of the ultimate nature of mind is developed, compassion and loving-kindness will naturally manifest without attachment or clinging.

Lama Lodro Rinpoche taught that if we practice great loving kindness and compassion for all beings, it will lead us right up to the view.

Garchen Rinpoche said we should practice loving kindness towards all beings, and that this would gradually dissolve the ego - the false sense of separation between ourselves and others, *just like an ice cube dissolving in the great ocean...*

From Meditation Instructions by Garchen Rinpoche

Meditation means to first recognize and then habituate to the nature of mind. First, you must understand the basic nature of mind. This mind is a single ground within which we are one. Once you have recognized the nature of mind, you must always sustain it, uphold it, without falling into distraction. To habituate this present awareness is meditation...

What is most important is to cultivate bodhicitta, love and compassion, in all your activities.. If you give rise to compassion, then you will understand the nature of mind very easily.

* * *

The purpose of meditation is to realize the nature of mind.

You should begin your meditation by taking refuge and cultivating boundless love because when you meditate on the basis of love, your mind becomes all-pervasive, and only in such a boundless state will you realize the nature of mind as it truly is. Love is also your actual refuge, your actual protection...

Once you have given rise to boundless love, rest in a natural state while sustaining clear awareness...

A Verse from The Aspiration Prayer for the Attainment of Mahamudra, by
The Third Karmapa

The basis of purification is this very mind itself- when recognized as the
inseparable unity of clarity and emptiness;

That which purifies is the Great Vajra Yoga of Mahamudra;

That which is to be purified are the transient stains of delusion;

May the result of purification, the stainless Dharmakaya, be manifest.

From The Avatamsaka Sutra

*To all internal and external worlds
 Bodhisattvas have no attachment at all,
 Yet do not abandon works beneficial to sentient beings;
 The great ones cultivate this kind of knowledge.*

*In all lands in the ten directions
 They do not depend or dwell on anything;
 They do not grasp things, such as livelihood,
 And do not arbitrarily create distinctions.*

*They engage with all sentient beings
 In all worlds in the ten directions;
 Observing their essential nature,
 They practice dedication reaching everywhere.*

May all beings have happiness, and all the causes of happiness flourishing
 May they all enjoy an abundance of positive conditions,
 well being, and peace.

Verses Quoted in the book Bodhicitta, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

Since the limitless mind of the Sole Guide of the World
has upon thorough investigation seen its preciousness,
all beings wishing to be free from worldly abodes
should firmly take hold of this precious Awakening Mind

- A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, by Shantideva, chapter 1, verse
11

The thought desiring to dispel
every mistake from every sentient being
and to bring every being to full knowledge is bodhicitta.
Of all wonderful things, this is the most wonderful.

- The Jewel Lamp, by Khunu Lama Rinpoche, verse 21

If even the thought to relieve
living creatures of merely a headache
is a beneficial intention
endowed with infinite goodness,

then what need to mention
the wish to dispel their inconceivable misery,
wishing every single one of them
to realize boundless good qualities.

- Shantideva, chapter 1; verses 21 - 22

By depending on the medicine of bodhicitta
 all the diseases of the all-rising delusions are cured.
 Therefore, there is no question at all
 that there is no better medicine in samsara than bodhicitta.

- Khunu Lama Rinpoche, *The Jewel Lamp*, verse 286

It is the supreme ambrosia
 that overcomes the sovereignty of death;
 it is the inexhaustible treasure
 that eliminates all the poverty of the world.

It is the supreme medicine
 that quells the world's disease.
 It is the tree that shelters all beings
 wandering and tired on the path of conditioned existence.

- Shantideva, chapter 3; verses 29 - 30

All the Buddhas who have contemplated for many eons
 have seen it to be beneficial;
 for by it the limitless masses of beings
 will quickly attain the supreme state of bliss.

- Shantideva, 1.7

Just as I have fallen into the sea of samsara,
so have all mother migratory beings.

Please bless me to see this, train in supreme bodhicitta,
and bear the responsibility of freeing all migratory beings.

- The Foundation of All Good Qualities, by Lama Tsongkhapa

Just as a flash of lightning on a dark, cloudy night
for an instant brightly illuminates all,
likewise, in this world, through the might of the Buddha,
a wholesome thought rarely and briefly appears.

Hence virtue is perpetually feeble,
the great strength of evil being extremely intense,
and except for a fully awakening mind,
by what other virtue will it be overcome?

Shantideva - 1.5, 6

{Of bodhicitta, Shantideva said}

Do even fathers and mothers
have such a benevolent intention as this?
Do the gods and sages?
Does even Brahma have it?

If those beings have never before
 even dreamed of such an attitude
 for their own sake,
 how would it ever arise for the sake of others?

1. 23 - 24

When you walk, walk with bodhicitta.
 When you sit, sit with bodhicitta.
 When you stand, stand with bodhicitta.
 When you sleep, sleep with bodhicitta.
 When you look, look with bodhicitta.
 When you eat, eat with bodhicitta.
 When you speak, speak with bodhicitta.
 When you think, think with bodhicitta.

- Khunu Lama Rinpoche, The Jewel Lamp, verses 338 - 339

Live with compassion
 Work with compassion
 Die with compassion
 Meditate with compassion
 Enjoy with compassion
 When problems come, experience them with compassion

{Bodhicitta is the medicine that can cure all illness and destroy all
 suffering}

Generating the mind of bodhicitta
is the central axle of the supreme vehicle path;

It's the foundation and the support of all expansive deeds;
To all instances of two accumulations it is like the elixir
that turns base metals into gold;
It's the treasury of merits
containing myriad collections of virtues

Recognizing these truths, the heroic bodhisattvas
uphold the precious supreme mind as the heart of their practice

I, a yogi, have practiced in this manner
You, who aspire for liberation, too should do likewise

- From Hymns of Experience, by Lama Tsongkhapa, verses 21 - 22

The moment an Awakened Mind arises
in those fettered and weak in the jail of cyclic existence,
they will be named a child of the Buddhas,
and will be revered by both humans and gods of the world

- Shantideva, 1.9

Bodhicitta beautifies the whole appearance of the face
Bodhicitta lends beauty to the wideness of the eyes
Bodhicitta gives beauty to the sound of the voice
Bodhicitta makes behavior beautiful

- Khunu Lama Rinpoche, The Jewel Lamp, verse 129

The world honors as virtuous
 one who sometimes gives a little, plain food
 disrespectfully to a few beings,
 which satisfies them for only half a day
 What need be said then of one
 who eternally bestows the peerless bliss of the sugatas
 upon limitless numbers of beings,
 thereby fulfilling all their hopes?

- Shantideva, 1. 32- 33

If merely a benevolent intention
 excels veneration of the buddhas,
 then what need to mention striving to make
 all beings, without exception, happy?

- Shantideva, 1.27

If it possessed physical form,
 the merit of the altruistic intention
 would completely fill the whole of space
 and exceed even that

If someone were to fill with jewels
 as many buddha fields as there are grains

of sand in the Ganges
 to offer to the Protector of the World
 this would be surpassed by
 the gift of folding one's hands, even for a moment,
 and inclining one's mind to enlightenment,
 even for a moment,
 for such is limitless

- From A Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment, by Atisha, verses 15 - 17

Just like the lotus among flowers,
 is bodhicitta supreme among all virtuous thoughts
 Since having it brings immediate and final happiness,
 one should make every effort to produce it

Without arrogance when things go well,
 not depressed when times are hard,
 unharmable by anything -
 this bodhicitta gold

The bodhicitta that serves as a sword
 to cut the shoots of the afflictions,
 is the weapon for the protection
 of all wandering beings

- Khunu Lama, v. 10; 63 - 64

Just like the fire at the end of an age,
it instantly consumes all great wrongdoing.

Its unfathomable advantages were taught
to the disciple Sudhana by the wise lord Maitreya

- Shantideva, 1.14

It is like the supreme gold-making elixir,
for it transforms the unclean body we have taken
into the priceless jewel of a buddha form.
Therefore firmly seize this Awakening Mind.

- Shantideva, 1.10

By relying on the medicine of bodhicitta
all the diseases of delusions are cured
So in all the world it is definite
that there is no other medicine like this

- Khunu Lama, v.286

If you want to help yourself, produce excellent bodhicitta
If you want to help others, produce excellent bodhicitta
If you want to serve the doctrine, produce excellent bodhicitta
If you want the path to bliss, generate bodhicitta

- Khunu Lama, v.26

Those who wish to destroy the many sorrows of their conditioned existence,
 those who wish all beings to experience a multitude of joys,
 and those who wish to experience much happiness,
 should never forsake the Awakening Mind

- Shantideva, 1.8

If you want to be a scholar, learn bodhicitta
 If you want to be a noble person, learn bodhicitta
 If you want to be a decent person, learn bodhicitta
 If you want to be of benefit to others, learn bodhicitta

- Khunu Lama, v.325

If one is without the vital juice of bodhicitta,
 one cannot even enter the Mahayana
 If such is the case, how will one get
 to the supreme stage of Buddhahood?

- Khunu Lama, v.298

All kinds of beings
 transmigrate through all the realms
 Buddhas, not discriminating,
 liberate countless kinds

- From The Flower Garland Sutra

If you desire to benefit others,
 you should cultivate bodhicitta
 If you desire to benefit yourself,
 to take the joyous path,
 you should cultivate bodhicitta

- Khunu Lama, v.286

In brief, the Awakening Mind
 should be understood to be of two types:
 the mind that aspires to awaken
 and the mind that ventures to do so

Although great fruits occur in cyclic existence
 from the mind that aspires to awaken,
 an uninterrupted flow of merit does not ensue
 as it does with the engaging mind

- Shantideva, 1.15, 17

In short, no matter what appearances happen,
 be they good or bad,
 I seek your blessings to transform them into the path,
 ever enhancing the two bodhicittas,
 through the practice of the five powers¹ -
 the quintessence of the entire Dharma -
 and thus to meditate only on mental happiness

¹ Motivation, familiarization, virtue, repudiation, and prayer

- From The Guru Puja, by the Panchen Lama, Chokyi Gyalsten

In brief, I will train myself to offer benefit and joy
to all my mothers, both directly and indirectly
and respectfully take upon myself
all the hurts and pains of my mothers

By ensuring that all this remains undefiled
by the stains of the eight mundane concerns,
and by understanding all things as illusions,
I will train myself to be free of the bondage of clinging

- Verses Seven and Eight from the Eight Verses on Mind Training, by
Langri Tangpa

Determined to obtain the greatest possible benefit
from all sentient beings,
who are more precious than a wish-granting jewel,
I shall hold them most dear at all times

- Langri Tangpa, v.1

Bodhicitta pacifies one's own mindstream
Bodhicitta pacifies the mindstreams of others
With bodhicitta, one respects everyone
With bodhicitta, one sees everyone as equal

This precious gem of bodhicitta

does not discriminate between rich and poor,
 does not differentiate between wise and foolish;
 it benefits equally the high and the low

- Khunu Lama, v.72, 31

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta,
 arise where it has not yet arisen
 Where it has arisen, may it not diminish
 May it ever grow and flourish

When your mothers,
 who've loved you since time without beginning
 are suffering,
 what's the use of your own happiness?
 Therefore to free limitless living beings,
 develop the altruistic intention -
 this is the practice of Bodhisattvas

- From The Thirty-Seven Practices of the Bodhisattva, by Thokme Sangpo,
 verse 10

If we were to see our dear ones
 fallen into the ocean of samsara
 as if into a whirlpool,
 swiftly whirling around,
 emerging, and then again disappearing
 in the cycles of birth and death,

and if we were to ignore them and go away alone -
how could there be anyone more shameless?

- From A Letter to a Disciple, by Chandragomin, verse 99

Even three times a day to offer
three hundred cooking pots of food
does not match a portion of the merit
in one instant of love
Though through love you are not liberated,
you will attain the eight good qualities of love -
gods and humans will be friendly,
even non-humans will protect you,
you will have mental and many physical pleasures,
poison or weapons will not harm you,
without striving you will attain your aims,
and be reborn in the world of Brahma

- From A Precious Garland, by Nagarjuna, verses 283 - 285

The Shravakas and those half way to buddhahood
are born from the Mighty Sage,
and the buddhas take birth from the mighty heroes

Compassion, nonduality,
and the wish for buddhahood for others' sake
are the causes of the children of the Conqueror

Of buddhahood's abundant crop,
 compassion is the seed
 It is like moisture bringing increase
 and is said to ripen in the state of lasting happiness
 Therefore, from the beginning, I offer homage to compassion

- From A Guide to the Middle Way, by Chandrakirti, 1.1-2

Having considered how all these miserable beings
 have been my mothers,
 and have raised me in kindness again and again,
 I seek your blessing to develop effortless compassion,
 like that of a loving mother for her precious child

- From the Guru Puja, by the Panchen Lama, Chogyi Gyalsten

When beholding someone with my eyes,
 thinking, I shall fully awaken
 through depending upon this being
 I should look at that person with love
 and an open heart

- Shantideva, 5.80

The Mighty One has said
 that the field of sentient beings
 is similar to a buddha-field,
 for many who have pleased them

have thereby reached perfection

A buddha's qualities are gained
from the sentient beings and the Conquerors alike,
so why do I not respect them
in the same way I respect the Conquerors?

- 6.112-113

The mind that cherishes all mother sentient beings
and would secure them in bliss
is the gateway leading to infinite virtue
Seeing this,
I seek your blessing to cherish these beings more than my life,
even should they rise up as my enemies.

- From The Guru Puja

Though someone may deride and speak bad words about you
in a public meet,
look upon him as a spiritual teacher,
bow to him with respect -
this is the practice of Bodhisattvas.

Even if a person for whom you've cared like your own child
regards you as an enemy,
cherish him specially,
like a mother does her child who is stricken by sickness -

this is the practice of Bodhisattvas.

- The Thirty-Seven Practices of the Bodhisattva, by Thokme Sangpo,
verses 15 and 16

I and sentient beings are equal in happiness and suffering
I have attained the holy form body only for the sake of sentient beings,
and so harming sentient beings is the supreme harm to me,
whereas benefitting sentient beings is the best worship to me

- According to the editor, this resembles a sutra, In Praise of Worshipping
Sentient Beings, that was put into verse form by Nagarjuna

{It is similar as well to this: As you have done to the least of these, you have
done to me; Matthew, 25:40}

There is no difference between myself and others;
none of us wishes even the slightest sufferings
or is ever content with the happiness we have.
Realizing this,
I seek your blessing that I may enhance the bliss and joy of others.

- The Guru Puja

When the world and its inhabitants boil with negativity,
transform adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment
Banish all blames into the single source
Towards all beings contemplate great kindness

- From The Seven-Point Mind Training, by Chekawa Yeshe Dorje

When others out of jealousy
treat me wrongly with abuse and slander,
I will train to take the defeat upon myself
and offer the victory to others

Even if one I have helped
or in whom I have placed great hope,
gravely mistreats me in hurtful ways,
I will train myself to view him as my sublime teacher

- From the Eight Verses on Mind Training, by Langri Tangpa

How could someone in whom the bodhicitta
of the supreme vehicle exists
ever turn toward the poison of self-cherishing,
even for a moment?
How could they give up the nectar of cherishing others?

-Khunu Lama, v.162

When both myself and others
are similar in that we wish to be happy
what is so special about me?
Why do I strive for my happiness alone?

Surely whenever there is suffering
 we must protect those who suffer
 Although the suffering of the foot is not that of the hand,
 one protects the other

- Shantideva, 6.14; and 8.95,99

If one is in possession of bodhicitta
 it is fine if one is sick,
 fine if one is dying,
 fine if one is studying,
 and fine if one is meditating
 One seems to be fine no matter what one is doing

- Khunu Lama, v.296

May I become an inexhaustible treasure
 for those who are poor and destitute
 May I turn into all the things they could need
 and be placed close beside them

May I be a protector for those without one,
 a guide for all travelers on the way
 May I be a bridge, a boat and a ship
 for all who wish to cross the flood

May I be an island for those who seek one
 and a lamp for those desiring light

May I be a bed for all who wish to rest
and a slave for all who want a slave

And until they pass away from pain,
may I be the source of life for them,
for all the realms of the varied beings
that reach unto the ends of space

- 3.10, 18-19, 22

The Pilgrimage of a Bodhisattva

From the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Eight Thousand Lines

Sariputra:

*How does a bodhisattva go on the difficult pilgrimage?,
and how can he possibly endure the those sufferings
which he is said to undergo for the sake of beings?*

Subhuti:

*I do not look for a Bodhisattva
who goes on the difficult pilgrimage.*

*In any case, one who courses in the perception of difficulties
is not a Bodhisattva.*

*Because one who has generated a perception of difficulties
is unable to work the weal of countless beings.*

*On the contrary,
he forms the notion of ease,
he forms that notion that all beings,
whether men or women,
are his parents and children,
and thus he goes
on the pilgrimage of a Bodhisattva...*

A Bodhisattva resolves:

I take upon myself the burden of relieving all suffering.
I am resolved to do so, I will endure it if necessary

I do not turn or run away,
do not tremble, am not terrified, nor afraid,
do not turn back or despond.

And why?

At all costs I must bear the burdens of all beings.
In that I do not follow my own inclinations.

I have made the vow to save all beings.
All beings I must set free.

The whole world of living beings I must rescue,
from the terrors of birth, of old age, of sickness, of death and rebirth,

of all kinds of moral offence,
of all states of woe,
of the whole cycle of birth-and-death,

of the jungle of false views,
of the loss of wholesome dharmas,
of the concomitants of ignorance,
from all these terrors I must rescue all beings. . . .

I walk so that all beings awaken, and are freed
and so that the kingdom of unsurpassed cognition
is built up for all beings.

In this, my endeavors do not merely aim at my own deliverance.
For with the help of the thought of all-knowledge,
I must rescue all these beings from the roaring flood of Samsara,
which can be so difficult to cross,

I must pull them back from the great precipice,
I must free them from all calamities,
I must take them across the raging torrents of Samsara.

I myself must grapple with the whole mass of suffering of all beings.

To the limit of my endurance I will experience
in all the states of woe, found in any world system,
all the abodes of suffering -

And I must not cheat all beings out of my store of merit,
I am resolved to abide in each single state of woe for numberless aeons;
in all the states of woe that may be found in any world system whatsoever,
and in so doing, I will help all beings to freedom.

And why?

Because it is surely better that I alone should go through these difficulties

than that all these beings should fall into such states of misery.

There I must give myself away as a mere pawn
through which the whole world is redeemed
from the terrors of the hells, of animal birth,
of the world of Yama,

and with this my own body I must do whatever is needed,
for the sake of all beings,
to remove the whole mass of all painful feelings.

In doing so I speak truthfully,
I am trustworthy,
and do not go back on my word.

I must not abandon all beings.

And why?

There has arisen in me the will to win freedom,
for the purpose of setting free the entire world of beings;
with all beings as its object,
I will perfectly accomplish the Buddha's teachings.

Sikshasamuccaya, verses 280-81 (Vajradhvaja Sutra) by Shantideva, revised

Selected Verses from The Jewel Lamp - In Praise of Bodhicitta, by Khunu
Lama Rinpoche

12

If one investigates to find the supreme method
for accomplishing the aims of oneself and others,
it comes down to bodhicitta alone.
Being certain of this, develop it with joy.

From 13

The rain of precious Dharma
nourishes the shoots of the good that people do

15

The sun, the moon, a lamp, a lightning flash -
they may illuminate, but they hardly clear away the inner murk.
This bodhicitta is extolled by the holy
as completely removing the darkness of living beings.

21

Supreme bodhicitta is the wish to remove
every flaw from every living being

and to help bring about limitless good qualities in each of them.
This is outstanding even amongst the outstanding!

22

If one wants to benefit everyone, one needs bodhicitta.
If one wants to befriend everyone, one needs bodhicitta.
If one wants to gain the confidence of all, one needs bodhicitta.
If one wants to be everyone's spiritual friend, one needs bodhicitta.

31

The precious gem of bodhicitta
does not discriminate between rich and poor,
does not differentiate between wise and foolish;
it benefits equally the high and the low.

55

It seems to be one of the dimensions of bodhicitta
that the hardships of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, and so forth
that come when one does something to help others
do not get one down but rather give one's spirit a boost.

59

Bodhicitta gets rid of malice.
Through bodhicitta one obtains concentration.

Bodhicitta produces wisdom.

Things go well if you hold on to supreme bodhicitta.

60

Even in a dream,
others are not there for one's own selfish aims
when there is this amazing concern for others
that arises with bodhicitta.

64

With bodhicitta, one does not do things
for gain, devotion, or praise;
and even if one gets those things,
like gold one does not change.

81

The fact that the more terrible the conditions
become for the bodhisattva,
the more they serve as an aid to their goodness
is, I think, due to bodhicitta.

116

Abandoning the intention to do harm to anyone;
working directly or indirectly for the sake of others;

immovable regardless of the conditions one faces;
 these, I think, are some of the dimensions of bodhicitta.

131

The benefit of bodhicitta is supreme,
 lasting as it does for as long as cyclic existence remains,
 going forth without discrimination to every living being
 equal to the limits of space.

143

Bodhicitta transforms
 afflictive emotions, suffering and fear,
 and sickness and death
 into a path to enlightenment.

160

With bodhicitta one enjoys happiness.
 With bodhicitta one enjoys even sorrow.
 With bodhicitta one enjoys what is there.
 With bodhicitta one enjoys even what is not there.

From 162

How could someone in whom the bodhicitta
 of the supreme vehicle exists

ever give up the nectar of cherishing others?

167

What discriminating person would not delight in bodhicitta,
which eliminates the increase in afflictive emotions,
which stops any other faults from arising,
and which is the culmination of all that is proper?

168

The bodhicitta of bodhisattvas is like a spiritual friend
who naturally exhorts one to be ethical, to study,
to analyze, to meditate,
and to work for the welfare of wandering beings
who reach as far as space.

169

Bodhicitta beholds the totality of living beings
like a mother does her only son.
It is the nectar that is of one taste with being of help to others,
hoping neither for reward or future result.

170

Bodhicitta functions like a spiritual friend:
it demonstrates correctly and without mistake

the essentials of what is to be done
and what is to be avoided.

175

Meditate upon bodhicitta when afflicted by disease.

Meditate upon bodhicitta when sad.

Meditate upon bodhicitta when suffering occurs.

Meditate upon bodhicitta when you get scared.

243

Strive to fully take up this bodhicitta,
the source of every happiness,
for wandering living beings
as long as existence endures.

245

Due to bodhicitta,
the children of the buddhas look without partiality
at wandering living beings
like a mother looks at her only son,
with a gaze of love
that comes from the very depth of her being.

261

If one wishes to engage in the spiritual deeds of Samantabhadra,
 one should look after the root of bodhicitta,
 just as if one wishes a fine tree
 to have a wide spread of branches,
 one conveys water to the root of the trunk.

265

When Mahayana bodhicitta has arisen,
 the muddy effluent of cherishing self-interest subsides;
 the essential thing - the needs of others-
 is enthusiastically embraced,
 and one becomes an anonymous friend.

267

Bodhicitta is the best means for getting nondual wisdom
 It is the best bringer of pleasure to all living beings
 It is the supreme amongst virtuous minds
 It is the ornament of the universe.

From 278

If you want supreme bodhicitta to arise
 mediate on the thought to be of benefit to all.

From 284

Enthusiastically embracing the needs of others
is a friend to precious bodhicitta.

286

By relying on the medicine of bodhicitta
all the diseases of defilement are cured.
So in all the world it is definite
that there is no other medicine like this.

296

If one is in possession of bodhicitta
it is fine if one is sick, fine if one is dying,
fine if one is studying, and fine if one is meditating;
one seems to be fine no matter what one is doing.

304

Amongst medicines, the victory medicine.
Amongst jewels, the wish-fulfilling gem.
Amongst flowers, the white lotus.
Amongst virtuous minds, bodhicitta.

311

It is bad enough if one's morality degenerates,

but it is even worse if bodhicitta declines.
 The result of the former is heaven,
 but the result of the latter is enlightenment.

325

If you want to be a scholar learn bodhicitta.
 If you want to be a noble person learn bodhicitta.
 If you want to be a decent person learn bodhicitta.
 If you want to be of benefit to others learn bodhicitta.

338

When you walk, walk with bodhicitta.
 When you sit, sit with bodhicitta.
 When you stand, stand with bodhicitta.
 When you sleep, sleep with bodhicitta.

339

When you look, look with bodhicitta.
 When you eat, eat with bodhicitta.
 When you speak, speak with bodhicitta.
 When you think, think with bodhicitta.

348

Having seen that I myself

and all wandering beings equal to space
want happiness and do not want suffering,
with the awareness that self and other are equal,
one should meditate on bodhicitta continually.

354

Since bodhicitta is what causes one to obtain
the unequalled stage that is neither situated
at the extreme of samsara nor at the extreme of nirvana,
my friends, it would be good to value it highly.

Refuge and Bodhicitta Verses, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

I go for refuge to Buddha, the Dharma, and Sangha,
until I reach enlightenment

Due to the merits of having done charity, and so forth,
the Six Paramitas,
having listened to teachings,

by the three times merits collected by me,
the three times merits collected by numberless sentient beings,
and the three times merits collected by numberless Buddhas,

May I achieve total cessation of mistakes of mind,
and the total completion of all realizations of Buddhahood

in order to free from oceans of samsaric suffering
the numberless hell beings, hungry ghosts,
animals, human beings,
sura, asura beings,
intermediate state beings,

and bring them to enlightenment

The Bodhisattva Attitude - the Verses

1. The Full Verses

Recite or chant the following verses from Shantideva's Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life in the morning or at other times throughout the day. Then contemplate the meaning to bring about a total change to the normal attitude of self-cherishing that only harms ourselves and others. Try to live your life in this practice.

I shall give away fully with no sense of loss
 My body, enjoyments and all merits of the three times
 (past, present and future)
 To accomplish the work for ALL sentient beings.
 (Recite this verse with the meditation on "giving")

By giving away all, I will be liberated from the oceans of samsaric suffering
 And my mind will achieve the sorrowless state.
 Since I have to leave everything (at death)
 It is best to (now) give it away to every single sentient being.

Having given this body to sentient beings
 To use **HOWEVER** they want that makes them happy.
 Whether they always kill me, criticize, beat me, or whatever,
 It is **TOTALLY** up to them.

Even if they jest with my body,
 Ridicule me, put me down or make fun of me,
 Whatever they do, since I have given this body to them,

What is the point of retaliating?

Let this body only do actions that cause no harm to others
And whoever looks at or thinks of me
May it NEVER be meaningless for them.

Whoever focuses on me -
Whether with anger or devotion -
May that ALWAYS be the cause for them
To achieve EVERY success.

May all who say unpleasant things,
Harm, mock or make fun of me
Have the fortune to achieve enlightenment.

May I become a guide for those who are guideless,
A leader for those who are entering the path,
A ship, a boat, and a bridge
For all who wish to cross (over water).

May I become a beautiful garden for those who seek one,
A light for those who look for light,
Bedding for those who wish to rest
And a servant for all who want me as their servant.

Like a wish-granting jewel,
A wish-fulfilling vase, powerful mantra,
Great medicine and a wish-granting tree,

May I fulfill all the wishes of sentient beings.

Just like the sky and the great elements

Earth, (water, fire and wind)

May I ALWAYS be the means of living and the cause of happiness

For sentient beings equaling the limitless sky.

As long as space exists

As long as sentient beings exist

May I too abide and eliminate the suffering of sentient beings.

2. The Bodhisattva Attitude - The Short Verses

When there is no time to recite all the verses, just recite these last three or two that contain everything.

Like a wish-granting jewel,
A wish-fulfilling vase, powerful mantra,
Great medicine and a wish-granting tree,
May I fulfill all the wishes of sentient beings.

Just like the sky and the great elements
Earth, (water, fire and wind),
May I always be the means of living and the cause
of happiness
For sentient beings equaling the limitless sky.

As long as space exists,
As long as sentient beings exist,
May I too abide and eliminate the suffering of sentient beings.

Stabilizing in the Bodhimind, by Shantideva

In the spiritual energy that relieves
The anguish of beings in misery and
Places depressed beings in eternal joy,
I lift up my heart and rejoice.

In the goodness producing illumination
I lift up my heart and rejoice.

I rejoice in the beings who have gained
Eternal liberation from suffering,
And I rejoice in those attained to Buddhahood
As well as in their offspring, the noble Bodhisattvas.

In the ocean-like virtue of the bodhimind
That brings joy to all beings
And in accomplishing the well-being of others,
I lift up my heart and rejoice.

To the Buddhas of the ten directions
I join my hands in respect.
Let blaze the light of Dharma's truth
For the beings lost in darkness.

To the Buddhas considering parinirvana
I join my hands in prayer.

Do not abandon the beings in sorrow
But remain and teach for countless ages.

May any spiritual energy thus generated
By my devotion to the enlightened ones
Be dedicated to dispelling the misery
Of living beings without exception.

As long as diseases afflict living beings
May I be the doctor, the medicine
And also the nurse
Who restores them to health.

May I fall as rain to increase
The harvests that must feed the living beings
And in ages of dire famine
May I myself serve as food and drink.

May I be a treasury
For those desperate and forlorn.
May I manifest as what they require
And wish to have near them.

My body, every possession
And all goodness, past, present and future
Without remorse I dedicate
To the well-being of the world.

Suffering is transcended by total surrender
And the mind attains to nirvana.
As one day all must be given up,
Why not dedicate it now to universal happiness?

My bodily powers I dedicate
To the well-being of all that lives.
Should anyone wish to ridicule me
And make me an object of jest and scorn,

Why should I possibly care
If I have dedicated myself to others?

Let them do as they wish with me,
So long as it does not harm them.
May no one who encounters me
Ever have an insignificant contact.

Regardless of whether those whom I meet
Respond toward me with anger or faith,
May the mere fact of our meeting
Contribute to the fulfillment of their wishes.

May the slander, harm
And all forms of abuse
That anyone should direct toward me
Act as a cause of their enlightenment.

May I be a protector of the helpless,
 A guide to those traveling the path,
 A boat to those wishing to cross over;
 Or a bridge or a raft.

May I be land for those requiring it,
 A lamp for those in darkness,
 May I be a home for the homeless,
 And a servant to the world.

In order to fulfill the needs of beings
 May I be as a magic gem,
 An inexhaustible vase, a mystic spell,
 A cure-all medicine and a wish-granting tree.

May I act as the mighty earth
 Or like the free and open skies
 To support and provide the space
 Whereby I and all others may grow.

Until every being afflicted by pain
 Has reached to nirvana's shores,
 May I serve only as a condition
 That encourages progress and joy.

Just as all previous Buddhas
 First gave rise to the precious bodhimind
 And just as they then carefully followed

The stages of the Bodhisattva disciplines,
 Likewise for the sake of living beings
 Do I now myself generate the bodhimind,
 And likewise will I myself train
 In the disciplines of a Bodhisattva.

They who out of wisdom
 Have seized the supreme bodhimind
 Praise, glorify and rejoice in it,
 That it may grow to fulfillment.

From today I will reap the fruit of life;
 Having well won the state of a human life,
 Today I am born in the Buddha-family
 And am now a child of the Buddhas.

Thus in the future I should make every effort
 To live in accord with the Bodhisattva Ways,
 And never should I act as would bring shame
 To this noble, faultless family.

Like a blind man fumbling in garbage
 Who happens to find a rare and precious gem,
 Likewise have I discovered
 The jewel of the precious bodhimind.

Thus was found this supreme ambrosia to dispel
 The Lord of Death, destroyer of life;

An inexhaustible treasure able to cure
The poverty of all sentient beings.

It is the highest of medicines
To quell the ills of the living,
And it is a tree giving shade
To those wandering on the paths of life.

It is a strong and mighty bridge
By which beings can cross from misery,
And it is a moon to shine in the mind
To clear away the pains of delusion.

The bodhimind is a great radiant sun
To disperse the darkness of unknowing,
And it is the very essence of butters
Gained from churning the milks of Dharma.

For all guests on the roads of life
Who would taste the very substance of joy,
Here is the actual seat of true happiness,
A veritable feast to satiate the world.

Thus today in the presence of all Awakened Ones
I invite every living being to this festival
Giving both immediate and lasting joy.
May the gods and all others rejoice.

A Dedication Prayer, by Shantideva

May all beings everywhere,
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind,
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of these merits.

May no living creature suffer,
Commit evil or ever fall ill.
May no one be afraid or belittled,
With a mind weighed down by depression.

May the blind see forms,
And the deaf hear sounds.
May those whose bodies are worn with toil
Be restored on finding repose.

May the naked find clothing,
The hungry find food.
May the thirsty find water
And delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth,
Those weak with sorrow find joy.
May the forlorn find hope,
Constant happiness and prosperity

May there be timely rains

And bountiful harvests.
May all medicines be effective
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.

May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their ailments.
Whatever diseases there are in the world,
May they never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be freed.
May the powerless find power
And may people think of benefiting each other.

For as long as space remains,
and for as long as sentient beings remain,
until then, may I too remain,
to dispel the suffering of the world

Dedication from the Bodhicharyavatara

May beings everywhere who suffer
 Torment in their minds and bodies
 Have, by virtue of this merit,
 Joy and happiness in boundless measure.

As long as they may linger in samsara,
 May their present joy know no decline,
 And may they taste of unsurpassed beatitude
 In constant and unbroken continuity.

May the naked now be clothed,
 And all the hungry eat their fill.
 May those parched with thirst
 Receive pure waters and delicious drink.

May the poor and destitute find wealth,
 The haggard and careworn joy.
 May confidence relieve those in despair
 And bring them steadfastness and every excellence.

My every being ailing with disease
 Be freed at once from every malady.
 May all the sickness that afflicts the living
 Be instantly and permanently healed.

May those who go in dread have no more fear.

May captives be unchained and now set free.
And may the weak receive their strength.
May living beings help each other in kindness.

May all attain the human state,
And be possessed of wisdom, faith and love.
With perfect livelihood and sustenance,
May they have mindfulness throughout their lives.

Thus by all the merit we have gained,
May every being, leaving no one aside,
Abandon all their evil ways
Embracing goodness now and ever more.

Dedication prayers from A Healing Buddha Practice

By this merit,
 and by all the virtue and all the blessings
 of all the ten directions three times Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
 all the Saints and Sages, Arhats and Ajahns,
 Lamas, monks and nuns,
 and of all Holy Beings...

together with all the virtue of kind hearted people everywhere,
 and all excellent practitioners,
 in mountains, and hermitages,
 in monasteries, Dharma Centers, and at home,

May all the sufferings of all living beings
 be completely and permanently cleared away,
 and may an abundance of health and well being be enjoyed by all,
 now, and always

May all beings benefit in every way that is needed by them,
 and may each of our temporal and ultimate aims be fulfilled.

By all this virtue, may all beings live always in safety, and in peace
 May all beings have lasting happiness

May all those I am connected to, through good or bad karma,
 be completely liberated from all suffering and its causes *forever*,
 May they enjoy every happiness,

and may I be the cause of that

By all the blessings we have received,
and by the strength of our own efforts, awakened insight,
courage, and love,
from this point forward,
may we all create only the causes
to enjoy fortunate conditions,
to realize higher rebirth,
and to accomplish each of the stages of liberation and enlightened
understanding and activity

May I and all others attain only these.

May we always care for ourselves and for one another
in the best of ways.

May the supreme jewel, bodhicitta,
arise where it has not yet arisen,
Where it has arisen, may it not diminish,
May it ever grow and flourish

For myself and for all others,
may the complete Right View awaken where it has not yet done so
Where it has been known, may it remain stable,
and may its power increase in our lives, and in the world,
more and more

Just as Samantabhadra and Manjushri have dedicated,
in the same way do I make this dedication,
in the way that is praised as best

May this bring peace.
May this bring healing wherever it is needed,
on outer, inner, and secret levels

May this bring about the health and balance of the elements,
and the firm establishment of true health and well being,
long life, and happiness for us all

By all this virtue,
may all the environments where we live be purified and renewed,
and may we all together accomplish the full realization
of the Noble healing buddha

By this merit,
wherever I am, and wherever I may go,
may I further the work of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
the awakening of light, complete freedom and peace.

By all this virtue,
may all holy teachers live long, and guide us until samsara ends,
and may there be peace and joy in all the world.

For further reading and reflection

[Readings on Metta](#)

[Readings on the Mahayana](#)

[Verses and Short Teachings on Bodhicitta](#)

[Metta and Readings on the Mahayana - Complete](#)

and,

[Mahayana Prayers and Poetry - audio - and text](#)