

The Bodhisattva Vow

(Comments based on ceremony received from Thrangu Rinpoche)

INTRODUCTION

The Bodhisattva Vow is different from the outer Praktimosha (Individual Liberation) Vows:

Praktimosha Vow

- *Praktimosha vows pertain to Body and Speech.*
- *You must keep them precisely because you can be keep them. We can control Body and Speech.*
- *Like **Clay Vase**, difficult to repair. We take them with the understanding that we can and will keep them*

Bodhisattva Vow

- *Bodhisattva vows pertains to mind*
- *Not so easy to keep; eventually we have a negative thought and break them. Thus taken not with idea we will be impeccable.*
- *Like a **Golden Vase**, if dent, easy to repair.*
- *Also, like **White-Washing a Stupa**, we can take vows many times, each time the stupa is whiter.*

ACTUAL CEREMONY

FIRST: *Set one’s attitude or motivation as follows: “I generate Bodhicitta, the wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings” exactly as they have done in the past. Whatever they have done to achieve Buddhahood, I will do too.*

SECOND: *Perform 3 prostrations.*

THIRD: *Kneel with right knee on the ground and hands held in gassho (lotus bud mudra) at the heart.*

FOURTH: *Recite after me:*

JANG CHUB NYING POR
 SANG GYE NAM LA
 CHÖ DANG JANG CHUB
 TSOK LANG DE SHIN
 JI TAR NGÖN GYI
 JANG CHUB TUK NI
 JANG CHUB SEM PAY
 DE DAKL RIM SHIN
 DE SHIN DRO LA
 JANG CHUB DEM NI
 DE SHIN DU NI
 RIM PA SHIN DU

CHI KHY BAR
 KYAP SU CHI
 SEM PA YI
 KYAP SU CHI
 DE SHEK KYI
 KYE PA DANG
 LAP PA LA
 NE PAR TAR
 PEN DÖN DU
 KYE GYI SHING
 LAP PA LANG
 LAP PAR GYI

(2x in Tibetan)

Until attaining the heart of enlightenment,
I go for refuge to the Buddhas,
And in the same way,
I also go for refuge to the teachings of the Dharma
And to the assembly of Bodhisattvas.

Just as the previous transcendent Buddhas
Developed the thought of enlightenment
And practiced the ten successive stages
Of Bodhisattva training

In order to benefit beings,
I also develop the thought of enlightenment
And follow these successive stages.

(1x in English)

IMMEDIATELY FIFTH: (At conclusion, teacher SNAPS finger with right hand above heart.)

SIXTH: The vow has now been received. Perform 3 prostrations. Then sit.

----- NOW REJOICE COMMENTS -----

Having received the Bodhisattva Vow, the key or principal point is to increase Bodhicitta until we attain the full enlightenment of Buddha.

The key, in turn, to increasing Bodhicitta is to take enthusiastic delight in generating Bodhicitta. So we take delight, we express our delight in the next phase of the ceremony.

Just as regret of a negative act helps to purify it and cause it to diminish, rejoicing at a positive act causes it to flourish and increase.

Thus we should take delight, but also others should do so as well. The only difference between Buddha and ordinary being, is that the Buddha once generated Bodhicitta. Today you have generated Bodhicitta and thus this act will definitely culminate in the same awakening. Thus it is appropriate to rejoice in what you have done.

FIRST: Please recite after me:

DENG DU DAK TSE	DRE BU YÖ
MI YI SI PA	LEK PAR TOP
DE RING SANG GYE	RIK SU KYE
SANG GYE SAY SU	DAK DENG GYUR
DA NI DAK GI	CHI NAY KYANG
RIK DANG TUN PAY	LAY TSAM TE
KYÖN ME TSÜN PAY	RIK DI LA
NYOK PAR MI GYUR	DE TAR JA

(1x in Tibetan)

Now my life is fruitful.
I have obtained the most excellent human existence.

Today I am born into the lineage of the Buddhas
And have become a child of the Buddhas,

From now on, in all possible ways,
I will make my actions conform to the family,
So that this faultless, noble lineage will not be defiled.

(1x in English)

----- OTHERS REJOICE COMMENTS -----

Today, you are not just fortunate yourself. Through this great fortune, you will benefit other beings. Generally speaking, all ordinary beings suffer. They are alone in their suffering, they have no protector. But today you have promised to be their protector. All the good qualities of Buddhahood come from Bodhicitta. Thus it is appropriate for all beings to rejoice that you have generated Bodhicitta since in doing so, this effort will definitely culminate in Buddhahood and benefit them as well.

FIRST: With an attitude of benevolence, please recite after me:

DAK GI DE RING	KYOP PA TSAM CHAY KYI
CHEN NGAR DRO WA	DE SHEK NYI DANG NI
BAR DU DE LA	DRON DU BÖ ZIN GYI
HLA DANG HLA MIN	LA SOK GA WAR GYI

(1x in Tibetan)

In the presence of all the refuges,
I have invited all beings to come to happiness
Until they have attained the bliss of Buddhahood.

Gods, jealous gods, and other beings rejoice!

(1x in English)

----- DEDICATION COMMENTS -----

Next comes the taking of associated aspirations. This aspiration needs to be as vast as possible. It has 3 parts, which in their entirety summarize the key points of Shantideva's "Guide to the Way of the Bodhisattva"

- *First, many have not yet generated Bodhicitta; obviously, it would be of great benefit if they did so. So first we wish that those who have not yet generated it, generate it*
- *Next, in those in whom Bodhicitta has arisen, it may become impaired. We wish that it not be hindered or reduced or impaired*
- *The third aspiration, is that for those in whom it has arisen and in whom it is unimpaired, we wish that this most precious thought be not only unimpaired but forever increase*

This is possible since Bodhicitta, of all virtues, has the distinct and unique quality of forever being able to bear fruit.

This is the aspiration we make in conjunction with our own taking of the Bodhisattva Vow.

FIRST: *Recite after me:*

JANG CHUB SEM NI
MA KYE PAR NAM
KYE PA NYAM PA
GONG NAY GONG DU

RIN PO CHE
KYE GYUR CHIK
ME PA DANG
PEL WAR SHOK

(1x in Tibetan)

Bodhicitta, the excellent and precious mind.
Where it is unborn, may it arise.
Where it is born, may it not decline
But forever increase.

(1x in English)

So that concludes our ceremony.