

## Taking of the Bodhisattva vows

1. As is traditional, you may seek out a Buddhist center or temple or a shrine and take the **Bodhisattva vows** in the **presence of a teacher**. Or, if you cannot do so, you can take them **at home** in front of your sacred shrine.

2. One must make **strong aspiration** to take these **Bodhisattva vows** with **determined faith** and **understanding, sincerely** in front of the Buddha or great Maha Bodhisattva who had gone forth before you.

3. Making of **special aspiration** to walk the Bodhisattva way:

‘By the power of whatever blessings and wholesomeness that this nature of ‘mine’ had cultivated from the distant past till now, **may it arise** the **causes and conditions** for this nature of mine to have the **following right Dhamma understanding life after life** whenever it **choose to come** or **have to come** in the form of a Form and Mind:

i) **Right view** with regards to (a) the **law of karma (karma niyama)**; (b) the **law of Dependent origination or 12 links (Citta niyama)** and (c) the **Four Noble Truths (Dhamma niyama)**;

ii) To understand the **2 aspects** of the 5 aggregates of Form and Mind **clearly** via the **direct seeing** to realize that they are all **condition arising entities, casual phenomena** hence **impermanent**; leading to **suffering; not me, non-self** and **empty**. That is this so called **living being** (5 aggregates of Form and Mind) is just a **karmically conditioned** ‘vehicle and tool’ for us to come to this **existential** world to **develop** the **cultivation** and **experience** all of the **beauty and wonders of life**. So use it with **wisdom** to arise the right thoughts, right speeches and right actions to be a **blessing to all** and **not to be deluded** by it. To **constantly** recite with **understanding** the following **dhamma profoundly**:

*Rupam aniccam, rupam anatta;*

*Vedana aniccam, vedana anatta;*

*Sanna aniccam, sanna anatta;*

*Sankhara aniccam, sankhara anatta;*

*Vinanam aniccam, vinanam anatta.*

*Sabba sankhara aniccam,*

*Sabba sankhara dukkha and*

*Sabba dhamma anatta.*

- iii) Having **developed the above right view** this nature of 'mine' **vow** to **always** keep the following **3 sets** of **pure precepts** following the advice of all Samma Sambuddha:
  - (a) To **avoid all evil** and to **understand clearly** what **constitute evil** (the 3 evil roots of Greed, Hatred and Delusion);
  - (b) To **cultivate all virtues** and **blessings** leading to the perfection of them all;
  - (c) To **cultivate wisdom** to help **liberate** and **take across** all sentient beings.

#### 4. Actual taking of the Bodhisattva vows

##### 4.1 Taking of the 4 basic vows

*'Just as all the previous Sugatas, the Buddhas generated the **Bodhi mind** of enlightenment and **accomplished all the stages** of the Bodhisattva training. So too will this nature of 'mine', for the sake of all beings, **generate the Bodhi mind** of enlightenment and **accomplish all the stages** of the Bodhisattva training so that the **seed of 'Bodhi'** can be **strongly planted** within our nature.'*

'This nature of mine further **vow** with **utmost sincerity, faith** and **perseverance** to **walk to perfection** this **Bodhisattva way** via taking the following initial **4 basic vows** of a Bodhisattva:

- i) This nature of mine vows **to liberate the countless living beings** from samsara and take them all across to the other shore;
- ii) This nature of mine vows **to endure and severe all vexation/suffering**;
- iii) This nature of mine vows **to cultivate and penetrate all dhamma** to realize the perfection of all wisdom;
- iv) This nature of mine vows **to perfect the 10 paramittas (or perfections)** to realize the unsurpassed Samma Sambuddhahood.'

##### 4.2 Additional vows to break all karmic obstructions to bring about the way

- i) If by actions, speech or thought, whether knowing or unknowing via ignorant, delusion and heedlessness, this nature of 'mine' had **offended** or **done anything wrong** unto the **Triple Gems** (Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha) this nature of 'mine' would like **to sincerely** ask for **forgiveness**.
- ii) Whomsoever from the distant past until now, whether knowingly or unknowingly that this nature of 'mine' had caused any **karmic negativity, misery, suffering** or **mislead**, this nature of 'mine' would like **to sincerely** ask for **forgiveness** from them all. May my **sincere request** for forgiveness be accepted by all so that all these **karmic obstructions** can be **amicably dissolved** or **watered down** or **lessen** thereby enabling this nature of 'mine' to continue with its cultivation to realize the **true dhamma** with ease.

- iii) This nature of 'mine' also vow to **repent** and **from** now onward **vow never to repeat** any of these karmic negativities (borne of Greed, Hatred and Delusion) by following the **advice** of the Buddha **to avoid all evil, do good** and **purify my mind** via **striving on with heedfulness** to keep the **5 precepts** and cultivate the **Buddha dhamma diligently** so that it will **never violate** this law of karma again whenever it arise.
- iv) By the power of **whatever wholesomeness or merits** that this nature of 'mine' had cultivated since the distant past until now may it arise the **causes and conditions** for this nature of 'mine' to have the ability to overcome **all other karmic obstructions or obstacles amicably** so that this nature of 'mine' will be able **to gain back its life, life after life** to walk the path of dhamma **to fulfill** and **realize** all its Bodhisattva vows.

#### 4.3 Additional miscellaneous vows to enhance the cultivation

This nature of 'mine' **vow**:

- i) To be **successful** in **fulfilling** all my above vows soonest possible;
- ii) To cultivate **strong affinity** with all Buddha and Bodhisattvas and **to request** their nature's **blessing, protection** and **guidance** always;
- iii) To strengthen my **5 spiritual faculties of Saddha, viriya, sati, samadhi and panna** until they become balas or powers, life after life so that all the above vows can be successfully fulfilled with ease;
- iv) To cultivate **extensively all virtues, blessings** and **merits** to **help support my cultivation** so that they will **shine forth to aid this nature of 'mine'** when needed in times of **trials, difficulties** and **tribulations** while walking the Bodhisattva way.

**Note:** The **10 perfections** leading to Buddha hood are:

1. **Generosity** (Dana)      2. **Moral virtue** (Sila)      3. **Renunciation** (Nekkhamma)
4. **Wisdom** (Panna)      5. **Spiritual zeal** (Viriya)      6. **Patience** (Khanti)
7. **Truthfulness** (Sacca)      8. **Determination or Resolution** (Adhithana)
9. **Loving Kindness** (Metta) 10. **Equanimity** (Uppekha)

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