

Readings from The Way of the Bodhisattva

by Shantideva

*This 8th Century text by an Indian Buddhist master is one of the most revered texts in modern Buddhism.
From Chapter Three, "Commitment," Verses 7-12, 16-19 and 21-24*

7. May all the pain of every living being
Be wholly scattered and destroyed!
8. For all those ailing in the world,
Until their every sickness has been healed,
May I myself become for them
The doctor, nurse, the medicine itself.
9. Raining down a flood of food and drink,
May I dispel the ills of thirst and famine.
And in the ages marked by scarcity and want,
May I myself appear as drink and sustenance.
10. For sentient beings, poor and destitute,
May I become a treasure ever plentiful,
And lie before them closely in their reach,
A varied source of all that they might need.
11. My body, thus, and all my goods besides,
And all my merits gained and to be gained,
I give them all away, withholding nothing
To bring about the benefit of beings.
12. Nirvana is attained by giving all.
Nirvana the objective of my striving.
Everything therefore must be abandoned,
And it is best to give it all to others.
16. If those who see me entertain
A thought of anger or devotion,
May these states supply the cause
Whereby their good and wishes are fulfilled.
17. All those who slight me to my face,
Or do me any other evil,
Even if they blame or slander me,
May they attain the fortune of enlightenment!
18. May I be a guard for those who are protectorless,
A guide for those who journey on the road.
For those who need a resting place, a bed;
For all who need a servant, may I be their slave.
19. Like the earth and the pervading elements,
Enduring as the sky itself endures,
For boundless multitudes of living beings,
May I be their ground and sustenance.
21. Thus for every thing that lives,
As far as are the limits of the sky,
May I provide their livelihood and nourishment
Until they pass beyond the bonds of suffering.
22. Just as the buddhas of the past
Embraced the awakened attitude of mind,
And in the precepts of the bodhisattvas
Step by step abode and trained,
23. Just so, and for the benefit of beings,
I will also have this attitude of mind,
And in those precepts, step by step,
I will abide and train myself.

*From "The Way of the Bodhisattva"
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