

# The Bodhisattva Vows

## The Eighteen Root Downfalls

1. praising oneself and belittling others
2. not sharing with others one's wealth and the Dharma
3. not forgiving even when others apologise
4. doubting and denying the doctrine of the Great Vehicle
5. taking offerings intended for the Three Jewels
6. abandoning the doctrine (through sectarianism, etc)
7. causing an ordained person to disrobe
8. committing one of the five crimes of immediate retribution
9. holding perverted views
10. destroying places such as towns
11. teaching emptiness to those untrained
12. discouraging others from seeking full enlightenment
13. causing others to break the vows of individual liberation
14. belittling those who follow the path of individual liberation
15. proclaiming false realisations (of emptiness, etc)
16. accepting gifts of articles that have been misappropriated from the belongings of the Three Jewels
17. laying down harmful regulations and passing false judgement
18. giving up the pledge of altruistic aspiration (bodhicitta)

Except in the cases of giving up the pledge of altruistic aspiration and holding perverted views, a complete infraction of any of the root vows requires the association with what are called the 'four factors of thorough entanglement':

1. not being mindful of the disadvantages
2. not reversing the desire to indulge in the infraction
3. indulging in the act with great pleasure and delight
4. lack of any shame and conscience

## The Forty-Six Secondary Infractions

### *Seven downfalls related to generosity*

1. not making offerings every day to the Three Jewels
2. acting out thoughts of desire because of discontent
3. not paying respect to those senior to one in ordination and in taking the bodhisattva vows
4. not answering others' questions out of negligence though one is able to do so
5. selfishly not accepting invitations due to pride, the wish to hurt others' feelings, or anger and laziness
6. not accepting others' gift out of jealousy, anger etc or simply to hurt the other
7. not giving the Dharma teachings to those who wish to learn

### *Nine downfalls in relation to the practice of morality*

1. ignoring and insulting someone who has committed any of the five heinous crimes or defiled his or her vows of individual liberation, or treating him or her with contempt
2. not observing the precepts of moral conduct because one wishes to ingratiate oneself with others

3. complying with the minor precepts when the situation demands one's disregard of them for the greater benefit of others
4. not committing one of the seven negative actions of body and speech when universal love and compassion deem it necessary in a particular instance
5. accepting things which are acquired through one of the five wrong livelihoods
6. wasting time on frivolous actions (such as carelessness, lack of pure morality, dancing, playing music just for fun, gossiping) and also distracting others in meditation
7. misconceiving that bodhisattvas do not attempt to attain liberation and failing to view delusions as things to be eliminated
8. not living up to one's precepts, thinking that doing so might decrease one's popularity, or not correcting the undisciplined behaviour of body and speech which result in a bad reputation that limits one's ability to carry out the tasks of a bodhisattva
9. not correcting others whom, motivated by delusions, commit negative actions. Doing so helps them to disclose and purify their actions, whereas concealing them generates suspicions of being disliked by others

*Four downfalls related to patience*

1. parting from the four noble disciplines; not retaliating when scolded by others, humiliated by others, hit by others or even killed by others
2. neglecting those who are angry with you
3. refusing to accept the apologies of others
4. acting out thoughts of anger, not opposing the arousal of anger within one's mind by reflecting upon its harmful consequences etc

*Three downfalls related to joyous effort*

1. gathering circles of disciples out of desire for respect and material gain
2. wasting time and energy on trivial matters; not countering laziness, addiction to excessive sleep, and procrastination
3. being addicted to frivolous talk

*Three downfalls related to concentration*

1. not seeking the appropriate conditions for attaining a single pointed concentration, and meditating upon it without proper guidance
2. not eliminating the obstacles to one's concentration
3. regarding the blissful experience derived from concentration as the main purpose of single pointed meditation

*Eight downfalls related to wisdom*

1. abandoning the doctrines of the Lesser Vehicle with the thought that the practitioners of the Greater Vehicle need not practise them
2. unnecessarily expending one's energy in other directions despite having one's own Greater Vehicle methods
3. pursuing non-Dharma studies to the neglect of the Dharma ones
4. studying non-Dharma subjects with great thoroughness, out of attachments to these views, and favouring them
5. abandoning the doctrines of the Great Vehicle, claiming that they are ineffective and rejecting texts on ground of their literary style
6. praising oneself and belittling others out of arrogance and hatred

7. not attending Dharma ceremonies, discourses etc out of laziness or pride
8. disparaging one's Guru and not relying on his words

*Twelve downfalls related to the ethics of helping others*

1. not helping those who need assistance
2. avoiding the task of caring for sick people
3. not working to alleviate other's suffering, such as the seven types of frustrations: being blind, deaf, lame, exhausted from fatigue, depressed, abused and rebuked by others, and suffering from the hindrances to a calm and single pointed mind
4. not showing the Dharma way to those recklessly caught up in the affairs of this life alone
5. not repaying the kindness of others
6. not consoling those who have mental grief, such as that caused by separation from loved ones
7. not giving material aid to those who are in need of it
8. not taking care of one's circles of disciples, relatives and friends by giving them teaching and material aid
9. not acting in accordance with others' wishes
10. not praising those who deserve praise and their good qualities
11. not preventing harmful acts to the extent permitted by circumstances
12. not employing physical prowess of supernatural powers, if one possesses them, at the time needed