

# The Path of the Bodhisattva – 10 day retreat

## Retreat Details

### The Path of the Bodhisattva chapter 1-3: Generating Bodhicitta

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*All other virtues, like the plantain tree,  
Produce their fruit, but then their force is spent.  
Alone the marvelous tree of bodhicitta  
Constantly bears fruit and grows unceasingly*

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#### What we will work with

The basis of retreat will be the book “The Way of the Bodhisattva” (Bodhicaryavatara), Shambhala Publications, 2nd edition.

#### What you will learn: day 1-3

- To generate a deep emotional response to the ideal of **bodhicitta**: the heartfelt wish to follow the path to enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.
- To accept your own imperfections and recognize that your virtues are not yet fully developed, without guilt or self-rejection.
- To acknowledge that your thoughts, words, and actions are often unwholesome, and that honestly admitting your mistakes is a crucial first step for genuine transformation.
- To understand how, from this honest acknowledgement, the sincere wish arises to change for the better.
- To see how important it is to awaken, nurture, and protect the aspiration for enlightenment for the welfare of all beings once it has arisen.

#### What we will study, day 1-3

- You will receive an introduction to chapters 1–3 of the Bodhicaryavatara.
- You will develop an appreciation of the preciousness of bodhicitta.
- You will gain a sense of the inner and outer prerequisites for developing the deep aspiration to follow the path to enlightenment for the benefit of all beings.

These prerequisites are presented in the first three chapters:

- In the first chapter we explore why the aspiration for enlightenment for the welfare of all beings is of such immeasurable value for oneself and others, and why practicing Mahayana Buddhists regard it as the highest value of all.
- In the second chapter, written in infinitely beautiful and poetic language, we learn about the preparations that open us to deeper wisdom and transformation, so that we generate the energy and motivation to engage wholeheartedly in this path of development.
- Chapter 3 marks the transition from inspiration to commitment. After chapter 1 has praised the immeasurable value of bodhicitta and chapter 2 has focused on purification and inner preparation, chapter 3 is where we consciously “take hold” of this awakening mind and turn it into a stable, life-guiding resolve. In our retreat, this chapter will help us understand how bodhicitta becomes firmly rooted in our hearts so that the later practices can grow from a clear and deeply felt commitment.

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*It is the universal bridge that saves  
All wandering beings from the state of loss,  
the rising moon of the enlightenend mind  
that soothes the sorrows born of the afflictions*

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## What you will learn: day 4-10

In the remaining seven days of the retreat, we will immerse ourselves in the remaining chapters of *The Way of the Bodhisattva* and explore how bodhicitta can be protected, strengthened, and fully integrated into daily life. After the first weekend has focused on awakening and adopting the enlightened mind, this intensive week will guide us through the practices of carefulness and vigilant introspection, patience, diligence, meditation, and wisdom as presented by Shantideva. Step by step, we will discover how the six perfections become very concrete attitudes and behaviors, and how the text leads us towards a profound understanding of selflessness and the dedication of all our practice for the benefit of all beings.

## Themes day 4-10

### *Day 4 – Chapter 4: Carefulness*

This day focuses on Chapter 4, which develops the quality of carefulness – a careful, responsible attitude toward our thoughts, words, and actions as we protect and nourish

bodhicitta. We explore how Shantideva encourages us to avoid harmful habits and to align our daily behavior more consistently with the Bodhisattva path.

#### *Day 5 – Chapter 5: Vigilant introspection*

On this day we turn to Chapter 5, which emphasizes vigilant introspection as essential tools for guarding the mind. The sessions show how steady awareness helps us to notice unwholesome mental patterns early and to repeatedly return to our intention to benefit all beings.

#### *Day 6 – Chapter 6: Patience*

Day three is dedicated to Chapter 6 on patience, presented as a powerful antidote to anger and inner hardness. Through teaching, study, and contemplation we learn to recognize different forms of anger and to meet difficult people and situations with more space, softness, and understanding.

#### *Day 7 – Chapter 7: Diligence*

This day explores Chapter 7, which highlights diligence (joyful effort or enthusiasm) as the energy that sustains all virtuous practice. We look at what weakens our motivation—such as laziness, discouragement, and self-doubt—and how inspiration, determination, and joy can be cultivated as a stable inner momentum on the path.

#### *Day 8 – Chapter 8: Meditative concentration*

On day five we work with Chapter 8, devoted to meditative concentration. The daily structure supports us in understanding how outer and inner simplicity, mental stability, and practices like exchanging self and others deepen both insight and compassion.

#### *Day 9 – Chapter 9: Wisdom*

Day six focuses on Chapter 9, the chapter on wisdom, especially the understanding of emptiness and selflessness. We are gently introduced to the view that all phenomena lack independent, fixed existence, and we explore how this insight transforms our relationship to ourselves, others, and the world.

#### *Day 10 – Chapter 10: Dedication*

The final morning is dedicated to Chapter 10 on dedication of merit. We reflect on Shantideva's vast dedication prayers and practice offering all our practice, understanding, and joy—and even our difficulties—for the benefit and awakening of all beings.

### Daily structure

- Morning: Teaching by **Khenpo Kunga Dakpa** on the respective chapter and theme of *The Way of the Bodhisattva*.
- Late morning : Shared study groups comparing revision notes in order to clarify and get a deeper understanding of the talk / chapter

- Afternoon: Question-and-answer session with **Khenpo Kunga Dakpa**, including guided contemplations on the chapter's main themes.
- Evening: Kum Nye session and guided meditations to embody and deepen the day's insights.