



How to Live the  
Compassionate Life:  
*The Bodhisattva's Jewel  
Garland* by Lama Atisha

Shantideva Center

Session 4 - June 10, 2025



*The Bodhisattva's Jewel  
Garland* – Verse 12ab

## On Verse 12ab

*The happiness of enjoying Dharma covers the entire body.  
It happens whenever you want.  
It exists in all the three realms.  
Once you achieve it, you have it wherever you are born.  
It causes you to achieve the seven riches of the aryas.*

Advice from Asanga,  
translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche

## On Verse 12ab

*By enjoying the happiness of Dharma, it never finishes.  
It only increases more and more.  
Enemies cannot destroy it.  
You can carry it to your next lives.  
You can complete the happiness of Dharma and achieve  
satisfaction.*

Advice from Asanga,  
translated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche



*The Bodhisattva's Jewel  
Garland – Verse 12cdef*

**On Verse 12cdef**

*When something has been planned and started on,  
Attention should not drift to other things.  
With thoughts fixed on the chosen target,  
That and that alone should be pursued.*

- Verse 5.43, *The Way of the Bodhisattva* by Shantideva  
Translated by Padmakara Translation Group

## On Verse 12cdef

*Behaving in this way, all tasks are well performed,  
And nothing is achieved by doing otherwise.  
If thus we act, the secondary defilement,  
Lack of introspection, will not grow.*

- Verse 5.44, *The Way of the Bodhisattva* by Shantideva  
Translated by Padmakara Translation Group

## On Verse 12cdef

When choosing what to do, how to spend our time, what people to spend it with and so on, we choose [1] according to our talents, [2] according to what most needs to be done and what is not being done by many other people, ...

From Oral Commentary by Alex Berzin



## On Verse 12cdef

... and [3] according to what would benefit the largest number of people. This is the advice His Holiness gave me. And, again, the benefits we're thinking of are not just those that would be realized in this lifetime.

From Oral Commentary by Alex Berzin

## On Verse 12cdef

Also, as Ringu Tulku reaffirmed when he was visiting here in Berlin a little while ago, when we're choosing how to spend our time and whom to help, another factor to consider is [4] what we personally would get out of it.

From Oral Commentary by Alex Berzin

## On Verse 12cdef

That's because, until we're very high bodhisattvas, there's always going to be some selfish component to our motivations. So, for instance, there are certain things we might do that would give us a lot of energy.

From Oral Commentary by Alex Berzin

## On Verse 12cdef

There are also certain people whom we might help or spend our time with who have a lot of positive energy and who would give us inspiration, whereas others would just drain our energy and make us feel very exhausted after having been with them. So, these also can be factors in choosing how to spend our time and whom to help.

From Oral Commentary by Alex Berzin

## On Verse 12cdef

When it comes to choosing what to work on ourselves, the advice is always to meditate on bodhichitta. That is the best thing and the biggest source of energy.

From Oral Commentary by Alex Berzin



### *The Bodhisattva's Jewel Garland – Verse 13*

ALTERNATE TRANSLATION  
BY BRIAN BERESFORD:

Always be apart from liking evil.

Whenever a pompous mind  
arises,

Flatten such arrogance.  
Recall the teachings of your  
master.

## On Verse 13

Pride or conceit is one of the worst emotional afflictions. If we feel that by having developed the awakening mind we are superior to others, then everyone will disparage us. If we are supercilious and pompous, no one will find us compatible. As an opponent to arrogance we should meditate on impermanence and death.

- *Advice from a Spiritual Friend* by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, pp.121-122

## On Verse 13

In such a time, when we have a **feeling of superiority about anything**, like our bodhichitta meditation, our practice – “Oh, I’m so holy,” and “I’m doing so well,” and so on – we need to **cut off our pride and remember our teacher’s guideline instructions** that we’re like the tide of the ocean that goes up and down, up and down. Sometimes we feel very proud that we’re doing so well; other times we get discouraged and think we’re so terrible.

From Oral Commentary by Alex Berzin

## On Verse 13

In conclusion, it is important to remember that our achievements are fleeting and inconsequential in the face of death. We are not alone in our accomplishments; others have surpassed us in various ways. This knowledge should humble us and prevent the growth of ego.

- *Solid Like a Mountain* by Lama Gyuremey, p.85

## On Verse 13

By hiding our best qualities and not seeking validation or recognition, we can maintain inner balance. We should heed the advice of our masters and contemplate the impermanence of life. Remember, the true light within us should remain concealed like a burning flame inside a pot.

- *Solid Like a Mountain* by Lama Gyuremey, p.85



*The Bodhisattva's Jewel  
Garland – Verse 14ab*

## On Verse 14ab

Very few people have a steady or stable experience of life. For most, their emotions ebb and flow like the tides. Sometimes we may feel proud of signs of accomplishment and yet at others we may be depressed when our defilements and habitual propensities overwhelm us.

- *Advice from a Spiritual Friend* by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, p.122

## On Verse 14ab

All such feelings are relative to one another because discouragement exists only in relation to elation; neither one is independent. It is beneficial if our life flows with little major change, like a wide river.

- *Advice from a Spiritual Friend* by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, p.122

## On Verse 14ab

Therefore we should not become too excited when we accomplish a great deal, or depressed when we fail to do so. If we feel self-pity, we should contemplate on our good fortune at having a fully endowed precious human form.

- *Advice from a Spiritual Friend* by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, p.122



*The Bodhisattva's Jewel  
Garland – Verse 14abc*

ALTERNATE TRANSLATION  
OF VERSE 14C BY ALEX  
BERZIN:

**And meditate on the voidness  
of both (states\*).**

**\* Referring to the states of samsara  
and nirvana.**

## On Verse 14c

### **The Reasoning of Dependent Arising to Realize Emptiness**

1. Dependence upon causes and conditions
2. Dependence upon parts
3. Dependence upon mere imputation or designation

*The first pertains to only compounded or produced phenomena, while  
the second and third are established for all phenomena.*





*The Bodhisattva's Jewel  
Garland – Verse 14de*

**On Verse 14de**

*When you encounter attractive objects,  
Though they seem beautiful  
Like a rainbow in summer, don't regard them as real  
And give up attachment –  
This is the practice of Bodhisattvas.*

- Verse 23, *The 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas* by Togme Sangpo  
Translated by Geshe Sonam Rinchen and Ruth Sonam

## On Verse 14de

*All forms of suffering are like a child's death in a dream.  
Holding illusory appearances to be true makes you weary.  
Therefore when you meet with disagreeable circumstances  
See them as illusory –  
This is the practice of Bodhisattvas.*

- Verse 24, *The 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas* by Togme Sangpo  
Translated by Geshe Sonam Rinchen and Ruth Sonam

## On Verse 14de

*“How should one correctly and thoroughly teach? Just how one  
should not correctly and thoroughly teach; therefore, one says,  
‘correctly and thoroughly teach.’*

*“As a star, a visual aberration, a lamp, an illusion, dew, a  
bubble, a dream, lightning, and a cloud – view all the compounded  
[phenomena] like that.”*

- *The Vajra Cutter Sutra* Translated by Ven. George Churinoff



*The Bodhisattva's Jewel  
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## On Verse 15

This is like *lojong*, the mind training (attitude training) text that Atisha's teacher Dharmarakshita wrote – that **when we hear unpleasant words it's like an echo**. So, the nasty words that we've spoken ourselves are now coming back to us and we're hearing them again.

From Oral Commentary by Alex Berzin

## On Verse 15

And when **harm happens to my body**, well this has **come from my karma**. We've thrown the boomerang out, as it were, and now it has come back. We create all our troubles ourselves. Other people may be circumstances, but we've created the conditions to meet with those circumstances.

From Oral Commentary by Alex Berzin

## On Verse 15

*Whenever suffering arises in our mind,  
It is definitely the sharp weapons of bad actions turning against us  
For having disturbed the mental continua of others.  
Now we should willingly take upon ourselves all their dukkha  
without exception.*

- Verse 11, *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons* by Dharmarakshita

Translated by Ven. Joan Nicell



*The Bodhisattva's Jewel  
Garland – Verse 16*

On Verse 16

*There, with no befriending or begrudging,  
I will stay alone in solitude,  
Considered from the outset as already dead,  
Thus, when I die, a source of pain to none.*

· Verse 8.36, *The Way of the Bodhisattva* by Shantideva  
Translated by Padmakara Translation Group

## On Verse 16

*Then there will be no one standing by  
In tears and mourning, thus to trouble me.  
And no one will be there distracting me  
From thinking of the Buddha and the practice.*

- Verse 8.36, *The Way of the Bodhisattva* by Shantideva  
Translated by Padmakara Translation Group

## On Verse 16

*Therefore in these lovely gleaming woods,  
With joy that's marred by few concerns,  
Where mental wandering will cease,  
I will remain in blissful solitude.*

- Verse 8.37, *The Way of the Bodhisattva* by Shantideva  
Translated by Padmakara Translation Group

## On Verse 16

Milarepa has said:

*If my relatives do not hear of my happiness, my enemies do not learn of my suffering, and I die alone without any mourners, then all my wishes as a yogi will have been fulfilled.*

- *Advice from a Spiritual Friend* by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, p.124