

**Translation of Ch. 5 of the Bodhisattvacaryavatara  
by Andreas Kretschmar**

# **Śāntideva's Bodhisattva-caryāvatāra**

## **Chapter Five The Teaching on Introspection**

[1] Those who wish to maintain the trainings  
Should guard their minds, exercising perfect control.  
If I do not guard (my) mind  
I will be unable to maintain the trainings.

[2] Letting the elephant of (my) mind run wild  
Will cause the misery of the avici (hell).  
In this (world), even untamed and crazed elephants  
Do not cause misery equal to that.

[3] If the elephant of my mind is firmly bound  
In all aspects with the rope of mindfulness,  
All fears will cease to exist  
And all virtues will come to my hand.

[4] Tigers, lions, elephants, bears,  
Snakes and all enemies;  
The guardians of the hells;  
And evil spirits as well as demons;

[5] All these will be bound  
By binding this mind (of mine) alone,  
If this mind (of mine) has been subdued  
All these (fears) will be subdued.

[6] 'The propounder of the genuine' himself has taught:  
"In this way all fears  
As well as boundless miseries  
Originate from mind."

[7] Who intentionally made  
The weapons of hell beings?  
Who created the ground of burning iron?

From where did these groups of women (in hell) manifest?

[8] The Muni said that all such (agents of harm)  
Manifest through (the power of one's own) negative mind;  
Hence, within the three worlds  
There is nothing to fear except (one's) mind.

[9] If the perfection of generosity (meant)  
To alleviate the poverty of beings,  
Then, since poor people still exist at present,  
How did the previous protectors perfect (generosity)?

[10] The perfection of generosity is said to be (giving)  
To all beings with a generous mindset  
All (one's) possessions, including the results (of such giving);  
Hence, as far as (generosity) is concerned, it is (a generous state of) mind.

[11] Fish and the like cannot be transferred  
To (a place) where they will not be killed.  
Attaining a mindset of abandoning (non-virtuous actions)  
Is explained as the transcendental perfection of discipline.

[12] Hostile beings are (as pervasive) as space;  
It is impossible to overcome these (agents of harm).  
If I overcome this, (my) angry mind alone,  
It will be like defeating all these enemies.

[13] Where could enough leather be found  
To cover the surface of the earth with leather?  
(Covering) with leather just the soles of my shoes,  
(Serves) a similar (purpose) as covering the entire earth.

[14] Likewise, while it is impossible for me  
To hold at bay external objects;  
Nevertheless, I must restrain this mind of mine.  
Why should I restrain anything else?

[15] The result of having generated a clear mind  
Is (rebirth in) Brahma's world), or the like.  
However, the result of (virtuous actions of) body and speech,  
Being inferior conduct, is therefore unlike (this).

[16] 'He who knows reality' has taught  
That all recitations and austerities,  
Although practiced for a long time, are meaningless  
If done with a mind distracted elsewhere.

[17] Whoever does not realize the secret of mind,  
The supreme point of the dharma,  
Despite wishing to attain bliss and defeat suffering,  
Will wander without any purpose or aim.

[18] Therefore, I will excellently control  
And guard well this mind of mine.  
Except for the discipline of guarding one's mind,  
What is the use of a multitude of disciplines?

[19] Just like those who control (themselves) and are heedful of their wounds  
When living in the midst of careless and unrestrained (people),  
In the same way, when dwelling among bad people  
One should always guard the wound of one's mind.

[20] If the minor hurt of a wound  
Makes me fearful and heedful about the injury,  
Why does the fear of being crushed by the mountains  
of 'the rounding-up and crushing' (hell)  
Not (make me) guard the wound of my mind?

[21] If I live by such conduct,  
Regardless of whether I dwell amidst base people  
Or reside among women,  
My precepts will not decline due to my stable diligence.

[22] It is acceptable to do without my income,  
Honor, body and sustenance.  
Moreover, it is even tolerable if (my) other virtues decline.  
However, I will never allow (my) mind to deteriorate.

[23] I, (Śāntideva), with palms joined,  
(Beseech) those who wish to guard their minds thus:  
"Even at the cost of your lives maintain  
Mindfulness and introspection."

[24] People who are troubled by sickness  
Lack strength in any of their activities,  
Likewise those whose minds are agitated by confusion  
Lack strength in regard to any (virtuous) deed.

[25] Just like water in a cracked vase,  
Even study, contemplation and meditation  
Will not be retained in the memory of  
Those whose minds lack introspection.

[26] Even many (people) endowed with learning,  
Faith and dedication to diligence  
Will come by the defilement of a downfall  
Because the defect of lacking introspection remains.

[27] The bandit and sneak thief, the lack of introspection,  
Follow in the footsteps of a decline in mindfulness  
Therefore, it is as though even the merit I accumulated  
Were to be stolen by a thief, so that I go to the lower realms.

[28] These afflictions, this assembly of bandits and sneak-thieves,  
Search for a chance or an opportunity.  
Seeing an opening they will steal my virtue  
And destroy the life-force of the happy states.

[29] Therefore, I will never let mindfulness slip away  
From the doorway of my mind.  
But should (my mind) become (distracted),  
I will recall the pain of the lower realms  
And firmly establish (mindfulness).

[30] From association with a master,  
Being instructed by a preceptor, and through fear,  
Mindfulness will easily be generated  
In a fortunate person who shows respect (to the trainings).

[31] “I am constantly dwelling in the presence  
Of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas,  
Who are at all times endowed  
With unobstructed vision.”

[32] Thinking thus  
I will abide in this way, endowed with a sense of shame, respect and fear.  
Thereby, the recollection of the Buddha  
Will repeatedly arise for this (person).

[33] When mindfulness focuses on the purpose  
Of guarding the doorway of the mind,  
At that time introspection will come about  
And even if (introspection) has gone, it will return.

[34] If at the outset I understand that  
This mind is at fault,  
At that time I will remain still—  
Keeping control—like a tree.

[35] I will never look around  
Distractedly without (any) purpose;  
With a confident mind  
I will always look (while) keeping my eyes cast downward.

[36] In order to relax the gaze  
I can sometimes look around.  
If some (people) appear in my field of vision  
I will look at them and speak, (saying) “Welcome.”

[37] To investigate whether there is any danger on the road I should look repeatedly in  
the four directions.  
When resting, I will look back,  
(But will only) look by turning (my entire body).

[38] Having scrutinized ahead of and behind (me),  
I will either depart or return.  
Understanding (what is) necessary  
In every situation, I will behave in this manner.

[39] Having prepared myself for an action, (thinking):  
“I will position my body in this way,” I will then from time to time examine:  
“Does this body still abide exactly as it was?”

[40] Without letting the crazed elephant of my mind  
Escape, but binding it just like (an elephant)  
To the great pillar of focusing on the dharma,  
I will investigate (my mind) in this way with all my effort.

[41] By all means, those who are diligent in concentration  
Should not stray even for a single moment;  
They must minutely analyze their minds as follows:  
“What is this mind of mine doing?”

[42] But if I am not able (to remain one-pointedly)  
When in fear or (when) engaged in (offering) feasts and so forth, I will do as I please.  
In this way, as it is said, at the time of giving  
One may neglect (the lesser trainings in) discipline.

[43] Whatever I might have (initially) thought,  
Once I have started or undertaken (a task),  
I will not think about anything else.  
With my mind focused upon it,  
I will pursue it for as long as it takes.

[44] If one (acts) in this way, all (projects) will be done well.  
Otherwise, neither (the earlier nor the latter) will be accomplished.  
(If one acts) in this manner, the secondary affliction (called) 'lack of introspection'  
Will not increase.

[45] If I participate  
In various senseless conversations,  
(Or observe) all the numerous kinds of marvelous spectacles,  
I will overcome (my) attachment toward these (conversations and spectacles).

[46] If for no reason I (wish to) dig the earth,  
Pluck the grass or draw patterns on the ground,  
I will immediately reject (these activities) out of fear  
By recalling the trainings of the Sugata.

[47] Whenever I intend to move (my limbs)  
Or if I wish to speak,  
I will first examine my mind.  
Thus, 'the stable one' acts in the proper way.

[48] Whenever my mind becomes attached  
Or whenever I want to be angry,  
I will not engage in (any) action nor will I say anything,  
But will remain (still), like a tree.

[49] Whenever I am wild or mocking, Filled with pride or self-infatuation;  
When I have the intention to expose the faults of others,  
Cause dissension or have the thought to deceive others;

[50] Whenever I am inclined to praise myself  
Or when I disparage others,  
Insult others or cause a quarrel:  
At such times I will remain (still), like a tree.

[51] Whenever I desire (material) gain, respect or fame;  
Whenever I intend to seek an entourage of servants,  
And when in my mind I desire (personal) service:  
At such times I will remain (still), like a tree.

[52] Whenever I desire to give up (working for) the benefit of others  
And desire to pursue my personal welfare,  
And when a thought of wishing to speak arises,  
At such times I will remain (still), like a tree.

[53] Whenever (I am) impatient, lazy and fearful,  
Likewise when (I am) boastful or when (I talk) nonsense;

When thoughts of attachment to my own group arise, At such times I will remain (still),  
like a tree.

[54] Having in this way examined (whether or not) thought of afflictions  
Or of pursuing what is meaningless (have arisen),  
The hero will at such times hold steady this (mind of his)  
By (applying) the (respective) antidote.

[55] (Being) very certain and highly devoted,  
Firm, respectful and polite;  
Possessing a sense of shame, (being) apprehensive and peaceful,  
I should strive to delight others.

[56] I will not be disheartened by the desires  
Of child-like (beings) who live in mutual discord.  
(Bodhisattvas) are endowed with love and think, “This mindset  
Of these (child-like beings) has arisen born from afflictions.”

[57] Concerning actions free from misdeeds, Acting for my own purposes and for (the  
purposes of other) sentient beings, I will constantly maintain the thought (That my  
actions are) like an apparition, without an ‘I’.

[58] Thinking again and again,  
“I have obtained after a long time (a human body), the supreme freedom,”  
I will maintain such a frame of mind  
As utterly unshakeable as Mount Sumeru.

[59] Mind, if you are not upset  
When vultures greedy for flesh  
Drag and toss (the body) back and forth,  
Then why do you now treasure it (so much)?

[60] Holding this body as ‘mine’,  
Why, mind, do you protect (this body) so?  
Since you and this (body) are two separate (entities),  
What use has this (body) for you?

[61] Mind, so confused,  
Why do you not grasp onto a clean, wooden form?  
Why do you protect  
This foul machine, a mass of impure (substances)?

[62] First of all, with your intellect separate (from the flesh) the layers of your skin  
(From the flesh) the layers of your skin.  
(Next), with the wisdom scalpel  
Separate as well the flesh from the skeleton.

[63] And having split open even the bones  
Look right into the marrow.  
Examine for yourself,  
“Where is its essential core?”

[64] If, even when searching diligently in this way  
You cannot find any essential core,  
Then why do you now still guard this body  
With so much attachment?

[65] If this impure (body) is unfit for you to eat,  
If even its blood is not fit to drink,  
And if its small intestine and stomach are unfit to be sucked,  
Then what is the use of such a body?

[66] On the other hand, if (you, mind), guard  
This (body) as food for jackals and vultures, it is appropriate.  
This body of human beings  
Should be employed only (to practice virtue).

[67] Though you, (mind), have guarded (this body) in this manner,  
Nevertheless, when you are taken away by the merciless lord of death  
And (your body) is given to the vultures and dogs,  
What will you do at that time?

[68] If servants, when they cannot be put to work,  
Are not given clothing and so forth,  
Then, since (your body) will part (from you) although (you) have fed this body,  
Why do you exhaust yourself in caring for it?

[69] After giving this (body) its wages and rewards,  
Let it now work for your own benefit.  
But if (this body) lacks (any) benefit  
Do not give this (body) everything.

[70] Consider the body as a boat,  
A mere support for going and coming.  
In order to work for the benefit of sentient beings,  
Transform (your body) into a body that fulfills all wishes.

[71] Having thus put (the remedial mind) in charge,  
Always present a smiling countenance.  
Utterly avoid frowns as well as angry looks.  
Be a friend to beings and be soft-spoken.



[72] Do not thoughtlessly and noisily  
Toss around chairs and the like.  
Also do not violently open doors.  
Always delight in being humble.

[73] The heron, the cat and the thief  
Accomplish the goal they desire  
By moving covertly and silently.  
A sage always acts in this manner.

[74] With respect I accept  
Advice that has not been sought, that brings benefit  
And (that is given by) those skilled in admonishing others.  
At all times be a student of everyone.

[75] I will say, "Well said,"  
To all that has been well spoken.  
And if I see (others) performing merit  
I will inspire genuine enthusiasm by praising them.

[76] I will talk discreetly about their qualities.  
If (another person) speaks of (someone else's) qualities,  
I will agreeably discuss (them).  
If someone is speaking of my own qualities  
I will acknowledge that (the speaker) recognizes qualities (in others).

[77] All actions undertaken are (done) to (achieve) happiness.  
Even if one could purchase (happiness) at a price, it would be rare (to find).  
Therefore, I will experience a joyful satisfaction  
Due to the qualities others have developed.

[78] I will never suffer any losses in this life (with respect to this joyful satisfaction)  
And in future lives as well I will achieve great happiness.  
(But) through the defect (of jealousy) I will be unhappy and miserable  
And in future lives I will (experience) great suffering.

[79] When one speaks, one should speak agreeably, with consistency,  
With clear meaning and pleasantly;  
Having abandoned attachment and aversion,  
(One should speak) gently and in moderation.

[80] When looking with my eyes at sentient beings,  
I will look at them candidly and with loving-kindness (Thinking),  
"Relying on these (sentient beings)  
I will attain buddhahood."

[81] Constantly to be motivated by strong passion  
Or being motivated by a remedial force,  
Or toward the fields of qualities, benefits and misery, Great virtues will result.

[82] Being endowed with learning and faith,  
I will always carry out the (bodhisattva) activities myself.  
In all my activities  
I will not place my expectations in someone else.

[83] Since the transcendental perfection of generosity and the other (perfections)  
Become progressively more important, (one must mainly) practice (the higher ones).  
Do not abandon a greater (perfection) for the sake of a lesser. (  
However, bodhisattvas) primarily consider (whatever brings)  
the (greater) welfare for others.

[84] Having understood in this way, I will always  
Practice with diligence for the welfare of others.  
'The one endowed with compassion', the 'far-seeing one',  
Has permitted even that which is prohibited (for the śrāvakas) to those (bodhisattvas).

[85] I will divide (my alms) among those who have fallen into the lower realms,  
(Among) those without protection, (among) those who abide in discipline,  
And (out of my own portion) I will eat just enough.  
Except for the three robes, I may give everything away.

[86] I should not harm this body (of mine, which I use) to practice the sublime dharma  
For the sake of insignificant (benefits).  
If I practice in this way  
(All) sentient beings' wishes will swiftly be fulfilled.

[87] For as long as one's compassionate motivation remains impure,  
(A beginning bodhisattva) should not sacrifice this body.  
However, one should certainly sacrifice (one's body when the sacrifice serves)  
as a cause for accomplishing great benefit In this and future (worlds).

[88] Do not explain the dharma to those who are disrespectful, Nor to those who, while  
not being sick, wrap their heads, Nor to those who carry parasols, staffs, or weapons,  
Nor to those who cover their heads.

[89] Nor (is it proper to teach) the profound and vast (dharma) to (those of) lesser  
(intellect), Nor to women who are without (the company of) men.  
One should teach the lesser and the higher dharma  
With equal respect.

[90] One should not steer those who are a vessel for the vast teachings  
Toward the teachings for the lesser ones.

Do not ignore the conduct (of recognizing karma).  
Do not mislead (a capable person) with sūtras and mantras.

[91] If one discards a tooth-stick or (clears) spittle,  
One should cover it up.  
To pollute water used (by others) or (to pollute) a meadow With urine and so forth is  
contemptible.

[92] Do not eat with an (overly) full mouth,  
Nor with noise, nor with your mouth wide open.  
Do not sit with your legs outstretched  
And do not rub your hands together.

[93] One should not be alone with someone else's woman on a mount, upon a bed  
A seat or in a house.  
Having seen as well as asked (about what is offensive),  
(One) should avoid all (conduct) that causes worldly (beings) to lose faith.

[94] Do not point out (a road) by indicating it with your finger,  
But instead point out the road  
Respectfully and  
With your (entire) right hand.

[95] Nor should you vigorously move your hands,  
But rather give an indication by a gentle movement,  
By being soft-spoken, snapping your fingers and the like.  
Otherwise, you will lose composure.

[96] Just as 'the protector' lay down to pass into nirvana,  
Lie down (to sleep facing) toward (any) desired direction.  
With introspection firmly focus from the very first (moment)  
On the intent to quickly rise (in the morning).

[97] (Although the distinctions of) the bodhisattva conduct are limitless,  
From (all) that has been taught  
One should practice the conduct of training the mind  
Until certainty.

[98] Three times during the day and three times during the night  
Recite the Tri-skandha-(sūtra).  
By relying upon the victors and upon bodhicitta  
The 'remaining downfalls' will be alleviated through this (sūtra).

[99] Whatever one is doing in any situation,  
Whether for one's own benefit or for others,

One must diligently apply  
In each situation whatever has been taught (about how one must) train.

[100] There is no (field of knowledge)  
That the sons of the victors do not learn.  
For someone who is skilled in abiding in this way,  
Everything becomes meritorious.

[101] One should not do anything except (practicing for) the benefit of sentient beings  
Either directly or indirectly, And (should say), “For the sole welfare of sentient beings I  
dedicate all (roots of virtue) for (the attainment of) enlightenment.”

[102] Never, even at the cost of my life,  
Will I forsake a spiritual guide  
Who is learned in the meaning of Mahāyāna  
And who is supreme in the discipline of a bodhisattva.

[103] Train in the way of relying upon a spiritual guide (Which is lauded) in the  
biography of Śrī-sambhava. Understand (the bodhisattva trainings) through reading  
This and other advice spoken by the Buddha in the sūtra sections.

[104] From (studying and reading) the sūtra section  
(the bodhisattva) trainings become apparent.  
Therefore, one should recite the sūtra section.  
One should first read  
The sūtra of Ākāśagarbha.

[105] Therefore, I will definitely read  
Again and again the Shiksha-samuccaya  
Because in this (Shiksha-samuccaya everything) that (bodhisattvas)  
Should constantly practice is extensively taught.

[106] Alternatively, I will sometimes look at  
The condensed Sūtra-samuccaya.  
I will also read diligently two (treatises)  
Written by the noble Nāgārjuna, (the Shiksha-samuccaya and the Sūtra-samuccaya).

[107] One should practice  
Whatever is not prohibited in any (of the sūtras and treatises).  
In order to protect the minds of worldly people  
One should study the trainings and practice them genuinely.

[108] I will again and again examine  
The temporary condition of my body and mind,  
That alone is in brief  
The defining characteristic of guarding introspection.

[109] I should practice these (trainings) with my body, (speech and mind).  
For what can be achieved by simply explaining the mere words (of this text)?  
Would (the disease of) a sick man be cured  
Merely by reciting (the four tantras on) medical examination?

The fifth chapter from the *Bodhisattva-caryāvatāra* entitled, “Maintaining introspection.”