

# The Collection of Verses on Precious Qualities

A translation from Sanskrit by Śraddhāpa of the first two chapters of the  
Ratnaguṇasaṃcayagāthā

**Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.**

**Once, at a suitable time, the Blessed One spoke the following verses to the four assemblies. He did this to encourage them in their practice by illuminating the perfection of wisdom.**

## **Chapter 1 – The Practice of the Knowledge of All Times**

**1. Arouse in yourselves the highest kind of love, reverence, and serene faith.  
Renounce the impurities of the hindrances and the defilements and be at peace.  
Listen to the perfection of wisdom of the Gentle Ones,  
Set forth for the benefit of all, and practised by the heroic.**

**2. The rivers that flow through this continent of Jambudvīpa,  
Bringing growth to fruit, flowers, herbs, and trees,  
Depend on the power of Lord of Serpents,  
The Ruler of the Nāgas who dwells in Lake Anavatapta.**

**3. In the same way, the Dharma that the disciples of the Victorious One teach,  
The coherent explanations they set forth  
Concerning the kind of action that leads to the most noble kind of well-being and the  
results of this kind of action,  
All represent the achievements of the Tathāgata.**

**4. Those who are true disciples of the Bull Among Human Beings have practised  
The teachings of the Victorious One, the Guide in the Dharma.**

**They teach what they have practised and realised,  
And this comes from the power of the Buddha, not from their own strength and power.**

**5. In this practice, no highest perfection of wisdom is obtained.  
No state of bodhisattvahood is obtained, nor any awakening mind.  
A bodhisattva who can hear this without becoming confused or afraid  
Is practising the wisdom of the sugatas.**

**6. For this kind of bodhisattva, there is not the slightest place in form, sensation,  
Perception, volition, or consciousness where they can stand firm.  
They wander homeless and independent of all phenomena.  
Nothing limits them, and they attain the awakening of the sugatas.**

**7. For a wandering mendicant like Śreṇika, there is no attainment of knowledge  
And no manifestation of the five categories of experience.  
In the same way, a bodhisattva who understands phenomena  
Does not take hold of nirvana, but dwells in wisdom.**

**8. They investigate this wisdom that all phenomena are empty –  
What it is, whose it is, and where it comes from.  
In doing so, they do not become dispirited or afraid.  
A bodhisattva like this is close to awakening.**

**9. If a bodhisattva practises without an understanding  
Of the categories of experience – form, sensation, perception, volition, and  
consciousness –  
They will wrongly imagine these categories of experience to be empty.  
They will practise in relation to causes, and will not be committed to the path of non-  
arising.**

**10. The homeless practitioner does not practise in relation to  
Form, sensation, perception, volition, or consciousness.**

**Because they do not enter into this kind of practice, they attain  
The firmness of wisdom, an understanding of non-arising, and the highest samādhi of  
peace.**

**11. A bodhisattva like this dwells at peace in themselves,  
Their awakening foretold by the tathāgatas of ancient times.  
They do not become agitated thinking about whether or not they are in samādhi  
Because they have understood the true nature of phenomena.**

**12. In this way, they practise the wisdom of the sugatas.  
They do not seize hold of the phenomena they practise in relation to,  
But understand their practice as no practice.  
This is how they practise the highest perfection of wisdom.**

**13. Immature people mistakenly imagine things that do not exist  
And make the non-existent existent in their minds.  
Neither existence nor non-existence are in accord with the Dharma.  
A bodhisattva who understands this attains nirvana.**

**14. They know that the five categories of experience are like an illusion  
And do not make them into something other than an illusion.  
They free themselves from perceptions of multiplicity and practise tranquility.  
This is how they practise the highest perfection of wisdom.**

**15. Those who have good spiritual friends and who have attained insight  
Do not become afraid when they hear the Mother of the Victorious Ones.  
Those who have bad friends and are led astray by others though,  
Are destroyed like an unfired pot that comes into contact with water.**

**16. Why are such beings called bodhisattvas, 'awakening beings'?  
They want to destroy all forms of attachment, cut them off.  
They will attain true non-attachment, the awakening of the Victorious Ones.**

**This is why they are called bodhisattvas, 'awakening beings'.**

**17. Why are they spoken of as great beings?**

**Because of their greatness they rise above the masses of ordinary beings**

**And cut off the wrong views of a great many beings.**

**This is why they are called great beings.**

**18. With great generosity, great intelligence, and great power**

**They mount the Great Vehicle of the Victorious Ones, the unequalled Mahāyāna.**

**Clad in great armour they will paralyse the Evil One.**

**This is why they are called great beings.**

**19. When a conjuring trick is performed at a crossroads, an illusion**

**Of a great crowd of people all having their heads cut off, no-one is really harmed.**

**In the same way, a bodhisattva knows that the whole world**

**Is like a conjuring trick, and is not afraid.**

**20. Form, perception, sensation, volition, and**

**Consciousness are bound, not liberated. They are not real.**

**The best kind of person, someone who is not faint-hearted,**

**Approaches awakening in this way, clad in the best kind of armour.**

**21. Why is this called the 'Bodhiyāna', the Vehicle of Awakening?**

**Mounted upon it, one leads all beings to nirvana.**

**This vehicle is like a great divine chariot, as vast as space.**

**This, the best of all vehicles, leads one to happiness, well-being, and ease.**

**22. We cannot grasp where they go when they transcend the world.**

**We say that they have gone to nirvana, but we cannot comprehend what this means.**

**Just as we cannot say where a fire goes when it is extinguished,**

**We cannot say where they go when they attain nirvana.**

**23. A bodhisattva cannot be grasped in the past,  
The future, or the present. They are purified of the three times.  
They are pure, unconstructed, and free of neurotic thinking.  
This is how they practise the highest perfection of wisdom.**

**24. When a bodhisattva who has understanding  
Practises in this way, reflecting on non-arising,  
They develop great compassion without forming any notion of a living being.  
This is how they practise the highest perfection of wisdom.**

**25. If a notion of suffering and a notion of living beings arise in them,  
They think, 'I will work to end suffering, for the welfare of the world.'  
A bodhisattva who mistakenly imagines an essential self and living beings in this way  
Is not practising the highest perfection of wisdom.**

**26. They understand that all living beings are like the illusory essential self,  
And they know that all phenomena are just like living beings.  
They do not make a false distinction between non-arising and arising.  
This is how they practise the highest perfection of wisdom.**

**27. All words for phenomena in the world must be left behind  
And both non-arising and arising must be transcended.  
Then the deathless and perfect knowledge will not be far away.  
This is what 'the perfection of wisdom' means.**

**28. A bodhisattva who practises in this way, free from doubt,  
Should be known as one who dwells with wisdom and skilful means.  
They understand that phenomena have no essential nature.  
This is how they practise the highest perfection of wisdom.**

**1. They do not base themselves on form or on sensation.**

**They do not base themselves on perception or on volition.**

**They do not base themselves on consciousness, but on the true nature of things.**

**This is how they practise the highest perfection of wisdom.**

**2. Permanence and impermanence, happiness and suffering, beauty and ugliness,  
Essential self and no essential self: these things are simply the way they are, in  
emptiness.**

**They do not base themselves on the fruits they have attained,**

**Be that the stage of an arhat, a solitary buddha, or a buddha.**

**3. The Guide does not base himself in the realm of the unconstructed,  
Nor in the realm of the constructed, but wanders homeless.**

**A bodhisattva bases themselves on this state of not basing oneself on anything.**

**The Victorious One uses the word “state” in this way, to mean a state which is no state.**

**4. Someone who wants to become a disciple of the Sugata,**

**A solitary buddha, or a Dharma king**

**Will not be able to reach their goal without patient acceptance.**

**That would be like setting out for the far shore without seeing the riverbank.**

**5. The true nature of someone who listens to what is being said is illusory.**

**Someone who has attained the fruit of a solitary victorious one, a lord of the world,**

**And the nirvana attained by the learned:**

**The Tathāgata has explained that these are all illusory.**

**6. There are four kinds of people who do not become afraid when they hear this:**

**Children of the Victorious Ones who know the truth well, those whose progress is  
irreversible,**

**Arhats who have rid themselves of the impurity of the defilements and abandoned  
desire,**

**And fourthly, those who are surrounded by good spiritual friends.**

**7. This is how a wise and learned bodhisattva should practise.**

**They do not train to become arhats, nor to attain the stage of a solitary buddha.**

**They train in the Buddha-Dharma in order to attain the full knowledge of a buddha.**

**They train in the training which is no training. This is their training.**

**8. They do not train in this way in order to augment or diminish forms,**

**Nor to attain different kinds of phenomena.**

**They train in order to attain the full knowledge of a buddha.**

**They go forth into this training in precious qualities.**

**9. Form is not wisdom, and wisdom is not found in form.**

**Consciousness, perception, sensation, and volition**

**Are not wisdom, and wisdom is not found in them.**

**It is like space, ungraspable.**

**10. The nature of all foundations is boundless.**

**The nature of all beings is boundless.**

**The nature of space is boundless.**

**So too, the nature of the wisdom of the knowers of the world is boundless.**

**11. The Guide says that “notions” is only a word.**

**When notions are abandoned and eliminated, you go to the other shore.**

**Those who attain the cessation of notions**

**Have reached the other shore, and stand in perfection.**

**12. If the Guide were to repeat the words “living being”**

**For as many eons as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges,**

**How could a living being arise from that, primordially pure?**

**This is how they practise the highest perfection of wisdom.**

**13. When the Victorious One had spoken these agreeable words, he said:  
“When what I said accorded with this highest perfection of wisdom,  
The Best of Human Beings, in the distant past, predicted my awakening:  
‘In an age yet to come, you will be a buddha.’”**