

extremely useful. In other words, your bodhisattva name acts as a password; it is a very accurate guideline to your particular style of basic openness in working with all sentient beings. Both your potentialities and your basic attributes are expressed in your bodhisattva name, which should be recalled whenever a critical situation comes up. Instead of looking to a savior, you should remember your name as a reminder of the solidness of your involvement on the bodhisattva path. It is a token that you have made a link with your buddha nature, *tathagatagarbha*: you have dug a well and found fresh water which you can use continuously. Your bodhisattva name represents your commitment to basic sanity, your willingness to devote your life to all sentient beings. Therefore it is very powerful and important.

Without any doubt, having taken the bodhisattva vow, you should celebrate. Taking the vow is a landmark, not just a casual thing. It is something extraordinary, something historic. Keeping that in mind, you invite everyone to share your joy that you finally have become a worker for all sentient beings, by saying: "Today, witnessed by all the protectors, I have welcomed the sentient beings and sugatas. Devas and asuras rejoice!"

That ends the bodhisattva vow ceremony. It is a simple ceremony that presents you with the extreme challenge of committing yourself to people without consideration for your own comfort. And the key to meeting such a challenge is fearlessness. By taking the vow you therefore enter the fearless world of the warrior.

[Excerpted from selected bodhisattva vow ceremonies given between 1973 and 1978.]