

Bodhicharyāvatāra

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པའི་སློབ་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ།

by Venerable Lama Gelong Sangyay Tendzin

Session 4

December 19, 2020

REFUGE - BODHICITTA - MANDALA - REQUEST for Teachings

MEDITATION

| DAG-CHAG-GI LAMA GELONG SANGYAY TENDZIN THUB-PA'I WANG-DÜ KHYAB-JEY-DU
DRIB-MA MED-PA-LA || GO-WA'I RAB-TU TÖD-TE GO-SUM THUB-PA CHEN-PÖ CHAG
TSHAR-CHÄD KYAB-SU-CHIO ||

LAMA TÖN-PA CHOM-DÄN-DAY DE-ZHIN SHEG-PA DRA-CHOM-PA YANG-DAG-PAR DZOG-
PÄI SANG-GYAY || RIG-PA DANG ZHAB-SU DÄN-PA || DE-WAR SHEG-PA || JIG-TEN
KHYEN-PA || KYE-BU DUL-WA'I KHA-LO GYUR-WA LA-NA MED-PA || LHA-DANG MI-NAM-
KYE TÖN-PA || DAG-GI SEM-CHÄN THAM-CHÄD-KYE | KHYÖD JIN-GYE LAB-TU TSAL-DU-SOL
|| TSE-CHIG MÖ-DANG GÜ-PAY DÜD-DO DRAL-MED THUG-JEY KYONG-WAR-DZÖD ||

| PALDEN TSAWAY LAMA RINPOCHE |
| DAG-GI CHI-WOR PÄD-DA'I DEN-ZHUG-LA |
| KHA-DRIN CHENPO GO-NAY JE-ZUNG-TE |
| KU-ZUNG-THUG-KYE NGÖ-DRUB TSAL-DU-SOL ||
| KARMAPA KHYENNO ||

Good morning everyone, let us value the present moment as we pursue our study of the precious Dharma, namely the Bodhicaryāvatāra from Shantideva.

Last session, we went through Stanzas 5 to 12 of Chapter One.

Having been reminded of the qualities of the mind that serve as a basis for engendering Bodhicitta, Shantideva insists on the need to engender Bodhicitta as the one and only mean to pierce the darkness of our ignorance. Having strongly emphasised the value of this, he continues to describe the benefits of Bodhicitta by means of a series of examples.

The first example was the example of alchemy, showing that bodhicitta leads to the attainment of buddhahood.

The next example was showing bodhicitta's great worth comparing it to a Jewel.

The third example was showing that bodhicitta's root of virtue as inexhaustible and increasing like the miraculous fruit-bearing tree.

The next example is now described as the example of the heroic bodyguard

Stanza 13:

**Even if they've committed extremely unbearable negative acts,
Why don't the caring rely on that which,
When relied on, will instantly free them,
Like relying on a hero when greatly afraid.**

Committing great outrageous evil, such as rejecting the Dharma or harming the Three Jewels, or the sins of immediate retribution, are certain to produce the result of unbearable suffering in the Avici Hell.

Nevertheless, just like a murderer who, relying on the protection of a powerful escort, has no fear of harm even if meeting the avenging son of his former victim, similarly, whoever has precious bodhichitta is instantly freed from the sufferings of hell. Birth in hell will not occur; or if it does, one is instantly freed.

Therefore, how could those who are fearful of the effects of their evil actions not rely on bodhichitta?

Stanza 14: The example of the Fire at the end of time

**Like the time-ending fires, it burns off with certainty,
In an instant, enormous negative karmic force.
With wisdom, the Guardian Maitreya has explained
Its fathomless benefits to Sudhana.**

The blaze at the end of time consumes the world without leaving anything behind; -not even the ashes of burnt grass. In the same way, and in addition to the evils described above, bodhichitta completely consumes or purifies in a single instant all other extreme negativities, such as slaughtering a hundred people. No remainder is left behind to be experienced.

How, therefore, can anyone do without bodhichitta? It is surely a universal necessity.

Sudhana was the main figure mentioned in the last and longest chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. He is one of the attendants of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Shantideva will refer to him again in Stanza 20.

The stanzas 15 & 16 defines two types of bodhicitta.

Stanza 15:

**Bodhichitta is to be known, in brief,
As having two aspects:
A bodhichitta aim that aspires to enlightenment
And a bodhichitta that's engaged with attaining enlightenment.**

Bodhichitta can be classified in many ways.

For instance, it may be analysed in terms of the first to the sixth aspects of Paramita. In the *Prajnaparamita-sutras*, on the other hand, it is said that, according to the grounds of realisation, there are twenty-two kinds of bodhichitta.

In ལྷོ་གྲོ་སྐྱོ་རྒྱ་མཚོས་ཞུས་པའི་མདོ།, the *Sagaramati paripriccha-sutra*, bodhichitta is classified by way of eighty unceasing factors called the **80 inexhaustibles factors** as discussed by Mipham Rinpoche in his “**Khayjug**”.

The **Khayjug** is one of the first texts often studied in a Shedra - མཁའ་སྐྱོད་ལ་འདུག་པའི་སྐོར་གྱི་བྱ་བའི་བསྟན་བཅོས་ - Khay-pa'i Tshul-la Jug-pa'i Go-Zhey Ja-wa'i Tän-Chö - *The Entrance to the Way of the Wise or Introduction to Scholarship*.

By just swiftly looking at these factors provide a clear idea of the order of properly progressing in one's practice rather than assuming that one already has a fair idea and realisation of Bodhicitta. So, just to name these factors:

1. སེམས་བསྐྱེད་ - Generation of bodhichitta;
2. བསམ་པ་ - Aspiration ;
3. སྦྱོར་བ་ - Application;
4. ལྷག་པའི་བསམ་པ་ - Superior aspiration or noble intention;
5. to 10. བ་རོལ་ཏུ་བྱིན་པ་བྱུག་ - The six Paramitas;
11. to 14. ཚད་མེད་བཞི་ - The four immeasurables;
14. to -19. མངོན་ཤེས་ལྔ་ - The five clear perceptions;
20. to 23. བསྐྱེད་པའི་དངོས་ལོ་བཞི་ - The four means of attraction;
24. to 27. སོ་སོ་ཡང་དག་པ་རིག་པ་བཞི་ - The four perfect knowledges;
28. to 31. རྟོན་པ་བཞི་ - The four reliances;
32. to 33. ཚོགས་གཉིས་ - The two accumulations;
34. to 70. བྱང་སྤྱོད་སོ་དབུལ་ - The thirty-seven factors of enlightenment;
71. & 72. ཞི་ལྷག་གཉིས་ - Shamatha and Vipashyana, both;
73. & 74. ག་རྒྱུངས་སྤོངས་གཉིས་ Perfect recall and courageous eloquence, both;
75. to 78. ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྒྲིམ་བཞི་ - The four seals of the Dharma;
79. བསྐོད་པ་གཅིག་པ་ - The single path to be traversed; and,
80. ཐབས་ལ་མཁའས་པ་ - Skill in means.

Nevertheless, and not inferring with these 80 factors, Bodhichitta is categorized into 'relative' or 'conventional bodhichitta', and absolute Bodhicitta.

- **Relative bodhichitta** entails the compassionate wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all living beings and to train in the methods to achieve that aim.
- **Absolute bodhichitta** is the direct insight into the absolute nature of things.

Stanza 16

**As is understood by the distinction
Between aspiring to go and actually going,
So, the learned understand the distinction
Between these two and their order.**

Within relative bodhichitta there is also the distinction between **'bodhichitta in aspiration'** and **'bodhichitta in action'**, which is portrayed by Shantideva as the difference between deciding to go somewhere and actually making the journey:

The difference between these two kinds of bodhicitta is like the difference between the wish to go somewhere and traveling to one's destination. It is thus that learned Bodhisattvas should understand the respective difference between bodhichitta in intention and bodhichitta in action.

Once again, there are several ways using numerous examples of explaining the difference between these two kinds of relative bodhichitta.

Some masters identify bodhichitta in intention with the bodhichitta of ordinary beings, and bodhichitta in action with that of beings on the bhūmis.

Others say that bodhichitta in intention is the bodhichitta associated with ཚོགས་ལམ་, the path of accumulation, whereas bodhichitta in action is associated with the subsequent paths (སྦྱོར་ལམ་ - མཐོང་ལམ་ - ལྷོམ་ལམ་ - མི་སྦྱོང་ལམ་).

According to Atisha, they are defined as commitments related to the cause and to the result: Bodhicitta in intention focuses on the result, i.e., Buddhahood, Bodhicitta in action focuses on the cause, namely, the Path.

Next Stanzas (17 to 20) describe the benefits of these two relative forms of bodhichitta:

Stanza 17

**Although great fruits arise, even in recurring samsara,
From an aspiring bodhichitta aim,
Positive force doesn't accrue without interruption
As it does with an engaged bodhichitta aim.**

Simply to engender the bodhichitta of aspiring to supreme enlightenment produces, for those who wander in samsara, an immense result in terms of power and excellence: the states of Brahma and of Indra, kings of the gods, or of a chakravartin, a sovereign of the human race. Nevertheless, a ceaseless stream of merit (in other words, the virtues of generosity, ethical discipline, and so on) does not flow from bodhichitta in intention, as it does from bodhichitta in action.

Stanza 18

**As soon as someone perfectly gains hold
Of that mind, with the thought
Never to turn back from totally liberating
Infinite realms of limited beings,**

When, however, one perfectly embraces the vow of active bodhichitta and keeps it unspoiled; when one intends never to turn away from the practice of the six paramitas but to liberate an infinity of beings from the sufferings of existence and peace and to bring them to enlightenment,

Stanza 19

**From that time onward,
Whether asleep or even not caring,
A profusion of positive force gushes forth,
Without interruption, equal to space.**

from that moment on, the power of one's merit constantly increases and becomes inexhaustible—even when one is asleep, at play or in some other distracted state. It becomes as immeasurable as space itself.

Stanza 20

**For the sake of limited beings admiring modest aims,
The One-Thus-Gone himself
Has proclaimed that this is correct
In the Sutra Subāhu requested (*).**

Here, Shantideva makes reference to ལག་བཟངས་ཀྱིས་ཞུས་པའི་མདོ། - The Noble Great Vehicle Sutra: The Question of Subāhu. A Sutra delivered by The Blessed One at the Kalandakanivāpa in the Veṅṅuvana, nearby Rājagṛha. A notable personality from Rajgir, Subāhu made this request after bowing to the Buddha.

“Blessed One, what are the qualities bodhisattva great beings should have if they are to awaken swiftly and completely to unsurpassed and perfect awakening?”

To make it short, The Blessed One replied by delivering a great teaching on the six paramitas.

Although 2020 has been a difficult year from a mondain point of view with socio-cultural and economical hindrances, it has also been a very good year on the Dharma aspect, leaving more time for listening, studying and practicing the Dharma. It is also the year of publication of this sutra translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, initiated by His Eminence Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche (*).

Let us now rest for a little while and dedicate this session to the benefit of all. May all manifest their true essence of a Buddha.

Tashi Deleg!



(*) [The Sutra of Subahu's Request](#)