

# Bodhicharyāvatāra

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པའི་སྤོན་པ་ལ་འདུག་པ།

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Session 8

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## Session Q&A-3 - Chapter One

QUESTION: Stanza 31 & 35 - We should make prostrations to the Bodhisattvas, the children of the Buddhas, and take refuge in them. Both stanzas in Lama's teachings mentioned Bodhisattvas and their children and offspring of the Buddhas. What is the different between Bodhisattvas and their offspring?

ANSWER:

Bodhisattvas are often depicted as the offspring or children of the Buddhas. However, there is no problem to see that Bodhisattvas who are "Buddhas-to-be", to also have their followers. Nothing to worry about here.

QUESTION: How does meditation on emptiness creates Bodhicitta mind?

ANSWER:

Meditation on 'Shunyata' - emptiness, is the only way to realise thatness or thusness, the oneness of the present moment, coemergent wisdom, the Buddha mind. Meditation is inseparable from emptiness. Emptiness is the result.

QUESTION: [Verses 23] our father or mother, even the gods, sages and Brahma does not have bodhicitta. [ Verse 24 (and 25)] this bodhicitta mind does not even arise in their dreams or thought, even if it is to benefit themselves?

Why do our parents, gods, sages, Brahma do not have mind of enlightenment? Then how can we have it?

ANSWER:

These three stanzas do not deny possessing the Mind of Enlightenment but states the fact that all designated categories do not manifest the awareness of such mind.

QUESTION: *Once reborn, due to karmic latencies, our misconception fabricates a self which is an exaggeration of what exists. Since the self is fabricated and empty, what is it that goes through rebirth and cyclic existence?*

ANSWER:

Simply what has not been realized. All solidifications, all grasping, all hopes and fears. All fixations are like germs that develop from birth to birth.

QUESTION: Where does one go after attaining enlightenment?  
What does it mean to be outside of cyclic existence?

ANSWER:

If I knew, I wouldn't probably here to talk about Buddhahood. (Laughing)

No 'here' and no 'there', no 'not-here' and no 'not there'.

No more cycling, no up and downs, no come and go, no birth and death...

Madhyamaka.

We come and go along with our hopes and fears.

QUESTION: What is the significance to have a vision of one's Yidam deity?

ANSWER:

If you have it, you know and can't forget. If not, practice more without any expectations.

QUESTION: *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.*

Can Lama explain further the difference between Relative and Absolute Bodhichitta? Do we strive for both simultaneously?

ANSWER:

Relative Bodhicitta is the subject of the Bodhicaryāvatāra. It consists in two parts:

1. The Aspiration to achieve Buddhahood and to establish all beings in the same.
2. The Action of application, which is training the mind to fulfil that aspiration. This is essentially done by training in the various aspects of Paramita. The first five aspects of Paramita are meant to develop the needed merit, which empowers us to access and practice the Accumulation of Wisdom through the practice of Prajnaparamita.

Once this accumulation is perfected or complete, this is what you call the direct insight into the absolute nature of things; or simply said the realisation of emptiness.

QUESTION: It is difficult to predict the result of the Law of Karma Cause and Effect through reasoning. Other than having faith in the dharma and abide by the teachings of virtuous/non-virtuous actions, is there any way we can be certain of Karma Cause and Effect?

ANSWER:

Well really, the other way is your daily experience. It just happens, from moment to moment and we call this reality. Having faith relies on others. Having faith in the Dharma relies on the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, virtuous spiritual friends. You trust them on the basis that they have compassion and rely on virtue.

One can only trust the truth. If not, the topic is naivety.

Personally, Dharma is the only thing I can trust. Now think of this, Dharma is everything... So, trust does not necessarily depend on its object. This is the way to

engage in the meditation on trust and the way to find out that trust or doubt is all about you.

QUESTION: What are the benefits of accumulating merits?

ANSWER:

Generosity provides you with means and the ability to give.

Ethics is a good start of turning your ego inside-out.

Patience benefits everyone; from it most difficult situations self-resolve.

Joyful effort leads to success and concentration is the basis for meditation.

Meditation is the key to wisdom and the method to achieve enlightenment.

