

Bodhicaryâvatâra

བླ་མ་རྣམས་ལ་སྐྱེ་བའི་མཉམ་སྦྲེལ་གྱི་སྒྲིབ་ལུགས་ལྟར་གྱི་སྐྱེ་བའི་མཉམ་སྦྲེལ་གྱི་སྒྲིབ་ལུགས་།།

Group Study with Venerable Lama Sangyay Tendzin

Chapter TWO (Followed)

Session 10 - March 13, 2021

Good morning,

Appreciate the fact that we are once again in the meritorious situation of listening and studying the precious Dharma. Let's start reciting the traditional prayers.

REFUGE

MANDALA

REQUEST for Teachings

Lama's invocation

I invite you to generate a positive mind adorned with faith to the Buddha Dharma. This is essential to get its benefits.

MEDITATION

Pursuing the elaborate way to present offerings that are owned by no one, we ended our previous session mentioning that there are four features to be kept in mind while doing this. Amongst these, the two first have been explained. As a reminder:

1. Quantitatively, offer without limit, extending to the very limits of space.
2. Qualitatively, generate offerings free from negativity, for they do not belong to anyone. In Uttarakuru where beings are naturally endowed with a great ethical discipline, they remain without envy or arrogance since everything they wish manifests itself spontaneously. Mentally, we have these skills and therefore you can let go of negativity.

The next two features are explained in the next stanza:

Chapter 2: Stanza 6

Taking them to mind, I offer them fully

To you, the Sages, Foremost of Beings, together with your spiritual offspring.

Hallowed objects for offerings, having great compassion,

Think kindly of me and accept these (tokens) of mine.

3. Offerings are made mentally. Nonetheless, keeping them in mind, we act as if they were our property and offer them wholeheartedly. This allows us to let go of attachment and greed.
4. Fourth, they are offered to the Lord Buddha, the Powerful Sage, who, accompanied by his entourage of Bodhisattvas, possesses the ability to act spontaneously and unguardedly in body, speech, and mind; He is the most valiant of all the six classes of beings and the greatest of humans.

Moreover, when the offerings are well-made with the great intention that precious bodhichitta take birth in the mind, even if modest, they will produce great result, for the Buddhas are their perfect recipients.

This is illustrated by the story of Ashoka, whose dignity as a Dharma king was because he had in a previous life placed a handful of sand in the Buddha's begging bowl.

Chapter 2: Stanza 7

**Lacking in positive karmic force, I'm extremely impoverished
And have nothing else that is precious to offer.
Therefore, Guardians whose thoughts are for the welfare of others,
Accept them by the power of your concern for my sake.**

Shantideva explains that he is destitute of merit, which results from generosity and other virtues performed in the past. Because of this, he is poor in his present life and is quite simply the least of a beggar. Apart from the offerings mentally created, he has in fact nothing to offer.

Therefore, Shantideva prays to the Lords of Compassion, the sublime recipients of his offerings, who are without deceit and guile and are unchanging in their desire to help beings. He prays that they might think lovingly of him and accept his gifts. This in accordance with the ethics of giving. Only when the gift is accepted, can the act of giving be completed in the emptiness of the three circles.

If, in our turn, we can make offerings in this way, it follows that, since the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have wisdom and compassionate skill and are masters of inconceivable miraculous powers, they will also accept our oblation, thereby allowing us to fulfil our accumulation of merit and to cleanse our defilements.

Chapter 2: Stanza 8

**All my bodies I offer for eternity
To you, the Triumphant and to your spiritual offspring.
Supreme Beings, please fully accept me.
Respectfully, I shall serve as your attendant.**

To the Buddhas, the Victorious Ones who vanquished the four maras, and to the host of their Bodhisattvas offspring, from now on and for all his future lives, Shantideva makes a constant and uninterrupted offering of his own body, which is so dear and necessary to him.

He begs the supreme heroes, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the lords of the three lineages (Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri and Vajrapani) and so forth, to accept him completely and to adopt him as their own. Having thus become their respectful subject in body, speech, and mind, he pledges himself to fulfil their wishes.

Chapter 2: Stanza 9

**Completely under your care and thus unafraid
Of compulsive existence, I shall benefit limited beings.
I shall perfectly transcend my previous negative karmic force
And henceforth, never commit further negative acts.**

Now that they have fully accepted him as one of their servants and have made him their own, Shantideva promises that he will act according to their satisfaction. Although he is himself still in samsara, he will work for the benefit of others, fearless of the sufferings he may endure.

He promises to accomplish the welfare and happiness of beings. But seeing that any negative action that he has committed is prejudicial to the good name and reputation of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, he confesses all his past wrongdoings and resolves from that very moment to abstain from it.

This is quite essential. We too, will come to a point where we can identify with this. No matter what we will come to resolve that from that very moment, we will abstain from continuing to commit wrongdoings. Doing so will cut our ties with suffering and allow us to adopt the mind of enlightenment or Bodhicitta, not just a mere thought of it from time to time.

Chapter 2: Stanza 10

**To bathing chambers, exquisitely sweet scented,
With crystal floors, transparent and polished to a shine,
Having beautiful pillars, glowing with gems,
And crowned with canopies, radiant with pearls,**

Now comes a most special offering, that of a ceremonial bath.

To purify himself and others, cleansing the impurities of body, speech and mind, Shantideva offers a bathing ceremony to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, even though the latter are themselves quite unstained by any defilement.

In the space before him, Shantideva imagines one or more bathing chambers, excellently perfumed with sandal, camphor, and the like. The floor, composed of five kinds of pure crystals, beautifully shaped with inlaid patterns. It is smooth, sparkling and brilliant.

Four pillars, with the colours of the directions, shine with the variegated glitter of seven kinds of precious stone and crystal. To retain the water, these pillars are connected at their base by a low wall, reaching to the level of human's waist. Above this wall are four railings. The commentary provides an extensive description of these chambers.

The whole is surmounted by a ceiling, its inner surface adorned with gleaming canopies of five sorts of pearl and other jewels, as well as banners, parasols, victory banners, flags, and pendant strings. whereby the whole is rendered extremely beautiful, just like the palaces of deities visualised in most Kye-Rim practices.

The roof of such chambers opens upward to reveal an extra roof crowned by a wishing jewel. Moreover, Shantideva imagines that within these chambers, thrones of precious stones have been set to welcome and seat the guests.

Chapter 2: Stanza 11

**I invite you, Thusly Gone and your spiritual offspring,
And shower your bodies, over and again, from many jewelled vases
Filled to the brim with scented water and delightful things,
To the accompaniment of song and music.**

The Buddhas are thus invited. Although their minds never waver from the wisdom of the dharmakaya, according to the needs of beings, they nevertheless appear in the rupakaya, the illusory display of primordial wisdom. Accompanied by the infinite hosts of Bodhisattvas, they hang their garments on the railings described previously.

Then, visualizing himself either in his own form or in the form of emanated offering goddesses, Shantideva dresses the Buddhas in translucent white bathing robes.

With tilted vessels large, exquisite vases of lapis lazuli and other precious substances, two-third filled with fragrant water, with cleansing unguents and perfume, Shantideva bathes the Buddhas.

All the while, offering goddesses of ravishing beauty staying on the radiant terraces outside the bathing chambers, sing melodious prayers and praises celebrating the high deeds of the Buddhas, accompanied by other goddesses on flute and drums.

This then is the offering of the bathing ceremony.

When the baths are emptied, imagine that the bathing waters stream down from the sky and cleanse away all the wrong doings and and defilements of beings, oneself and all beings in the six realms.

More specifically, this water pacifies all the evil intentions and violent wickedness of the local gods, owners of the ground—all spirits and bloodthirsty demons, and all evil forces that are the source of epidemic diseases, thereby bringing to an end the illnesses of both human beings and animals. And one then imagines that precious bodhichitta takes birth in their minds.

Chapter 2: Stanza 12

**I (now) dry your bodies with incomparable cloths,
Clean and well-anointed with scent,
And then present you hallowed beings
With most fragrant robes correctly dyed to colour.**

Then with immaculate cloths of extraordinary quality such as heavenly fabrics and Benares silk, with towels perfumed with sweet-smelling medicinal talc, Shantideva carefully dries the bodies of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

All these garments, bathing robes, and drying cloths now transform into a red light of blessings and supreme accomplishments and dissolve into the foreheads of himself and others, specifically in the place between the eyebrows.

With such a thought it is understood that all the qualities of primordial wisdom have been gained.

Once their bodies have been dried, offerings are made to the nirmanakaya Buddhas (who assume the demeanour of monks) of all the accoutrements of renunciants: the thirteen articles of ordained livelihood, such as the three Dharma robes, well-dyed with the three permitted colors of red, blue, and saffron. Hundreds of thousands of such precious and scented robes are offered.

Chapter 2: Stanza 13

**I adorn with excellent garments, fine and smooth,
And with hundreds of the choicest pieces of jewellery, this and that,
You, the Aryas Samantabhadra, Manjushri,
Lokeshvara and all the rest.**

Once again, Khenchen Kunpäl collected in his commentary the marvellous teachings of Patrul Rinpoche's descriptions:

To the sambhogakayas, who appear in the guise of chakravartins and who are given to the enjoyment of pleasures, offerings are made of incomparable garments of celestial and priceless materials, extremely fine, light, and soft to the touch, in assorted colors and designs.

All in all, the five silken garments: the short-sleeved garment that can bestow upon the body the bliss of samadhi; the upper garment of white silk woven with gold; the many-colored lower garment; the pendants of different silks, and a sash.

When making this offering of clothing, one should wish that all beings, oneself and others, be clothed with a sense of moral conscience regarding their own conduct and the opinion and feelings of others.

As for ornaments and jewels, the eight precious adornments: the golden diadem inlaid with lapis lazuli and so forth; earrings; the short, medium, and long necklaces; bracelets; anklets; and belts. These are offered many a hundredfold.

In the same way, one adorns the noble Samantabhadra, Manjughosha, Avalokita Lord of the World, together with all the others: Vajrapani, Kshitigarbha, Maitreya, Akashagarbha, and Sarvanivaranavishkambhin.

While doing so, one should wish that all beings be graced with the major and minor marks of enlightenment.

This will be it for today; let us now experience some quietness and dedicate our session to the benefit of all.

