

Shantideva's  
**Bodhicaryâvatâra**

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་པའི་སྲོད་ས་ལ་འཇུག་པ།

Group Study with Venerable Lama Sangyay Tendzin  
Chapter Five: Safeguarding Alertness  
Session 38 - Saturday November 20, 2021

Good morning, everyone.

Let us start with the traditional prayers.

REFUGE | MANDALA | REQUEST for TEACHINGS  
Lama's Invocation | Mental Quiescence

Pursuing our study of Chapter Five, we ended last session at stanza 85. In this stanza, Shantideva was reminding us that, whatever alms we receive, must be shared with three categories of beings:

- Those who have fallen into the lower realms, such as animals like birds and dogs.
- Those who have no protection, like beggars. And,
- Those who are engaged in the outer and inner yogic disciplines, namely, solitary meditators.

In addition, one should offer the first part of one's own share to the Three Jewels, and ignoring one's likes and dislikes, just take enough to sustain one's body ending by dedicating the leftovers and donating them to the spirits.

Chapter Five - Stanza 86:

For some trivial aim, I shall not harm my body  
That's practicing the sacred Dharma.  
Acting like that, all the hopes of limited beings  
Will be quickly fulfilled.

As a novice Bodhisattva, one must refrain from injuring one's body for some altruistic but trivial reason. For it is with the body that one can practice the sublime Dharma properly.

One should instead take care of one's body so that it is able to work for the welfare of others; eating just enough to fill one's stomach and dressing sufficiently to keep out the cold, without being excessive to the point of falling into extremes.

Fulfil the activities of a Bodhisattva and, with prayers of aspiration, dedicate the merit to the acquirement of omniscience for the sake of all beings. If one acts in this way, one's wishes for immediate and ultimate happiness of all beings will be swiftly realised.

Chapter Five - Stanza 87:

I shall not give this body away  
While my thought of compassion is still not pure.  
I shall give it over till then, in this and other lives, in whatever way possible,  
To causes that will fulfil the Great Purpose.

The compassionate attitude of a beginner is not pure. Therefore, until one reaches Perfect Joy, the first bhumi of the Bodhisattvas, refrain from giving away your body (one's head or one's limbs), which is the basis for the practice of the sublime Dharma.

For it is not certain that such actions will be of benefit to others. It is also possible that one will have regrets, which will in turn create obstacles to the practice of virtue.

As it is said in the Shikshasamucchaya:

*"It is taught that the body must be protected as though it were an important medicinal tree."*

Nevertheless, such sacrifices can be made when they are beneficial for the teaching and for beings in this and future lives, and when they are not an obstacle to virtue, as when the lama-king Jangchub Yeshe-Ö sacrificed his body to invite Atisha to Tibet (\*).

(\*) c. 959–1040) was the first notable lama-king in Tibet. He abdicated the throne in c. 975 to become a lama. In classical Tibetan historiography, the restoration of an organized and monastic tradition of Tibetan Buddhism is attributed to him.

Chapter Five - Stanza 88:

I shall not explain Dharma to those lacking respect,  
To those with heads bound with cloth while not being sick,  
To those holding parasols, canes, or weapons,  
Or to those whose faces are veiled,

Teachings must not be given to people who show no respect, in conduct yet even only mentally, toward the teachings or the teacher.

If the teachings are given in such contexts, the supremacy of the Dharma will be lessened, and the listeners will not be benefited. What is more, the lack of respect shown by such people toward the teachings will cause them to fall into the lower realms.

Neither should the teachings be given to those who, even though they do have a respectful attitude, nevertheless keep their heads covered although they are not sick; keep their hats upon their heads; carry parasols or walking sticks, or swords, spears, and other weapons.

One should not explain the teachings to those who cover their heads with their monastic shawls or who are seated on high seats. Of course, allowances are to be made in the case of the sick.

Chapter Five - Stanza 89:

Nor the vast and profound to those who are modest,  
Nor to women without also a man.  
I shall always pay equal respect  
To the modest and the supreme Dharma teachings.

It is inappropriate to expound the profound teaching on emptiness and the vast teaching on the grounds and paths of the Mahayana to those who have the lesser attitude of the Hinayana and who aspire to the path of the Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas.

Furthermore, an ordained monk should not coach a woman alone, unaccompanied by a man. And when one expounds the Dharma, be impartial and non-sectarian.

Do not limit only in the doctrine of the Mahayana, downgrading the teachings of the lesser doctrine of the Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas, or the other way around.

The teachings are like different kinds of food, suitable either for adults or for children. They are not to be judged. On the path of liberation, they are the same, like the taste of molasses and salt.

With this understanding, one should respectfully expound them.  
In the Sarva-Dharma-Vaidalya-Samgraha-Sutra the Buddha said:

*"O Manjushri, if some people consider some of the Tathagata's teachings as good and others as bad, they have rejected the holy teachings."*

#### Chapter Five - Stanza 90:

I shall not join to the Dharma for the modest  
Those who are vessels for the vast Dharma teachings,  
Nor shall I cause them to abandon bodhisattva behaviour,  
Or entice them into merely reciting the sutras or mantras.

People who are of the Mahayana type, who are endowed with sharp faculties, people who are suitable vessels for the vast and profound teachings, must not be directed toward the teachings of the path of the Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas.

To do so is to commit a downfall, for it is not right for those with wisdom to be restrained and those who have faith to be confused. Aside from exceptional situations in which the profound view should be explained, it is essential to set forth the law of karma in relation to virtuous and non-virtuous actions.

Do not mislead those who are able to practice the way of the Bodhisattvas by telling them to gain liberation simply by reading a few good sutras and reciting a few dharanis and mantras.

Differentiating teachings of ultimate meaning from the teachings of expedient meaning, and teachings of indirect from those of implied meaning. Teach disciples according to their capacity.

In the next series of stanzas, Shantideva develops a new topic, that of "Avoidance of giving scandal to others".

#### Chapter Five - Stanza 91:

Should I spit or toss away the stick for cleaning my teeth,  
I shall cover it over with earth.  
Further, it's despicable to urinate and so forth  
Into water or on land that's to be used.

If Bodhisattvas do not avoid doing things that incite others losing faith in the paramitas, they will be a cause for them to engage later in non-virtue.

Hence, when they dispose of toothpicks, spittle, nasal discharge, and phlegm in the presence of lama, in a temple, or in some other dwelling place, they should do so unobtrusively.

Neither should they soil commonly used sources of clean water or good fields with urine and excrement. This is wrong and is forbidden.

#### Chapter Five - Stanza 92:

I shall not eat with stuffing my mouth,  
With noise, or with my mouth wide open.  
Nor shall I sit with my legs outstretched  
Or with my arms simultaneously (crossed), pressed (against my body).

When eating, Bodhisattvas should not gobble noisily, stuffing their wide mouths. Wherever they are, they should never sit with legs outstretched, and when they wash their hands, they should not rub their hands together but wash each hand individually.

#### Chapter Five - Stanza 93:

I shall not go in a vehicle, sit on a bed, a seat,  
Or in a room alone with someone else's woman.  
Having observed or inquired, I shall give up  
All that would bring disrespect from the world.

Lay Bodhisattvas should not sit on the same horse, bed, or seat, nor in an empty house, alone with a woman of another household; and ordained monks should never be alone with women who are not of their family.

In short, a Bodhisattva must abandon any behaviour seen as offensive in a given social setting, whether on the basis of personal experience or as a result of advice from knowledgeable sources.

Chapter Five - Stanza 94:

I shall never point with my left hand or one finger,  
But respectfully with my right,  
And with the entire hand,  
I shall also indicate the path like that.

When someone asks them directions, Bodhisattvas refrain showing the way rudely with their left hand or just by pointing with one finger. Speak and gesture respectfully and indicate the way with all the fingers of the right hand. Do so cheerfully and in a manner that comfort the enquirer with faith.

Chapter Five - Stanza 95:

I shall not wildly wave my arms,  
Nor shout out loud, when it's scarcely urgent,  
But shall signal with a snap of the fingers and the like,  
Otherwise, I'll get out of control.

Bodhisattvas must avoid spread-out and affected behaviour when picking up or putting down comparatively minor objects: Instead, move gently, making yourself understood verbally or by snapping your fingers. Behaving without restraint, others will no longer respect you on account of such faults.

Chapter Five - Stanza 96:

Just as the Guardian (Buddha) lay down to pass to nirvana,  
So shall I lie down to sleep, in the desired direction,  
And, with alertness, bind myself, firmly from the start  
To the intention to rise again quickly.

When Bodhisattvas lie down to sleep in the middle period of the night, they should remember to do so in the posture Lord Buddha assumed, when passing into nirvana; the position of a sleeping lion, lying on his right side, his head pointing to the north and his face to the west.

This makes you mindful of the Buddha. Therefore, lie facing the direction that is comfortable to you, with the right side to the ground, left leg laid on top of the other, the right hand beneath your cheeks, and the left arms stretched out along the thighs.

Just before falling asleep, focus mindfully with inner vigilance on luminosity, remembrance of death, and generate the thought to quickly rise the following morning. Doing so, even your sleep will be virtuous.

It is excellent to harmonise the periods of life with the periods of a single day. Consider the daybreak as birth, midday as adulthood, and evening as old age. Reclining corresponds to the afflictions of illness leading to death, and sleep is death itself.

Dreams correspond to the Chönyid Bardo; waking up the next day corresponds to rebirth in a next existence. Moreover, we are advised never to forget the practices related to precious Bodhichitta.

Next to these line of conduct, Shantideva will complete the chapter explaining other elements of perfect practice before providing a synopsis of the chapter.

Chapter Five - Stanza 97:

Out of all the boundless bodhisattva behaviours  
That have been spoken of,  
I shall definitely put them to practice (at least) to the extent  
Of the conduct for cleansing my mind.

As it has been said in the *Bodhisattva-pitaka*, the deeds of Bodhisattvas can be divided into innumerable categories, such as the six paramitas and the four ways of gathering disciples etc.

Besides these, novice Bodhisattvas must meditate on and implement the practices aimed at cleansing and training the mind (such as those set forth in the *Bodhicaryâvatâra*). This must be done until their minds are definitively purified.

Chapter Five - Stanza 98:

And I shall recite The Sutra of the Three Heaps,  
Three times each day and each night,  
And thus, with the support of the Triumphant and my Bodhichitta aim,  
I shall neutralize my remaining downfalls.

If a root downfall of the Bodhisattva Vows has been committed, confess it in accordance with your capacity, whether high, medium, or basic. Then again take the Bodhisattva vow.

If other faults have been committed, recite the confession of Bodhisattva downfalls called the *Sum-pa'i Do*, which includes the three sections of confession, rejoicing, and dedication. Do this three times by day and three times by night.

We stop here today. Next Saturday November 27, we will complete the Chapter Five on Vigilance.

Let's practice mental quiescence for a short while, before dedicating the merit of this session for the benefit of all.

