



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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More Examples Demonstrating the General Benefits of Bodhichitta **1st Chapter, Stanzas 11 and 12**

BA10: More Examples Demonstrating the General Benefits of Bodhichitta. 1st Chapter, Stanzas 11 and 12.

December 3, 2010

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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

We are now on stanza number eleven of the first chapter of Bodhicharyavatara. And it says:

*“Since the boundless wisdom of the only guide of beings
Perfectly examined and perceived its priceless worth,
Those who wish to leave this state of wandering
Should hold well to this precious bodhichitta.”*

So what it's saying is that the buddhas are the best guides to beings because they have boundless wisdom. Now 'buddha' here is not necessarily only talking about any kind of exclusively 'Buddhist Buddha'. Anybody who has this wisdom and compassion - that's what Buddha is.

So we are talking about these five different examples on the importance of bodhichitta - and this is the second one I think. What he's saying here is that Buddha with [his] perfect wisdom, boundless wisdom, examined for centuries, for countless eons and from his own / her own experience found that the most important, most valuable thing that would be good for you and good for others is bodhichitta. That if you have bodhichitta -with the help of the bodhichitta, with bodhichitta as the basis, as the motivation and the guiding force or the commitment or motivation

behind [you] - then you can free yourself from the sufferings and the problems of samsara. Here the 'state of wandering' is the translation of 'samsara'.

So therefore, bodhichitta is like the most precious jewel. Now [suppose] you get a precious jewel like a diamond or something like that, a very, very good one - but then if you just get something you don't [necessarily] know the value of it. Maybe it's a fake - maybe it's really not worth so much. But if that most precious jewel is examined, is tested by someone who is an expert at looking at jewels, who sees and examines the jewel - who has had the experience, who has done business with them for a very long time - who has bought and sold things like that, an expert - and then the expert says 'This is the most valuable jewel'. Then how important will you hold it? How much would you take care of it? How much would you value it? So in the same way one needs to take the bodhichitta, because the bodhichitta is something that is very precious.

The precious jewel - however precious it may be - it may be worth lots of money - but the only thing that it can do is that you will be freed from poverty. You can sell it and you would get lots of money out of it. You become rich, maybe very rich. But that's all it can do. Not more than that. But bodhichitta is not like that. It's much more worthwhile because through wisdom - bodhichitta is wisdom and compassion - through wisdom you learn how to deal with any problems you have. The more wisdom you have, the more you understand, [the more] you know how to deal with any kind of problems you have - inner as well as outside - emotional problems, the way of reacting with things, anything - because you understand yourself, you understand the nature of everything, so therefore you [can] deal with your own problems. So therefore the true solution to your own problems and suffering and pain basically is wisdom.

And with compassion you do only positive things and good things and beneficial things and helpful things to others. So when you have these two things, wisdom and compassion together, and especially compassion with wisdom, then you not only wish positive things for others, but you also learn and understand how best to help other beings. So therefore if you can develop something in you, if you can get something in you that will be the source of all good things for yourself and for others, that with which you can solve the problems and pain and suffering of yourself and others,

[then] you can bring lasting benefits, lasting happiness to yourself and others. What [is] more precious than that?

So therefore we need to generate this bodhichitta little by little. What we have is a little bit - not the highest now - but we need to hold it, we need to develop it, and we need to work on it. So therefore it is very important to do that. So that's the understanding.

Now we come to the second stanza, which is the twelfth:

*“All other virtues, like the plantain tree,
Produce their fruit, but then their force is spent.
Alone the marvelous tree of bodhichitta
Constantly bears fruit and grows unceasingly.”*

Now this example is that there are some trees, like the banana tree, the plantain tree – [they] grow, give fruit and then the tree itself dies – it's just a one time thing. But there are other trees, like the mango tree for instance - once you plant a tree and it grows, then you keep on getting the fruits every year - year after year after year - maybe all your life you can take the fruit out of this tree.

So in the same way, it says that if we don't have bodhichitta and [acting] without bodhichitta you do positive things - of course it has positive results: we refrain from doing negative things or do something really good, positive, with all our body, speech and mind and help other people - it has very good results. But once the result is experienced - the result comes and then the result goes - then it's finished.

But if we do positive things with that bodhichitta, with that compassion inside us, with that great aspiration to help all sentient beings, to bring the highest benefit to all of them, with that - and the understanding of not reacting with aversion and too much selfishness and things like that - with that wisdom of understanding the nature of yourself and others - if we do with bodhichitta any positive deeds then of course like any positive deed it has a result - but then it keeps on growing.

It is not that once you get the result then it's finished because you do it not just for yourself - you do it for every being. Every positive deed you do, you kind of share it with others - you dedicate it to everybody. You give it to all other people. The result is not that you are only enjoying that result and attached to that result but you are sharing it and giving it away. You are not stuck with that positive result, a little bit of enjoyment and things like that. So therefore the force of that positive deed keeps on giving results again and again. And not only that but it increases and increases and increases. So therefore bodhichitta is like that of the fruit trees, the staple fruit tree, a wish fulfilling kind of tree which not only gives fruit all the time again and again, but also the fruit or the results - positive kinds of things - increases all the time. It never decreases, never stops giving results, but it increases all the time. So therefore, you know, this bodhichitta.

We need to do positive things of course, but we need to do them with bodhichitta. And once we have bodhichitta - then when we have that way of thinking - if we dedicate ourselves to work for the benefit of all beings, and we learn how to see ourselves in a little bit [of a] clearer way, then there is nothing which can stop us. And therefore [with] that understanding, that attitude, the bodhichitta or the compassion - when we have that kind of compassion, bodhichitta, then even if we do positive things, we don't think to ourselves 'Oh I am so great. I'm doing something really good for people. Everybody should appreciate it'. It's not like that. It becomes very natural. This is good for me and this is good for others. Why should I not do something that's good for me and good for others for a long time? There is no need for anybody to show appreciation for me. I have to appreciate more that I have the chance to work on this.

So when that kind of understanding comes, the bodhichitta comes, then you don't expect even appreciation and 'thank you' and things like that from others. So therefore you do good things, you do positive things, you help people but you don't need to crave for appreciation and applauding and things like that from others too. So I'll stop here this time.

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