



# Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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**Classification of Bodhichitta**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Chapter, Stanzas 15 and 16**

BA12: Classification of Bodhichitta. 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter, Stanzas 15 and 16.

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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

So now we come to stanza number fifteen, where we are discussing the benefits of the actual bodhichitta and the separate, different types of bodhichitta, and the benefits of the different types of bodhichitta. So first we have to understand what are the categories of bodhichittas, and then what different benefits there are - and then to establish these benefits through the quotations, through the teachings of the Buddha, and also through reasoning.

And so the differences: there are different categories. There are many different ways of categorizing bodhichitta. There is relative bodhichitta and ultimate bodhichitta - these two categories. Then there are sometimes six different categories and then sometimes in some sutras twenty two different stages of bodhichitta and also in some sutras eighty categories of bodhichitta. There are many different ways of defining the categories of bodhichitta, but here he talks of the two - the inspiring, aspiring or bodhichitta of intention which is called [says Tibetan equivalent], and active bodhichitta - practical engagement bodhichitta. But first - it's not in the root text but it is in the commentary - we will say a very few words on relative bodhichitta and ultimate bodhichitta.

The relative bodhichitta is the plain, the compassion based bodhichitta that we have been talking about – a kind of a genuine intention to end the suffering of all the sentient beings including

yourself and to bring them to a kind of lasting peace and happiness - what we call enlightenment. That's the relative bodhichitta - a good intention, a strong commitment to work for the benefit of others. Now this, it is said, can be generated and can [also] happen because of different causes and conditions. Five different causes and conditions are given here in the commentary by Khenpo Kunpal.

First is the power of your friends - a spiritual friend or your positive friends. So if you have association with good people, the bodhisattvas, or enlightened beings, then that helps you to generate bodhichitta - and helps you to also increase that and finally become enlightened.

And then secondly, because of [what they call as to awaken to your] past experience, or 'the power of the cause' sometimes they call it - it means that we have practiced bodhichitta, we have practiced compassion in this life or in another life before, and then because of that, due to certain kinds of conditions and incidents, or maybe without any special incidents, you get that bodhichitta awakened in you. That's because there is a seed, that seed is awakened – that's the second one.

The third one is that you have compassion - that some compassion is generated in you - and then because of that, you generate the bodhichitta.

There was the story of Khenpo Shenga for instance. He was a hunter, a very good hunter, and he used to hunt a lot - shoot the animals, deer and things like that. And one day, he was shooting a deer, and he shot this deer - a mother who had a baby [fawn] in her belly. And when he shot, at that time, she gave birth to the baby [fawn]. And even when she was shot and she was kind of totally - like her inside was coming out of her - she was not worrying about herself, she was not running away, but trying to care for the little [fawn] that she gave birth to and was trying to lick the [fawn] and trying to take care of it. And when Khenpo Shenga saw this, that mothers, other beings, even animals have so much love in their heart for their children, that even if they are about to be killed and they are killed and are dying, even then they are not too much concerned about their own safety or their own well being. They are totally dedicated and totally concentrated on taking care of or helping the little [offspring]. So he was so shocked, so inspired - such a strong compassion arose in him that immediately he left this way of life - he completely promised not to hunt anymore and also to dedicate his life to dharma. And then he went and met

Dzogchen Rinpoche. And he started, although he was in his twenties at that time maybe, he started to learn how to read and write and then in a very short time, he became the most kind of learned and most enlightened - the greatest khenpo. And he's responsible for so many shedras in Kham, not only for the Nyingmas but also for the Kagyus and Sakyas. So therefore you know when the compassion arises suddenly or due to some reason, then the bodhichitta happens.

And then another condition is that you receive teachings, you listen to some deep or profound instructions or teachings that connect to your heart - that touch your heart - and through that also you can generate bodhichitta.

And then, fifth, that you either in this life or because of other lives, in [previous] lives, you have done lots of positive things - positive deeds - accumulated positive deeds. The more positive deeds you accumulate, the more you are likely to generate bodhichitta, and the more that bodhichitta is likely to become established and strong. And all your positive wishes also become more realized – [they] become true.

So therefore these are the five conditions that will generate the relative bodhichitta, or the kind of rough, plain bodhichitta.

And then the ultimate bodhichitta is actually the experience of the true nature of ourselves and the true nature of the phenomena. That you actually experience the wisdom and actually experience the way things are....meaning that you get awakened, you see clearly what you are and you see clearly, experience clearly, the way everything is. So this is something that - you can say that the ultimate bodhichitta is almost the same as enlightenment - that you actually not only wish for something, wish for enlightenment, but you actually experience the possibility, not only possibility, but actual experience of that freedom from suffering, that experience of total lasting peace and tranquility. Because you understand, you clearly understand and experience, that there is no absolute need, there is no need for any struggle, aversion, attachment - all these negative emotions [are] not necessary, [are] not needed. So therefore you experience this and there are many levels and many degrees of how clear and how true the experience is and how strong the experience is - and that's why [there are] all these different stages - twenty two.

But this is not what the Bodhicharyavatara is trying to explain. Bodhicharyavatara is trying to explain only these two stages, two categories. And, this is how it is written here in the fifteenth stanza:

“Bodhichitta, the awakened mind,  
Is known in brief to have two aspects:  
First, aspiring, *bodhichitta in intention*;  
Then *active bodhichitta*, practical engagement.”

So what are these two bodhichitta[s]? – ‘aspiring bodhichitta’ and ‘active bodhichitta’ or ‘bodhichitta of aspiration’ and ‘bodhichitta of action’ - there are different translations.

Then we go to the sixteenth stanza to explain this and here it says:

“As corresponding to the wish to go  
And then to setting out,  
The wise should understand respectively  
The difference that divides these two.”

So the aspiring bodhichitta is really wishing to go - ‘I want to go, I wish to arrive at that state, I wish to be free from all kind of pain and problem and suffering, not only for myself, but for every being’. And, in order to do that, ‘I wish all of them to have lasting peace and lasting happiness, and that I must work on, I must do’.

So therefore there's these two things: one is that the object of your wish - [to be] free from suffering, free from suffering for all the sentient beings. You wish them to have the complete kind of happiness, or the lasting happiness. And you wish to get there for everybody. So it's focused on a result - it's an intention - it's a commitment towards the result. The result is free[dom] from suffering for all beings and lasting peace and happiness for all beings. 'I must do that. I must get there!' So that is the aspiring, ‘bodhichitta aspiration’.

Now the 'bodhichitta of activity' or 'practical bodhichitta' is that now in order to do that then now 'I must do this - I must practice, I must learn, I must train. I must practice six paramitas or whatever you have to do. I must do this. I will do this. I will work on this so that the result, what I wish, is attained'. So that is the 'action bodhichitta'. 'Action bodhichitta' is actually to do something, to make a commitment, to actually really [be] committed or really deciding to do something, make an action so that your intention is [actualized] - you make the first steps on what you wish for. So this is the action bodhichitta and so therefore now these are the two levels.

First, of course, if there is no intention, there can't be an action. So the intention is very important - why we need to do this, have this intention, is because every action is coming from an intention. If your mind doesn't want it, if you don't have the intention to do something, then you cannot do it or you will not do it. And then if the intention is a very good intention then, it will be a very good action also. The action will follow. So therefore the intention is the important thing but just intention without action doesn't work. So therefore actually the action is the more important one because that's the actual work - that's the actual practice, that's the actual thing that will actually bring what you want. If you don't do anything then nothing will happen. So therefore, these two are very important. These two are, in a way, together. But then, even to have that intention is very useful. What he's saying here is that even to have that intention is also very useful and very important, and even if we cannot do any action at this very moment, we should at least try to generate the intention - and when intention becomes stronger, naturally we will act and that action will become less difficult because we have a very strong intention.

So I think I'll stop here.

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