



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche Proving the Benefits by Scripture 1st Chapter, Stanza 20

BA14: Proving the Benefits by Scripture. Chapter 1, Stanza 20.

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Now to explain this further, first we go to the quotation of the Buddha and then we try to explain it, or understand it, through reasoning. So first the quotation of the Buddha and this is stanza number 20:

*“This the Tathagata,
In the sutra Subahu requested,
Said with reasoned argument
For those inclined to lesser paths”.*

So the *Tathagata* is another name of the Buddha. The Sanskrit word Tathagata means ‘thus gone’. ‘Tatha’ means ‘as they have’ [‘gata’ means ‘gone’] – ‘so gone’ means that there have been people with wisdom and compassion – the way they have understood and they have attained wisdom and compassion and attained the lasting happiness, so also has the Buddha. So this indicates the Buddha is not something the first time or the last time. There have been countless Buddhas before and there will be countless Buddhas after, because it is just the way. If you see things clearly and if you find the truth then you become Tathagata.

So this Tathagata - the Buddha used to call himself Tathagata - so the Tathagata said this in a sutra -

I think we already discussed this – the sutra called ‘Request by Subahu’: there was a bodhisattva called Subahu and there is a sutra answering the questions of Subahu. The Buddha explained there how special the bodhichitta is, how important it is, how different it is from other positive actions and positive thoughts. And there the Buddha argued - the Buddha gave four reasons - ‘Four Limitlessnesses’ - because the person who has the bodhichitta wishes all the beings to be free from suffering and it is extended to the limitless beings. They’re not just for our near and dear ones, not just for the people of one country, not just the people of one world, not just human beings - all the beings, wherever they are throughout the space, in whatever form, whatever kind of different existence they may be [in] - the compassion is extended to all of them - to the limitless beings - the compassion.

And then, second, is that they want or wish to be free from every type of suffering and pain and problems. It’s not just that they have enough to eat, or have just no disease, or no particular strong suffering and pain. It’s not just like that, but every type, every kind of suffering or pain or dissatisfaction - they want to be free from all of those. So this is another limitlessness - the second limitlessness.

And the third is that it’s not just to wish that people should be free from pain and then that’s only that much. It’s not like that. That they wish, the bodhichitta, or bodhisattvas wish, or even those who have the strong kind of aspiration bodhichitta, wish, that these beings, all these countless beings, not just be free from all kinds of sufferings, but they have the highest, the best, the most ultimate happiness. Whether that is called enlightenment or not is another matter. But what you wish them is the best. It’s not that I wish myself to be really happy and really joyful and really the best and then others a little bit below there - a little bit okay, but not too much. It’s not like that. [The wish is for] the limitless happiness, limitless wellbeing, limitless wisdom, compassion, freedom, everything - the best - enlightened. So that's the third limitlessness.

Now it’s not just that the wish is that these beings be free from suffering and have the highest kind happiness or joy or wellbeing for a short time. It’s not like that. That’s not the wish. The wish is that they be in that state of lasting peace and wellbeing and highest kind of happiness for all time. So it’s limitless - for limitless time, for the limitless beings, free from any kind of suffering - that they have the limitless happiness, the highest, the best - for limitless time.

So therefore, there is nothing better you can wish for, there is no grander benefit you can wish for, so therefore this bodhichitta is something extraordinary. It's an extraordinary wish, it's an extraordinarily benevolent wish, it's an extraordinarily good wish - the best wish. So therefore it is something that is extremely powerful, extremely positive - unlimited kind of positiveness.

That's why it is said that this is not just for those inclined to the lesser path – the lesser path means only wishing good things for myself and just doing positive things only because I wish to be happier. 'I wish to be [happy]', that's lesser path or 'I wish me and some of my people to be happier'. That's a little bit lesser. It's not bad, it's very good, but much lesser than this kind of thing. So therefore it's not only bringing those kind of smallminded people to a more grander kind of way of using this compassionate way of looking - not only that. It is for that, but it's not only that. If you look at this limitless kind of compassion, then you would... there is a reason to understand that this kind of motivation is the most limitless and the most beneficial and benevolent. There can't be anything better than this. It's not possible [for there] to be any wish or any motivation, any intention that could be more positive or more limitless than this. So that's why Buddha said that the bodhichitta is the limitless kind of positiveness. So therefore, usually this kind of what is more positive or what is less positive is something that is not easy to say - it's difficult. But here we can understand, we can imagine. So therefore it is possible to kind of reason it also.

So therefore, based on this you can also reason how important, how positive this aspiration is. And when the aspiration itself is so positive and so powerful, then the action, the actual implementation, to kind of start the work on that kind of great unthinkable kind of project - how positive, how powerful that may be we can imagine and we can understand.

So this is stanza 20 and I think I will stop here.

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This is a transcript of a video talk given for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche. The transcript has only been lightly edited and is meant to be used within the Online Shedra study context.