



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche
Offering of Material Possessions
2nd Chapter, Stanza 1

BA2_1: Offering of Material Possessions. 2nd Chapter, Stanza 1.

March 1, 2011

Transcribed by Albert Harris

Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra



Photo: Kishor Dongal

So now we have gone through the first chapter of the Bodhicharyavatara and that was about how important the bodhichitta is. What is bodhichitta and how important bodhichitta is that we need to generate that bodhichitta. It's very important to have that way of thinking, that attitude, that compassionate kind of way of thinking and acting also. So now we have kind of understood its value, its importance. But just by knowing this, just by understanding how important bodhichitta is, bodhichitta doesn't necessarily arise in us. Of course, it will help, that's the first step: but we have to do something to have it fully blossomed. And as I said before, the whole of Buddhist path is on how to increase that bodhichitta, generate the bodhichitta in ourselves and then to make it deeper and stronger and stronger. And when bodhichitta is totally blossomed in ourselves then we have both limitless compassion and limitless wisdom and that's what we call enlightenment: and that's what we need and that's the elimination of all our sufferings and pain and learning how to help other beings is in that. So we have to work on it.

Now, what are the things that we should do in trying to generate that bodhichitta? So, the next few, at least two chapters are on that—how to generate bodhichitta; what to do so that our bodhichitta becomes established, or generates that bodhichitta.

The first thing is that we have to create more positive deeds; we have to create positive environments, positive habitual tendencies in us so that we become a good container to generate bodhichitta. If you have to get very, very nice food, clean food that will be good and beneficial to yourself we need to clean the utensil or the plate. If we have an unclean plate which is infested with either poison or infections then the food becomes useless. Therefore, we need to first learn to purify ourselves, we need to generate a certain kind of positive environment in ourselves. And this is what we call the purification.

And therefore, the second chapter is called *The Chapter of Purification*. And in this chapter of purification we have four things.

First, making offerings; second, prostrations, making homages; third, the Refuge; and fourth, the purification to purify our negative deeds. These are the four sections or four things that are described in this chapter of purification.

The first, offerings. Making offerings is regarded as something very important, a preparation for generating bodhicitta because bodhicitta is to do with compassion, to do with not holding on to your things for yourself; too much craving, too much grasping. And if you need to generate that kind of equal-to-all, universal compassion, you need to make a habit of letting go of your own petty things, not grasping at things to yourself: “I want this, I want that, I’ll keep this for myself and I won’t allow this to be given to anybody.” Not like that! Open mind, sharing, and giving. Not just giving down in the sense that I just kind of throw it to the dog or something like that, not like that, but making an offering.

Sometimes, the difference between the giving and offering is this: the giving can be with some kind of insult. I don’t need this so I’ll give it to others; I don’t want it so I’ll give it to others. Those people who have nothing, I’ll just throw it to them so that they can use it, I can’t use it anyway. Not that kind of attitude, but “offering” means something that is precious, something that is very

valuable, and something that I really treasure and that I like very much. Those things I make an offering with respect. Making an offering means to give with respect, give with honour, give with humility: that's the offering.

So, if you make an offering, it is something clean, something nice, something good, something that is precious. Therefore, we try to make this habit, train ourselves to make offerings.

Now this offering has four sections: the first is the offerings of material things; the second is the offering that I create with my imagination—the offerings of the mind, the offerings that are manifested by my mind is the second offering; the third one is the offering of my prayers and of my wishes—wishful offerings, aspiration offerings: that's the third one. I'll describe these later on when we come to these things; and the fourth is unexcelled offerings, the greatest offerings, the highest, excellent offerings, there's nothing better than that kind of offerings, unexcelled offerings; and then the fifth is – there's a fifth offering – the offering of the melodies, offering of the music. These are the five offerings.

The first, the offering of things, material things you can say, is also in three sections: offerings that are owned by people, offerings that have owners, that belong to people; and offerings that don't have any owner, natural things, offering of things that are not owned or possessed by anybody; and then the offering of your own body. These are the three offerings.

Now the first one is this first stanza. The translation of the first stanza is like this from the Padmakara translation:

*“To the Buddhas, those thus gone,
And to the sacred Dharma, spotless and supremely rare,
And to the Buddha's offspring, oceans of good qualities,
That I might gain this precious attitude, I make a perfect offering.”*

Now, in the Tibetan this is the first one [reads a verse in Tibetan]; that I might gain or hold, I might hold or gain this precious bodhichitta. I want to hold this bodhichitta; I want to generate this bodhichitta that we have described before. I'm inspired to generate this bodhichitta. But in order

to do that, what should I do? I make the offerings to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

The Buddha is to the '*Buddhas, thus gone*', those who have gone according to the exact nature of things. That means they have realised, they have understood, they have actualised the truth, the way things really are. Therefore, they are not deluded, they are not ignorant, therefore they have become Buddhas, they know of everything, the nature of everything. To those Buddhas, I make the offerings of the best things that I have. To all these Buddhas, thus I make the offering of the best things I have, in a very beautiful way, with respect I make these offerings as much as it's possible for me to give, to offer. Because if you see something, if you feel something or somebody that's really qualified, that's really with great qualities, that's doing the best things for yourself and other beings then you want to contribute something towards that, you want to be part of that. So therefore, you make offerings—your contribution, your sincere kind of way of appreciating that. So these kinds of things, I make these offerings to that Buddha.

And also the dharma. Of course we will talk about this when we go through the Refuge. The thing that's with the two truths— (in Tibetan) *denpa nyi*, the two truths— the path and the cessation, that's the dharma. The path dharma is the methods, the way that the Buddha gave us, through which I can tread and which I can actually purify myself with and generate the end of suffering for myself in that—the way, the methods, the path. That's also dharma. But then dharma is also the *experience* of that, the *full experience* of that cessation of suffering, the experience of the Buddha.

So dharma is the path as well as the result, the enlightened experience. So, I would like to appreciate that, I would like to make my contribution, my offering, my rejoicing, my submission to that dharma also. And then, towards that dharma, for that dharma, to make that dharma generate in me and in others, in order to bring that dharma into our lives, in order to make possible that this dharma arises in us and in others, I make the offerings—everything that I have. And then, to the Buddha's offspring, the bodhisattvas, and this is a translation of "bodhisattva", *oceans of good qualities*, the bodhisattvas are the people who are not only practising the dharma but actually have some experience of the dharma who are on the actual path and who have the different levels of the realisation of the cessation. To them I make offerings because through them I will understand the dharma and through them, I and all sentient beings get help and also the guidance, and they become my examples, my role model. Therefore, I have lots of appreciation of them,

[give] lots of reverence to them so I want to make offerings to them.

So to all these three, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha I make offerings; to the small things to the big things, the valuable things, to the not so valuable things, everything that I possess and I can offer my open heart without any stinginess, without any regret, all those things I would like to make an offering.

So I train to be less greedy, more openness of the heart, to be able to share more. Although we are working on offering but actually I'm working on bodhichitta, because I'm sharing with beings. And I offer these not only to the enlightened Buddhas, of course enlightened Buddhas, but also we talk about Buddhas of the three times. Buddhas of the past, totally enlightened, and long, long before; Buddhas of the present who are actually teaching and being around at the moment and Buddhas of the future who *will* become Buddhas and now may be bodhisattvas or not even bodhisattvas, just sentient beings. To all of them I would like to make offerings.

So that's the first stanza of the second chapter of Bodhicharyavatara.

Thank you very much.

©Ringu Tulku Rinpoche

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.