



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche **Questions and Answers 1 (Chapter 2)**

BA2Q1: Questions and Answers 1 (Chapter 2) (after teachings BA2_1 and BA2_2-7)

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Transcribed by Pat Murphy

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So, this time I will answer some of the questions that came up from these - the first stanzas of the second chapter and the first question is,

“Rinpoche, how is it best to make offering of material possessions part of my daily practice? Is it by actually making a material offering as part of my meditation practice e.g. flowers, incense and so on, or is it more to do with being in a state of mind in daily life in which one is always ready to be generous with material possessions?”

I think when we talk about making material offerings, it could be anything, you know. It could be helping somebody, somebody who needs food, giving food; whoever needs clothing giving clothes; whoever needs medicine or education or maybe even a little bit of nice words or encouragement, or anything that you feel that this person is really in need of, trying to give that. That is material giving.

But at the same time, it is also supporting the sangha, supporting people who are studying, or doing meditation, or very old and disabled and things like that. This is a very, very important part of the material giving, or material offering. But if that is not possible then, you know, you create nice flower for the Buddhas and bodhisattvas in your shrine room, or make an offering of one nice

flower or some incense. Anything that you have and anything that you get you can offer and then feel and wish that you can make a very great offering of this kind.

So making a habit, making a state of mind, as you have said, is also a training. There is no limitation or no, like, “this kind of material offering is good and the rest is not good,” or “you have to do only this way or can’t do other way”. It’s not like that. You have to, you know- just generating this, what can you offer? Look for what can I offer. What can I offer? What can I do to help? It’s the same thing, you know. And wherever there is some help needed that I can do in the material way, in a physical way, in a mental way, or an emotional way, I try to do that. That’s the general understanding, I think. There’s no kind of restrictions there. I think like that.

Then the second question is from David.

“I’ve been told that there were different reasons for which we may find difficult to obtain results in our practice. One of them is the damage we caused to the vows we have taken. Once, I met obstacles during a retreat of a vajrayana practice and I found myself thinking I was imitating Tibetan folklore. I now think that it was just too much practice for me at that time. I fear that by these thoughts I possibly have damaged my empowerment. Do you think it could create difficulties for me to develop and realise bodhicitta, and if yes, what should I do to purify this? Thank you.”

Well, it’s true that there are many different reasons why we have so many obstacles and obscurations and so many weaknesses and things like that, so many negative emotions, habitual tendencies. So therefore it is not easy to progress as we want. Damaging the vows: -if you promise to do something and not doing it is not a good thing. That is not a positive thing, but I think it is also not a good thing that “because I did this thing wrong and therefore I can never get anything right.” This is not the Buddhist way of thinking. Buddhist way of thinking is “We have done lots of good things, we have done lots of bad things in our lives and in lives before, but there is nothing negative that can not be purified, that can not be changed, that can not be put right.” So if you have done something wrong, then do more right things and do more positive things and recognize what you have done and then you kind of let that go, you know. Let that habit go, let that emotion go, let that action not repeat again. That’s the main way of purification. The purification is that you

recognize if you have really done something not right, not good, no use. But then also of course there are lots of things that are seemingly negative but not negative, seemingly positive but not positive and seemingly negative and are negative and seemingly positive and are positive. So if you have done something really wrong, really, harmful to yourself and others, then try not to do it again and then let these kind of actions not come again. That is the best way of purification and if we can really do that, then there's nothing which will not purify. Especially if you make a strong intention that you will not do the thing again. And then try to do more of positive things-any positive thing, doesn't matter which, but something that is really positive.

Next question is,

“In my everyday life, whenever I see something beautiful, should I try to remember to offer this to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas rather than to accumulate it as a good experience? Would this then help me to develop more equanimity because I would not be holding on to good experiences?”

Well there is nothing wrong if you experience nice thing, beautiful thing and then you experience it. But, it is also good to- “I experience, it is very nice, I experience it, I'm very happy, I enjoy it very much, I'm very joyful because I see this beautiful thing, so I also offer it to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. I wish that all the sentient beings be able to enjoy this nice thing.” There's no contradiction between these two things. But the main problem is when you see a nice thing and then you don't enjoy it. You are not joyful because of the nice thing but you say “I need this, I want this, I need to get one like this” and then you make a state of mind which is dissatisfied. By seeing this nice thing, instead of making your mind satisfied, which is what you mention as having a good experience, that nice thing you see or experience should make your mind satisfied, rather than dissatisfied. But if you get attached to it, if you crave for it, if you, you know, make it into an object of too much desire, then you create a dissatisfaction out of this nice thing which should be matter of joy and good experience. And also, if you wish that others might enjoy it too, that is also like offering. So this is, I think, the understanding.

So, so then there are some notes that Bob has forwarded to me which are very much appreciating the teaching. So I am very thankful to them. This is from Paula. It says that,

“Many thanks Rinpoche for this teaching. It’s so easy to do it, give things that no one possesses. After some time we’ll get the habit, and we will lose attachment, and we will give easily our things. I’m starting right now! Looking forward to see you in Europe. May you have a safe journey.”

Thank you very much, Paula.

And then another one is from Caswan.

“I started this course late and have just caught up as you are leaving for your tour. Is this my karma, to always be behind? Nevertheless I have really enjoyed the teachings so far and look forward to continuing. I particularly enjoyed this recent teaching on offering. Never having owned very much I do appreciate the things I see around me and offer thanks for that. This is my blessing. Best Wishes for your travels.”

So, thank you very much Caswan. I am now in Germany and I will try to continue with the teachings and record them and send you as soon as I can. So, thank you very much.

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