



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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More Offerings
2nd Chapter, Stanzas 20-23.

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So, now we go through the offering with aspirations. Last time we did the offering of imagination, or the imaginative or created by the mind. Some people had difficulties to kind of understand and relate to that. This is something which Shantideva, because he was a monk, had nothing much to offer; so all the imaginations, all the creative imagination – I think we can even say something like “daydreaming” –

whatever kind of daydreaming you make, you can make it very kind of positive, nice things, and instead of clinging to them, you make an offering, offering to what we call the Buddhas of the past, present and future which means, actually, everybody.

Sometimes, I think this is also important from a Buddhist point of view to understand, that usually we kind of throw a coin to a kind of beggar on the street and say, “Just take this!” That’s a gift in a way; but it’s not the kind of right way. We are giving it with some kind of, “Oh, this useless fellow.” But if we can see it in a different way, like, “I am making an offering to the future Buddha.” So, when you do that then it’s a different kind of way of giving, it’s not kind of throwing away something to somebody who’s useless, but making an offering with a kind of respect and

reverence to somebody who has, potentially, lots of positive qualities. And sometimes you cannot even say that that person sitting on the street – it's possible, I'm not saying that it's always like that, but it is possible that he is an emanation of a Buddha trying to generate some kind of a sense of compassion or sense of generosity in us: that is also a possibility.

So, try to see it like that and make an offering of this kind, any kind. What is mentioned here is just an example; [this is] what came to the mind of Shantideva and some of this is kind of mentioned by the Buddha also. So this is like that.

Now we come to what is called the "offering of the aspirations": what we aspire to, we make a great aspiration or prayer that this may happen. Make that offering.

*"May a host of other offerings,
And clouds of ravishing sweet melody
That solaces the pain of living beings
Arise and constantly abide."*

May innumerable hosts of other kinds of offerings that are not mentioned here and that cannot be imagined by me at this moment, may they all appear like the clouds spreading everywhere. It's not countable, it's not measurable, it's everywhere – clouds can go everywhere – and it's kind of covering all the things. One thing I can think about is sweet melodies, "*ravishing sweet*" melodies; ravishing sweet melodies can be very inspiring and can be very powerful. It is even said that once somebody made music and it was so sweet, it was so inspiring that even the great senior bikshu, a monk, Kashyapa – when Buddha died, he asked Kashyapa to represent him – even Kashyapa started to dance, they say. The melodies that would give peace, that would generate happiness and peace and solace to all the pains and destitute and suffering, miserable, living beings; that kind of thing may arise. And anything that brings happiness, that gets rid of unhappiness, that brings peace, harmony and kindness and all positive things, may all these of things arise naturally and not just arise and disappear immediately but may they abide, may they be there constantly for a long time.

*“May rains of flowers and every precious gem
Fall down in an unceasing stream
Upon the Jewels of Sacred Dharma,
Images and all supports for offering.”*

So, this is stanza number 21. Also may the rains of beautiful and good smelling and liberating flowers [fall down]; not only flowers, but every nice thing, every precious and wonderful precious gems to eradicate this poverty of the living beings; and food, drink, medicine, whatever the people need, all of them may just fall down from the space and that also not just a little bit but an unceasing stream never stopping. This may fall not only upon all the beings on earth but also the sacred dharmas; the dharma is venerated and worshipped because dharma is the source of all the happiness, because if we practise dharma, if we live by the dharma then we actually find the way to be totally free from all the defilements and thereby [find] lasting peace and happiness.

So, the sacred dharma, and not only that but the images, the statues, representations of the enlightened beings, like many sacred images showing the Buddha or of the Buddha and many others, that give us a reminder of the qualities of the Buddha and through which we can take the teachings, remember the teachings, remember the qualities of the enlightened beings and through which we kind of connect with them. So may those images also be covered by these precious, nice offerings. And then, also the stupas, *“all supports for offering”*. This is, I think, the translation of *chörten*. *Chörten*, in some sense, can mean “support of offering” but in other words means the stupas also. So they are also the relics of the Buddhas, the relics of enlightened beings and there's a story of eight stupas built for Buddha, to remind or signify eight important activities of the Buddha's life. But then, this is to remember the body, speech and mind of the Buddha and enlightened beings. But this is also mainly to say that may anything positive happen that will help all sentient beings. You can imagine anything; and any aspirations that you can imagine. These are offerings of all kinds of creative offerings, you can create whatever you like. So these are something that's mentioned by Shantideva.

Then, stanza 22 is what's called the “unexcelled offering”. It is said like this:

*“Just as Manjughosha and the like
Made offering to all the Conquerors,
I do likewise to all the Buddhas our protectors,
And to all their Bodhisattva children.”*

Gyalse – the heirs of the Buddha or the children of the Buddha, the princes of the Buddha – is one of the synonyms for Bodhisattvas. I think we can just say Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

So, this is like this: I try to create some offering; I try to make a kind of aspiration. I try my best, but it cannot be perfect, it may not be perfect. I have all my own capacities but this is not necessarily the best because my knowledge is not perfect, my mind is not the broadest, my mind is not the cleverest, my mind is not the most compassionate. So therefore, the best way of making this kind of aspiration or also making offerings is to say that all the great beings of the past, the greatest masters like Manjushri – Manjushri was very important for Shantideva because it was Manjushri who guided Shantideva all his life; whenever he wanted to see Manjushri, Manjushri appeared – so Bodhisattva Manjushri, and not only Manjushri, but all the great Bodhisattvas and great Masters, the Buddhas of the past made their kind of offerings, made their aspirations in the biggest way, in the grandest way, the most limitless way. In this way, as they have done, all the great Masters, all the great Bodhisattvas, all the Buddhas of the past, as they have done, all of them together, may I be able to do all that too and I will make the same kind of offerings, I will aspire for the same benefit for all the sentient beings, all the limitless beings and I would like to achieve that, I would like to do in the same way. If you say that, if you deeply say that then it's the kind of biggest and grandest – there's nothing more you can do. Therefore, this is called the “unexcelled offering”.

I don't specify because I don't know how to specify. I don't make the details because I don't know how to do that, but I say, 'As all the great beings have made the offerings, as all the great beings have made the aspirations and prayers, dedications, I would also do the same thing, all of them, together I would do. May all their wishes, may all their positive wishes and aspirations and prayers and dedications for all sentient beings, may I be able to make them ripe.'

So this is the very simple way of doing the greatest dedication, greatest offering and greatest

aspiration. So this is called the “unexcelled offering”.

Then next is the offering of the melody, this is the twenty-third:

*“To those vast oceans of good qualities
I offer praise, a sea of airs and harmonies.
May clouds of tuneful eulogy
Ascend unceasingly before them.”*

I think this is what you say is the translation, I don’t know. What it says is, “*To those vast oceans of good qualities*”: now this is the offering of the praise, offering of the speech, you can call it. Offering of the mind, offering of the things, offering of the speech [so that] you say good things. This is to purify our speech. To purify our mind we make lots of things from our mind, we make our mind positive and we kind of create positive aspirations and things like that. To purify our body, we make offerings, of our body; we make all sorts of material offerings and all the offerings of all the senses, [which are] good for all the senses and nice things like that.

Now, to purify our speech, then we praise great beings, enlightened beings and count or recount all the good qualities, because we always say bad things about people and see bad things about the people; and if we see good qualities of especially the people who have good qualities, and then we actually praise them, propagate them, we appreciate them, especially with our speech, that purifies our speech and makes our speech more positive.

Therefore, the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, great beings have countless good qualities, an ocean of good qualities. So all those good qualities I would like to praise, I would like to sing about their good qualities: not just sing but with the most melodious voice and most nice tunes, I would like to sing and sing it all the time. Therefore, may everybody also know the positive qualities of beings and Buddhas and bodhisattvas and enlightened beings so that they may also appreciate them and aspire for them and they may eventually actualise them.

So, I would like to praise them with all those different melodies, an ocean of melodies, the branches of different melodies, voices and things like that. It’s a little bit not like “air” of

harmonies, not like that. So, *“May clouds of tuneful eulogy ascend unceasingly before them”*. So, may these kinds of positive melodies, or praises or songs or the speech that beautifully illustrates or expresses the positive qualities of good beings, may [these] happen - by me, in fact. But if not, just happen all the time because it is so important to recognise the positive qualities of positive beings and by recognising them not just to kind of keep quiet but also talk about them, sing about them in the most melodious way that everybody feels delighted and wants to aspire to those qualities.

So this is from stanza number 20 to 23 so I'll stop here. Thank you very much.

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