



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche **Questions and Answers 3 (Chapter 2)**

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“My question is about generosity. It seems to come up again and again in different forms as we progress through the teachings. Is the concept of generosity central to the Bodhicharyavatara? Is it a state of mind we need to cultivate all the time if possible? Does this mean being constantly alert in ourselves to any tendency to be mean spirited?”

Of course, the main idea of bodhisattva’s path is inspired by wanting and wishing to help and that, in essence, is generosity. The generosity is the first thing that comes up in the six paramitas and so therefore that is reflected every part of the Bodhicharyavatara. That’s why, actually, Bodhicharyavatara does not have a special chapter on generosity. It has a chapter on discipline, it has a chapter on patience, a chapter on the meditation, on diligence, on wisdom, but not on generosity because it’s kind of everywhere. But of course it is also the first chapter, part of the second chapter also and then the last chapter is more or less very much about generosity, especially the dedication. So therefore, it’s something that we must think about and that we must practice. We have to try to cultivate that as much as possible because when we have to generate bodhicitta, then the bodhicitta cannot be without compassion and compassion cannot be without generosity. So therefore I think this is important part of the practice.

“Seeing mention of music and song in Stanza 11, my question is about offering the music I make. I play in a brass band. Would the music I make with the band, or when I am practicing, be a good thing to offer to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas?”

Of course. Why not? I mean, it's not only that the music you offer - but you know music is a very important thing. It is something that is very inspiring. It is something that can even change the mood of the people, bring peace and harmony in the people's minds so it's very important thing. So therefore, to make an offering of this is very good. But as we have said again and again, we make the offerings to the Buddhas of past, present and future. So when you say "I make the offerings to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the past, present and future," this actually includes everybody. So you can make an offering of your music to the Buddhas of the past, Buddhas of the present and also to the Buddhas of the future who might appreciate your music and get at least some entertainment from it. So it's very good to make offering of the music.

"I would like to receive further instructions on the offering goddesses. What do they symbolize and what purpose do these visualizations serve?"

Actually, it's not necessary that you have to visualize offering goddesses. You can also visualize yourself. In some meditations, if you want to make limitless offerings, from your heart you radiate five lights, (or doesn't matter how many) and then on each of these you see yourself. Maybe you see yourself not in a very dirty and ugly and bad way, but in a very good way. So it's limitless emanations of yourself, luminous manifestations of yourself making offerings to all the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. So it's just a making of limitless offerings. But if you want to make the offering a little bit nicer and more beautiful and more kind of efficient, then you can make them also offering goddesses. But those are kind of your manifestations, your own kind of emanations and things like that. This is the general understanding. So I think that's all. I don't know much about anything else, but when you make offerings, you make offerings that please all the senses. So therefore we offer nice things to look at, nice things to smell, nice things to taste, nice things to touch, nice things to hear. Things like that. So these are different kinds of offerings. That's why there is the offering of music, offering of food, offering of clothes, offering of scents and incense and offering of all sorts of things. That's the general understanding. It's what we want, what we value, what we think is nice, what we are attached to, what we don't have, what we especially desire, all those things I make an offering. I think that's the essence of making offering. So thank you very much and this is a very short because only three questions are there. So thank you.

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