



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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Confession
2nd Chapter, Stanzas 27-31



BA2_27-31: Confession. Part 1. 2nd Chapter, Stanzas 27 to 31.

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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

So we continue with the second chapter of Bodhicharyavatara, which is on confession. And this is stanza number 27. Now, when we try to make the purification or the confession, the first thing is - in front of who do we make the confession? That is stanza number 27. It says:

*"To perfect Buddhas and to Bodhisattvas,
In all directions where they may reside,
To them who are the sovereigns of great mercy,
I press my palms together, praying thus:"*

So I am making this confession in front of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of all the directions - that means wherever, whatever any enlightened beings and great beings with compassion there are in the whole universe, who are the kind of sovereign or great; compassionate and merciful - to them all I put my palms together and I make this confession. So in front of all the great beings, all the compassionate beings, all the wisdom beings, I make this confession. How I make this confession is:

*"In this and all my other lives,
While turning in the round without beginning,
Blindly I have brought forth evil,
And incited others to commit the same."*

So I think about all my lives in the past, when I was going round and round in samsara in many different life forms since the beginning of my samsaric being - which is beginning-less.

'Blindly' means without understanding - I didn't know what were the actions of body, speech and mind that would bring more help, more benefit, more joy, more happiness to me and others, and what actions would bring suffering and pain to myself and others. So I was blinded. And with this blindness, with this ignorance, I did lots of negative deeds - all the negative deeds that I have done with my body, speech and mind, in all the lifetimes and also in this life - that's one kind of negative deeds I've done.

But even if I didn't do that myself, I made others do it and incited others to commit the same. I made others do very negative things. I incited them to do negative things and what I have incited or made others do is also the same as being done by myself. So all the negative things that I've done with my own body, speech and mind and also those negative deeds that I have done – which I have not done myself - but I have made or incited or encouraged others to do. Not only that, but then,

*"Deceived and overmastered by my ignorance,
I have taken pleasure in such sin."*

The third is - because of my ignorance, because of my not seeing things clearly or understanding

what is right and what is wrong, I have also taken pleasure in the negative deeds that were done by others. I have appreciated them, I have rejoiced at the negative deeds done by others.

*"And seeing now the blame of it,
O great protectors I confess it earnestly!"*

So now I see that it is very negative, it's very bad that I do negative deeds by myself, but also I see the negativity of me inciting and encouraging others to do negative deeds. And not only that but I rejoiced at others doing negative things. So therefore all of them - all the negative things that I have done with my own body, speech and mind, all the negative deeds that I have made or incited or encouraged others to do, and in all that I have rejoiced because others have done negative deeds - all of them I confess. Here '*I confess*' means I purify, I let go, I don't want it, I have to get rid of them, I don't want to do it again. I don't want to hold on to them, I want to give them up, I want to be free from all these negative deeds. That's what I mean by '*I confess it earnestly*'. And what are those negative deeds?

"Whatever I have done against the Triple Gem,

Now, whatever negative deeds I have done that harmed the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha - because you know Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are the source of great benefit to lots of beings - not for a short time, but for a long time - in a deep way - the lasting kind of happiness and source of lasting happiness and peace. So therefore if I do something really negative or really kind of harming them it's a very negative deed, so therefore all those deeds that I have done against Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and,

"Against my parents, teachers, and the rest.

My parents have always tried to help me - have been very kind, brought me up, did everything they could to make me a better human being, and tried their best to give me things that even they didn't have. So therefore if I do something wrong to them that's very bad because they tried their best to do whatever they could to help me and they loved me, and they looked after me and brought me up. So therefore I have to be grateful for that and I have to do whatever I can to help

them to do something - bring them happiness and well being. But if I do the opposite and harm them that's very bad so [I confess] all the negative things that I did against my parents in all my lifetimes. Teachers are also the object of my reverence - I've learned from them, they tried to teach me, they're the source of whatever I learn, my education, and I should respect them, I should help them. But if I've done something against those teachers I also am very sorry and I want to confess and purify those deeds. And not just that but anybody – if I have done anything wrong, anything negative, anything harmful, to anybody - because of my own defilements, because of my own ignorance.

We all do negative deeds - either because of ignorance - we don't know whether it's negative or whether it's positive, whether it's helpful to me and others or harmful to me and others, and thereby unknowingly and without understanding clearly I do negative deeds. Or with hatred - that is, with anger, hatred and fear or aversion, I do negative deeds because I think that if I do that I'll be freed from this kind of aversion, or something terrible that's happening - and then I get angry sometimes, and because of that I harm people. Or out of greed - out of greed and attachment and craving something for myself - because of that I do negative things and harm others. So all these are defilements – whether it is done through ignorance or through aversion or through craving or attachment - these are defilements. So,

"Through force of my defilements,

- any kind of negative deeds or harmful things that I have done -

"In my body, speech and mind,

All the evil I, a sinner, have committed,

All the wicked deeds that cling to me,

The frightful things that I contrived

I openly declare to you, the teachers of the world."

So any kind of negative deeds, evil deeds, harmful deeds, that I have done throughout my lives with my body, with my speech and with my mind I confess in front of you - all the Buddhas, all the teachers of the world, the guides of the world, all the great compassionate bodhisattvas. And I

must confess and I must purify them. Now here the purification is that - the understanding from a Buddhist point of view is - I do negative things and I do positive things, but I am not the negative one. So therefore you know the negative deeds I can do, the negative habits I can have, the negative ways of reacting I can [display] are because of these negative influences. But I can change that. I can get rid of these negative actions. I can get rid of these negative habitual tendencies. I can get rid of these imprints of the negativity - negative emotions and things like that I can change. So therefore if I stop doing them - if I understand what is negative, what is evil, what is wrong, what is not beneficial for me and others – and what kind of reactions, positive reactions, more positive reactions I can do - and I stop doing negative reactions - if I generate more positive emotions and I stop reacting with negative emotions - then I can purify. I can become more pure, more transformed, more enlightened - so that's what I want to do - and there is nothing negative, no negative deed, no negative imprint on me, and no negative karma that cannot be purified - that's the understanding from the Buddhist point of view. So therefore I will start to do it. I have to do it because it's neither good for me nor good for others - not good for now - not good for the long run. So therefore it is something I must work on.

So the first thing is that I need to understand what is wrong, what is the negative, what are evil deeds. So firstly I need to recognize the negative deeds, and I need to regret. I need to recognize what is not a good action and see it as not a good action. And that negative action, or not good action, I need to give up and I need to change that and I need to do more positive actions.

And the negative actions that I have done - when I realize that they were negative, they're not good, they're wrong and do not benefit anybody, but are harmful to all the people, then I must be very clear and I must reduce doing those things and have regret and feel bad that I have done it and I don't want to do it again - that's the regret and this is a very, very important recognition.

So therefore this is the starting of this section of the regret. It's not so short – it's quite a few stanzas - so we will go through them. But I think I stop here today. Thank you.

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