



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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Rejoicing
3rd Chapter, Stanzas 1-4



BA3_1-4: Rejoicing. 3rd Chapter, Stanzas 1-4.

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Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

So now we come to the third chapter of Bodhicharyavatara which is called “*Taking Hold of Bodhichitta*”: or “*Receiving the Bodhisattva’s Determination*” or “*the Vow*”. This is also called, sometimes, “*Fully Adopting the Bodhichitta*”

Now this has three sections. One is the preliminaries; the preliminaries, and actually making the commitment, and then rejoicing making this commitment.

The preliminaries is of two kinds. The first is to accumulate positive deeds, to accumulate merit,

and then to train the mind, too. First, to accumulate the merit, there are eight points and out of these eight points, four we have already discussed in the second chapter: taking refuge; making prostrations; making offerings; and purification. These are the four we already talked about.

Now, we come to the next four of the preliminaries, and the first is rejoicing. Now, rejoicing is a practice that is opposite, or to work on, as an antidote, to jealousy and feeling bad when somebody has done something good, achieved something good. This is a very, very important practice because from a Buddhist point of view, as we discussed earlier also: to do something good, to make some other people to do good on your behalf, and to really rejoice from the heart if somebody does something good, have actually the same result, the same power, the same energy.

So, here then, Shantideva rejoices in the three things. The first, the cause and result of the ordinary beings. Sometimes [these three] are called the lesser beings; the medium beings; and the excellent standard of understanding. But, [the first] are the ordinary beings who are not necessarily looking for enlightenment or awakening or anything like that. So there it says:

*“With joy I celebrate the virtue that relieves all beings
From the sorrows of the states of loss,
Exulting in the happy states enjoyed
By those who yet are suffering.” [1]*

These are for those people who are in samsara, who are not working towards enlightenment but do something positive, all those positive deeds. I rejoice the positive deeds done by people who are ordinary people which give them relief from suffering. It's a temporary relief maybe, even, but a relief from suffering, because every positive deed has its own power. So therefore, if you do positive deeds you are not born in the lower realms and things like that. So,

*“Joyfully I celebrate all the acts of virtue
That ease the pains of the lower realms,*

That's another translation [http://www.lotsawahouse.org/bodhicharyavatara_iii.html]. That's the cause. I rejoice in the positive deeds done by ordinary people. And also I rejoice the result, that is

the second part of the stanza:

*"And rejoice as well when those who suffer
Find themselves in states of happiness."*

Those who are not out of the suffering, those who are not freed from the samsara – they are in samsara - but still they have some good things, some positive life, a nice time, health, happiness, prosperity, born in the human realms, born in the heavenly realm and things like that. So I rejoice in that. That's the first stanza.

And then the second stanza is rejoicing at the more kind of advanced kind of people. Sometimes they call them kind of medium people who are... here it says:

*"I revel in the stores of virtue,
Cause of gaining the enlightened state,
And celebrate the freedom won
By living beings from the round of pain." [2]*

So this is the Padmakara translation. The first two lines are: I rejoice in those who have the understanding of emptiness, selflessness, wisdom and things like that, that will cause us to be enlightened, awakened so that you are no longer in samsara, so that those actions or those positive deeds or the wisdom or compassion that bring one out of the samsara, those deeds, when people do those deeds I fully rejoice.

And then, also, celebrate the liberation of beings. So those arhats and others who are not Buddhas or great bodhisattvas but who have managed to liberate themselves, free themselves from the constant suffering and pain of the samsara, to all of them, I rejoice. That's the second one.

And then, the third is... now this is the kind of great enlightenment:

"And in the Buddhahood of the protectors I delight

And in the grounds of realization of the Buddha's heirs" [3]

So I rejoice at the awakening of the Buddhas, the Buddhas who have completely become enlightened, awakened and attend not only the liberation from samsara but the highest level of wisdom and compassion and have the complete strength and power to help other beings, all these Buddhas, I rejoice in them. And also I rejoice at the result, and I rejoice in the result of the bodhisattvas who have attained the first bhumi onwards or even before that, all the bhumis from one to ten bhumis; who are working on them and attained that kind of experience. I rejoice the result that all of them have gained. I don't have any jealousy and envy to all of those beings from a little bit of positive deed they have done, a little bit of positive results they have attained, to the greatest result they have attained or greatest positive deeds like, for instance, this is the stanza, the fourth stanza:

*"Their enlightened attitude, an ocean of great good,
That seeks to place all beings in the state of bliss,
And every action for the benefit of beings:
Such is my delight and joy." [4]*

So I not only rejoice at the attainment of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, but I also rejoice at the positive actions that generates that, that results into, that causes the attainment of the Buddhas and the bodhisattvas. So therefore it says that I greatly rejoice in the infinite sea of virtue which is the noble intention of bodhicitta. I rejoice in the bodhicitta because bodhicitta is the direct cause of bodhisattva- and Buddhahood. Wishing to secure the happiness of beings, and what is that bodhicitta? That bodhicitta is wishing to secure the happiness of all the beings. And then, acting in ways that will be a benefit to all. Bodhicitta is that intention and action and to help all beings and to bring them the greatest benefit. To those kind of bodhicitta, which is the highest positive deed and positive action, the cause of Buddhas and bodhisattvas and also the attainment of Buddhas and bodhisattvas too: all, I rejoice.

So, now this includes everything, from the smallest to the highest positive things, deeds, and from the smallest to the highest achievements. So the main understanding here is this is something we have to practise again and again because it is very common that we feel jealous, we feel envy, if

something really good is happening to others. It's not that we don't have any empathy or any compassion. Most of the time when we see somebody suffering we feel empathy, we feel compassion, we feel bad that they suffer and we don't want them to suffer. But it is another case if we see somebody really progressing, really doing something very good and getting lots of good results then we might feel not so good. Therefore this is something we have to be very careful about. We have to work on it.

Now, some people have this misunderstanding that if you don't have any jealousy or if you don't have any envy, then you don't have any drive to work to improve yourself or to do something better. You need to have a strong kind of competitiveness, you need to have jealousy and these kinds of things. It's not true. That's not the right way. I think people misunderstand jealousy or envy with the positive intention, aspiration, vision. That's another thing. I want to attain enlightenment, I want to attain enlightenment for all the sentient beings; I want the best for everybody; I want to improve myself. Sometimes, people also misunderstand attachment and aspiration. Attachment is one thing and aspiration is another thing. Attachment is that I get stuck there: aspiration is that I don't get stuck there. I do it for a great purpose.

Therefore, some people who don't understand any Buddhism sometimes say that, *"Oh! In Buddhism there's a kind of contradiction because they said that the cause of suffering is attachment, and then they say there's a path we have to work for enlightenment."* That's a laughing stock because that's not totally understanding anything about Buddhism. It's not that you cannot have intention, you should not have an aspiration, you should not have any vision. You should have. You have to work towards that. That's not attachment. That's not clinging. That's an aspiration for the benefit of all other beings. Clinging is kind of holding on to something. There's no need of any attachment: the aspiration is not an attachment; vision is not an attachment; aspiration, compassion is not an attachment. Compassion is wishing the best for everybody. If you are attached, you cannot be really compassionate. You're holding on to something. You're too much self-centred. You become too much self-centred. The less you become self-centred the more you become the greater vision, the greater aspiration and more free and bigger. There's no fear. There's no need of any fear that if this doesn't happen it will be very bad and things like that.

Rejoicing is a very good way of working towards that. You can rejoice and you can also work hard and also aspire. You can also not compete against the person next to you. You don't need to compete with that, you have to compete for your excellence. *"I need to become better and better and better,"* there's nothing wrong with that. I don't have to pull the leg of the person who is next to me; that's bad, that's not necessary. That kind of competition is not necessary. The competition for excellence is necessary.

Of course, that is also not a kind of attached small-minded kind of competition for excellence – it's for me, for everybody. Therefore, the more people becoming better the happier I become. The more people are progressing the happier I become.

So that kind of rejoicing is to be cultivated and this is something very, very important that we need to practise every day, every hour in our life all the time. This is very, very important and I always say this: if we adopt rejoicing as a way of life, we can be happy all the time for no special reason without any extra expense or extra energy. If we are jealous and envious as a way of life, then we will be unhappy all the time without any special cause or without any special negative thing happening to us. So therefore, it is extremely important to adopt the way of life with rejoicing and without jealousy and without envy.

Thank you very much.

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