



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche

Carefulness
4th Chapter, Stanza 1



BA4_1: Carefulness. 4th Chapter, Stanza 1.
November 2, 2011. Transcribed by Desi and revised by Rinchen.
Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

Now we have come to the 4th chapter of the Bodhicharyavatara.

First we talked about ways to generate bodhichitta, in those [in whom] the bodhichitta is not generated. So - so far all the things we talked about in the last three chapters was about that – how to generate bodhichitta when we have not generated bodhichitta.

Now the next three chapters will be on how to prevent the bodhichitta which is [now] generated in us from deteriorating, from decreasing. There are three chapters on this topic and so the first of that is *pag yü*. *Pag yü* is a Tibetan word which is very, very important. It is translated here by the

Padmakara as 'carefulness'. It is carefulness, but there's a being aware and mindful - and then being careful. You don't lose your awareness and mindfulness - and within that awareness and mindfulness every action you do - whether it's with your body, speech or mind - you do it deliberately, you do not let it happen haphazardly, you do not do it without thinking or without knowing what you're doing. You do not just follow your provocations, or the emotional excitement at the time. You don't do things without examining or without discrimination - just doing what everybody is doing - it's not like that - but whatever you do with your body, speech and mind you do it with awareness, with understanding, with mindfulness, with care, with deliberateness, with discrimination, so you know you are not unmindful, you are not careless, you are not haphazardly doing things that you have to regret afterwards. So therefore that's what we call *pag yü*.

And this *pag yü* is extremely important from a Buddhist point of view, because this is the main thing. Because if you have to practice something, if you are training in something, if you want to live your life in a progressive, positive way, then you need to check what you are doing with your body, with your speech, with your mind and then do it the best way you think is possible. So therefore, unless you [act] like that, then you will be regretting what you have been doing, and then most of the time you will be distracted and doing things distractedly, unknowingly, unconsciously or without mindfulness. So you will be doing lots of wrong things - you will be doing lots of negative things - because you don't know how you are affecting yourself, or your future, or others by what you are doing now with your body, with your speech and with your mind. So therefore carefulness is very, very important.

So first there is one stanza which is like the statement and then others to elaborate on this statement.

So the first stanza is:

*The Children of the Conqueror who thus
Have firmly grasped this bodhichitta,
Should never turn aside from it,
Strive never to transgress its disciplines.*

So the 'Children of the Conqueror' - that's *gyalwe säpo* in Tibetan, *jinaputra* in Sanskrit, which actually means bodhisattva. We talked about this, this term before - and I personally do not too much like the term 'Children of the Conqueror' but it's one of the synonyms of bodhisattva. So what [the stanza] means is the bodhisattvas who have firmly taken [hold of] bodhichitta – have generated bodhichitta, have taken the bodhisattva's vows - after we have taken the bodhisattva's vows, then we should never turn aside from it - it's not that I took it and then I don't do anything about it, I don't care, I don't act on it - that is not good. Because a bodhisattva's vows is something that we thought about, that has been examined by a great many Buddha's and bodhisattvas [who have gone] through it and found it extremely useful and important. And not only that but I have also thought about it, understood it. So therefore it is not something that I took lightly - so it's not something that I will just throw away without doing what I promised to do. So once I've taken this bodhisattva's vows, then I should actually train in it, and because I promised that I would work for the benefit of sentient beings, for short term and for long term, I promised that I would liberate all sentient beings from the suffering of samsara and eventually bring them to enlightenment - the lasting peace and happiness - and I would like to find ways of how to do that. So if that is the case then I have to work on it, I have to find myself, I have to transform myself, I have to work on myself first, I have to study and not only study but live by that life. So therefore the three things - we need the aspiration, we need the determination, we need the willingness to work on it however hard it may be. But then I must also act on it - I must live by that. It's not just I think about it or I just understand it or I just talk about it. So that living is the *shila* - the discipline. And I must be aware and careful of how I live, how I act with my body, how I act with my speech, how I act with my mind. And if I am careful about these three things, then I am living the positive life. So therefore, first I have to understand how to do that - that's the study, that's the learning. But once I have learnt how to do that a little bit more, then I need to do it, I need to act on it. And in order to act on it properly, then I need to train my mind. I need to meditate. I need to use all different kind of techniques to tame my mind, to work on my emotions and things like that. So these three things are very, very important - what we call the three trainings are the training of the wisdom, the training of the conduct and the training of the meditation.

So also I have to learn what are the positive things. There are also the bodhisattva's vows which have with it lots of do's and don'ts - lots of instructions - lots of recommended [ways] or precepts. Now there are many different sets - there is not only one set of precepts for the bodhisattvas.

There are many, in different sutras, in different teachings of the Buddha there are different precepts, and there are those recommended for the kings, those recommended for the ministers, these are the things that are recommended for the general public - things like that. And then sometimes this and that [advice] - some more elaborate, some less elaborate. So therefore we need to study them a little bit - but I think it's also important that we have to see ourselves because the main thing is that we do not give up this intention, aspiration to help all sentient beings - that's the basic. If that is gone, then we have given up the bodhichitta - even the aspiration bodhichitta. So therefore that is the most important thing.

After that are the six paramitas - actually the way to live, to practice, to work on, the bodhisattva's life - bodhisattva's practice is the six paramitas. And these six paramitas are described in great detail in this book. So actually in this book it's mainly about the six paramitas. There is not a specific chapter on giving. But the dedication is about giving and also the first chapter has a lot [in it] and also the seven branch practice have lots of things on how to give - basically everything is about giving. So the giving, the paramita of generosity, paramita of giving, is very much included in it. So therefore when we understand these six paramitas, then we more or less understand how to live, how to practice the bodhichitta and bodhisattva's way of life.

So of course in the commentaries specific instructions are also included, but the root text is not very specific - like precepts - you have to do this-this-this like three, four, five, six, seven - it's not so much like that.

So with that understanding, with that [determination] so I must live my life. I must. The three chapters which we are talking about - especially this one and the next one also - are on the shila, on how to discipline, how to live your life. So this *pag yü* - the carefulness - on that we have to live our life - with some understanding, some clarity, some awareness, some mindfulness - of taking care that whatever we are doing with our body, speech and mind - when we're about to do something, whether it's with our mind or with our speech especially, or body, then before doing that, I see what I am about to do - and is it good to do or not good to do? Is it beneficial or not beneficial? The way I am doing it - is it okay or not? And then what is the best way I should do that? And in that way if I act, then I cannot act in a negative way. So therefore to try to be aware and be careful before you act. When you say 'careful' it's not that you always stop acting - it's not

like that - but whatever you are doing with your body, speech and mind you do it with clarity, with understanding - this is what I am doing now - and this I am doing in this way which I know is the right way to do it. So therefore I can do it this way, not without little bit reflecting on how I'm doing it and what's going on - not just overpowered by some negative emotions and things like that. So this the first stanza. Thank you.

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