



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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How All Good Things Come From the Mind
5th Chapter, Stanzas 9-12



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Now we come to the second point of that everything comes out of the mind, in the fifth chapter of Bodhicharyavatara, *The Way Of Bodhisattva*, which is translated here as the *Vigilant Introspection*. And now we come to the ninth stanza. This section starts from the ninth stanza to, I think, seventeenth stanza.

So it says,

*If transcendent giving is
To dissipate the poverty of beings,*

*In what way –since the poor are always with us–
Have former Buddhas practiced it? [5:9]*

So [when] we talk about becoming a Buddha, it is someone who has already transcended, already accomplished, completed the practice of the six paramitas. If one has accomplished or transcended the six paramitas, then one becomes a Buddha. So all these six paramitas are also about the state of mind and it comes out of the mind. Therefore, everything good, everything positive also comes of the mind. In fact, we can all say that happiness and unhappiness are also a state of mind. We discussed this before also, but the happiness is not necessarily generated by anything outside, whether it's wealth, whether it's power or popularity or even pleasure. So therefore, it is something that comes of our mind and even the accomplishment of six paramitas has to be of the mind, of the state of mind. As an example, the transcending or the paramita of giving or generosity is not about that every poor people, all poverty in the whole universe has to end in order to accomplish or transcend somebody's practice of giving or generosity. Because if that is the case, then nobody has ever accomplished generosity or transcended the generosity or giving, because there are still poor people in the world.

So therefore it says:

*Transcendent giving, so the teaching says
Consists in the intention to bestow on every being
All one owns, together with the fruits of such a gift
It is indeed a matter of the mind itself. [5:10]*

So then what is transcending giving or accomplishing the paramita of generosity? The teachings say, the Dharma says, the Buddha says that if somebody has become so generous, has become so used to giving, has so much compassion, that one has no problem giving anything, whatever they have, in order to help beings; that one is able to share or give whatever one owns; and not just [that] you give it so that you get a good result afterwards, but you are also able to give the result, positive result of that giving for the benefit of all beings; when one has that understanding, one has that state of mind, one has completely no attachment, completely no stinginess, completely is ready and willing and happy to give and share everything one has including the positive karma or

the result of that giving, then it is what we call as accomplishment or transcending the paramita of giving. So therefore it's not just what you do, but it is the state of mind.

Therefore, how rich you are is also [about this transcendent generosity or giving]. That's why it is said that if you give, if you are generous, then you become rich. And when you say that, it means that if your mind is satisfied, then you are rich. If your mind is always craving for something, is not satisfied, is always hungry and thirsty and always too much craving for something, then you are very poor even if you have a lot. So this is the understanding. Therefore, it's a state of mind – the mind is the most important thing. And in the same way, not only the paramita for giving but all other paramitas are also coming from the mind.

*Where could beings, fishes and the rest
Be placed to keep them safe from being killed!
Deciding to refrain from every harmful act
Is said to be transcendent discipline. [5:11]*

Now the *shila* or the discipline, the paramita of *shila* or paramita of discipline or paramita of good conduct is also about the state of mind. For example, refraining from harming others or refraining from killing is a paramita, it's a *shila*, it's a discipline. So, how do we transcend the non-violent action, accomplish the most kind of non-violent action? That is a state of mind, because if you say that this has to be that all the killings in the world has to be stopped and no one is harmed, that's not possible. Where could I bring all the fishes and all the beings, where could I put them that nobody will harm them? It's very difficult. We cannot make a place where nobody will kill anybody as long as there are people who want to kill, so it's very difficult to create a situation where there is absolutely no killing unless everybody stops that. So therefore, if you have to stop all the killing, for instance, or stop all the violence, then it's not for one person possible to control everybody. But the discipline, the *shila* is within ourselves. So deciding to refrain from harming – if I decide myself that whatever may happen, whether I die, whether even I have to give my life, I will not harm anybody, I will completely give up harming somebody – when that decision or that understanding or that state of mind becomes the way you are, then you have transcended the discipline of being non-violent. This is an example, so in all kind of disciplines also the real discipline is a state of mind.

Of course, to start with we have to keep discipline on our body and speech also. Even if sometimes our mind is kind of thinking or our mind has certain violent attitudes, violent expressions, then we catch that. And then we think again and we remind ourselves that that's not the way we should act and so we stop that act. That's also good to start with. But actually the true discipline is from the mind. When your mind even doesn't want to or doesn't desire or sees very clearly that these acts of violence, these acts of undisciplined actions are totally uncalled for, totally unnecessary, totally useless, then the discipline is automatic. There's nothing, there's no hardship in maintaining the discipline and it happens automatically. So therefore that's totally then transcending the discipline, or discipline is totally accomplished.

So in the same way, this is the 12th stanza. Now, I think, it's about patience:

*Harmful beings are everywhere like space itself
Impossible it is that all should be suppressed,
But let this angry mind alone be overthrown
And it's as though all foes had been subdued. [5:12]*

So we cannot get rid of all our enemies, all the things that are harmful to us or do something not so nice to us. It's not possible. If we have to get rid of everything that doesn't please us or supposedly harms us or is not nice to us, then we will never be able to accomplish that. Because if somebody does [something], whether it's harmful to me or not also depends on how I see it and how I react and many other things. And it's not possible to change everybody or completely get rid of everybody, it's physically not possible. So, what I have to do is I have to maintain the patience. And this patience is that I look at my angry mind, my mind which is reacting angrily and with aversion, with lots of kind of negative feeling against those things. If I can, if I am able to get rid of that aversion, get rid of that anger, then I am able to get rid of all my enemies, all my things that harm me. So therefore it is as if I've got rid of all the problems. Then it's patience. When you talk about patience, it is like that. It's a state of mind also.

When I see, when I understand really clearly that whatever harmful things or whatever negative things happening to me or somebody doing something or saying something or creating a situation, then, if I don't get angry, if I don't feel negative towards it, if I don't have this strong kind of

aversion to it, if I can get rid of my own anger and aversion, then actually in a way their ability to harm me has reduced a lot, and they can maybe do something a little bit painful, but they cannot really completely make me devastated. So therefore, patience is the most important, the strongest defense. And when you have made your mind like that, when your state of mind is full of compassion and loving kindness and forgiveness, and you have no aversion or have no negative feeling against anybody; when you see this, when you understand this, if you have that state of mind, then you have no enemies. Then nothing actually can harm, there are no obstacles. So therefore it's a state of mind. And when that state of mind becomes completely your way of being, then that's not even difficult. It happens automatically and that's why it's called transcendent. That's why when we talk about transcendent, there [has to be] a kind of deep understanding of what you are, what your mind is, how the things are. So therefore, if you really see very deeply the nature of yourself, the nature of your mind, the nature of everything and very clearly there's no truly existing self and everything is interdependent, everything is emptiness, everything is like impermanent and flowing and dependently arising; there's nothing which is totally existing on its own; and when you see the way things really are, then this understanding can become extremely clear. And therefore you can transcend. That's the wisdom. So, that's why we say that unless there is this wisdom then you can't completely transcend any of these paramitas. But if that is there, then you will have these paramitas also.

I think I'll stop here, stanza number nine to stanza number twelve, and then the same section will continue. We talked about the three paramitas. The three paramitas are a state of mind, [and] not only three but all the paramitas come from the mind. So the mind is a source of all the problems and pain and negative things, if we make it like that, and it is also the source of all the positive things and all the great enlightenment and all happiness and every good thing if you know how to make it. So that's the important thing to know.

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