



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

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Protecting the Training from Declining. Part 2.
5th Chapter, Stanzas 50-53



June 30, 2012. Transcribed by Desi Lake.
Teachings on the Bodhicharyavatara for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra

So I continue on chapter 5 and stanza number 50. This is continuation of those here [listed] 27 not so positive actions or reactions when I need to delay my reaction or I need to make myself kind of freeze and become like a log. That's how it has been suggested. So I read from stanza number 50:

*Or when you want to fish for praise,
Or criticize and spoil another's name,
Or use harsh language, sparring for a fight,
It's then that like a log you should remain. [5:50]*

Now all these translations like “*you should do something*” or “*you should*”, in the original either Sanskrit or Tibetan text there's no you, there's no me, there's no nothing. But the whole teaching of Bodhicharyavatara, as it is mentioned very clearly in the beginning, he says is basically for myself, so that I can train myself in the path of the bodhisattva. So sometimes I feel that it is more appropriate to say *I* instead of *you* because it's talking about himself, and also it's a kind of introspection, all of these are introspection and all the discipline in Buddhism is self-discipline. So it's not somebody telling somebody else that you should do this or you should not do this, but it's more like yourself telling yourself I should do this. So maybe not *you*, but *I*. But when you say *you* it means *you* to me. This I think is very important to understand.

So, I think this is out of these 27 the 10th one that I want to fish for praise, I want somebody to praise or proclaim me and want to do something about that. Then I catch that and see this is just making a negative kind of motivation so I remain like a log. Or when I want to criticize somebody, say bad things about somebody, that also is not good. I think sometimes people feel that if I criticize a person, then that person will learn from it and become better. Sometimes people say this and feel like that. But usually not. People learn more by praising, by appreciation, than by criticizing. Of course, when people make mistakes and you need to change them, then I think it is also good to start by appreciating and then mildly or without hurting that person's feelings suggest what he can do to improve. Maybe there are circumstances when you should really kind of criticize, but criticize in a way that is not like unfriendly way, but very friendly way. So if I feel like criticizing somebody, then I need to watch my reaction and action. Spoil another's name, especially if I want to say something or do something that would kind of insult or [expose] the defects of somebody. I think these are the 10, 11 and 12. Insult – when I verbally insult others through hurtful conversation that's spoiling others' name. Use harsh language, so using harsh language, sparring for a fight, harsh language – this is the 10, 11, 12 and 13. Then *like a log you should remain*. Then we got to the number 51:

And when you yearn for wealth, attention, fame,

A circle of retainers serving you

And when you look for honors, recognition

It's then that like a log you should remain. [5:51]

Whenever I desire material gain, respect or fame; whenever I intend to seek a kind of entourage of servants and in my mind I desire to have personal service, at such time I will remain like a log. Now this is the 14th one: gain material goods, such as food and clothing and all different kind of material goods. 15 is when I desire respect from others, so that they arrange everything for me, like my seat and offer prostrations and all sorts of things. And 16 is when I desire fame, so that my personal qualities are well known to others. So people say good things about me. 17 is whenever I intend to seek an entourage of good servants, assistants who build things for me and things like that. 18, when in my mind I desire personal service, immediate service such as having my bed made or that I'm kind of tucked into my blanket and things like that. So when these kind of intentions come to my mind I should also understand that, see that and then remain, not react at that time. Then 52:

And when you are inclined to overlook another's need

And want to get the best thing for yourself

And when you feel the urge to speak

It's then that like a log you should remain. [5:52]

So this is like [when] you see somebody having some need for benefit or some need for help or something, and you don't want to do this. Like whenever I desire to give up the minor benefits for others, for instance being a nurse, despite being able to do so. I want to give up doing good things for others also. This is 19th. The 20th is when I desire to pursue my personal welfare, such as by being particular about minor personal benefits like demanding a special seat in a gathering. In this regard, pursuing ones personal benefits must be embraced by mindfulness introspection. As in the biography of Geshe Ben. You know Geshe Ben's story. He knew that one of his benefactors, sponsors was coming to his retreat. And then he cleaned his room, he made a very nice offering, bowls and things like that, cleaned his shrine and made everything very nice, and then he sat there nicely, everything inspiring, clean and wonderful and things like that. And then he sat down and said: "*Why I am doing this? Why I'm doing this that I'm not usually doing?*" And then he found out that he wanted to inspire his benefactor. And why he wanted to inspire his benefactor? Because he thought that if he is inspired he would be more helpful and he would have to help him more, he would sponsor him more. So immediately he went to his fireplace which was just next to his [shrine]. He took lots of ashes from his fireplace and threw it all over

the place because his motivation of this being nice and inspiring was not good. So this kind of understanding.

And that's I think 20th, and 21st is the mouth, our mouth which entertains and if we say too much, if we are not mindful of our speech, then we can bring lots of afflictions and also lots of problems. We can say things which will bring problems to others, which will hurt others, we would also directly or indirectly praise ourselves, criticize others, and many other kind of things. So it's not good to talk too much. To have less pointless talk is better. Whatever we talk, we have to be nice, useful, purposeful and not just saying things. Just giving too much information about everybody is also kind of useless speech. So not to do that. When you intend to or when you're about to talk about these things too much and you know that, you stop doing that.

And then 22nd is "*a treasure for non virtue, a source of defects and downfall*". Where the thought of wishing to speak or talk arises, in such times I will remain like a tree. I'm a little bit lost in numbers but I think it doesn't matter. 21st was that you want good things for yourself, and 22nd is talking too much. Then 53:

*Impatience, indolence, faintheartedness,
And likewise arrogance and careless speech,
Attachment to your side - when these arise,
It's then that like a log you should remain. [5:53]*

So impatience must be 23 – or 22? The previous one was 21, impatience is 22, indolence 23, faintheartedness 24, arrogance 25, careless speech 26, attachment to yourself 27. I think that's it, that's the 27, so I could count to 27! But I'm sure it is in the commentary, so we can look at the commentary if you want.

So, impatience. When I'm impatient – not able to bear hardship, or the opposite of the patience, this kind of impatient – I become too frustrated or and I can't tolerate something or my mind becomes too closed and I can't see in a more broad way. The patience is three things: not getting angry is one patience, being able to endure hardships or being prepared to endure hardships for a

good reason is another patience, and that my mind is open and tolerant is another. So these things don't happen when I'm impatient.

And when I'm lazy. Laziness is of course the opposite of diligence. And when I become fearful or frightened on hearing about the bodhisattvas conduct which is difficult to perform and then I don't want to do that, I get frightened and I want to run away. Or I'm frightened about hearing about emptiness and things like that, so I don't want to listen because I don't understand or I don't think I'll be able to understand. And likewise, when I'm boastful, when I display pretentious behaviour – *spyi brtol* means doing something that's uncontrolled or boastful. And likewise, when I talk nonsense – that is when I engage in various kinds of worthless chatter or talk that has not been well considered, that's un-useful, not very welcome, people don't like that – that kind of too much talking and talking too loudly or not according to the situation. So when I have all these kind of actions or reactions coming.

And then when thought of attachment and clinging to my own group arises because I think my beloved friends are good in all ways, whether it's worldly or dharmic, at such times I will remain still like a tree or a log. So these are the 27 things. And it's then that the like a log one should remain.

Now this I think you can understand, but it's not necessarily only these 27 things. If you are about to do something that you know is not good, is not going to bring a positive result, a useful thing for myself or for others, especially if it's hurting somebody or doing something that's not good, then I don't need to react. I don't need to do that at this moment. So I understand that, I stop doing it. And that's the bodhisattva's practice. Also when I know that if I do something, if I say something, if I act in a certain way, it would be good for others, it would be good for me now and in the long run, it is useful, it will bring something really good, I should immediately do it and say it and act like that. So when I just do these two things then I'm trying, I'm becoming, I'm acting, I'm doing positive deeds, I'm practicing the bodhisattva's path. I'm acting out of compassion and wisdom. So this is something important to understand. But of course, you can never expect yourself to be perfect. It's not to say that if one time you did something wrong or another time you didn't do the right thing, then you have to be unhappy with yourself, or you have to punish yourself or you have to feel guilty, it's nothing like that. You need to understand that I

have a lot to learn, and if I can a little bit sometimes find what I'm about to do and about to say and I stop it, or when I'm about not to do something and not to say something and I do it and say it, then I have to feel very happy and joyful and I must appreciate myself for that. So that's it. Thank you. Stanzas number 50 to 53 I think.

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