



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Ringu Tulku Rinpoche The General Benefits of Bodhichitta 1st Chapter, Stanzas 9 and 10

BA9: The General Benefits of Bodhichitta (continued). 1st Chapter, Stanzas 9 and 10.

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Transcribed by Albert Harris

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Now we come to the ninth stanza and this says that:

*“Should bodhichitta come to birth
In those who suffer, chained in prisons of samsara,
In that instant they are called the children of the Blissful One,
Revered by all the world, by gods and humankind.”*

I don't like this translation where you call the bodhisattva as “the children of the Blissful One”.

The main reason I don't like it is because children of the Buddha is every being, every being is seen by the Buddha as his or her child, an only child. So it's not only the bodhisattvas. Also, when you say “children”, it kind of gives a meaning of [someone] innocent and very small, not knowing very much and things like that, needing to be looked after all the time. The bodhisattva is not like that.

Sometimes, the bodhisattva is called “the crown prince of the Buddhas” because they are going to be the Buddha very soon. They are *bound* to be Buddhas so that is why they are called “the heirs of the Buddha”: the one who would inherit the Buddha’s activities or the Buddha’s qualities or the Buddha’s throne you can say if you like.

So here it says that anybody, even the samsaric beings - the worst kind of samsaric beings - who are suffering, like all of us, who are imprisoned in the chain of the samsara, like all of us, even us, if this bodhicitta, that compassionate commitment to work for the benefit of all the beings, that motivation, that aspiration arises and happens in us then we become bodhisattvas. It doesn’t matter what we are, whether we are young or old, whether we are men or women, whether we are a high kind of caste or low caste, whether we are white or black or yellow or brown, it doesn’t matter where we are—who we are—high, low, highly educated, not educated, rich, poor, it doesn’t matter. Anybody who has this bodhicitta becomes a bodhisattva, and a bodhisattva is somebody who is sure to become the Buddha and that’s why it’s called an heir of the Buddha, or crown prince of the Buddha or princess of the Buddha.

And when one becomes a bodhisattva, it’s not just like, “Now I’ve become a bodhisattva”, it’s not like that— you become truly worthy of respect by everybody, including the god realms, the highest kind of beings also, and also all human beings and other beings because you want to help them, you are committed to help them and if you are committed to help somebody you become worthy of their respect, their gratefulness. It is also said sometimes - not sometimes, all the time - that the bodhisattvas are also worthy of respect and revered by the Buddhas themselves. If one generates bodhicitta that is the most, the highest, happiest moment, most joyful thing for the Buddhas because you have found one, to help them in their mission or in their endeavour or in their work.

So, this bodhicitta is something that really transforms you, transforms you from a kind of samsaric being who is only running after his own kind of small group of people that he calls his own, [on] their behalf, to somebody who has become so big, who has become somebody who

cares, who works and is committed to work for the benefit, and for the *highest* benefit of all the beings. This is the ninth stanza and then maybe I will explain the next, the tenth stanza as well here.

Now, there are five examples, five different kinds of examples of how important and beneficial, how useful bodhichitta is.

The first is alchemy. Here in the tenth stanza it reads:

*“For like the supreme substance of the alchemists,
It takes our impure flesh and makes of it
The body of a Buddha, jewel beyond all price.
Such is bodhichitta. Let us grasp it firmly!”*

So what it says is that an alchemist uses certain alchemy and with that simple kind of alchemy can transform any metal into gold, that’s the idea. In the same way, a being like us, who is a samsaric being, who is a small being, who is only chained and suffering, doesn’t know how to get rid of [his] own problems, becomes a bodhisattva who is sure to become a Buddha, who is heir to the Buddha and whose importance - whose work - cannot be priced and could not be measured at all. It’s beyond all kind of measure, because a bodhisattva is somebody who wants to work for the supreme benefit, the highest benefit of all the beings.

Therefore, if someone wants something good for himself and also good for others then one should never give up the bodhichitta, because it is so important and bodhichitta is something that is so transforming and so valuable that you need to nurture it, you need to nurture it very carefully with lots of effort, lots of care. If we knew, if we learnt how to become an alchemist, for instance, to make ‘gold’ out of other materials, how important we will use that, how valuable we will see it, how much effort we will make to learn this, to develop this and to use this, to keep it going because we can make gold out of...and making gold brings money, brings wealth: but it doesn’t bring happiness to everybody, still, we will care for it so much we will make it so important for us.

Therefore, to keep the bodhichitta, to nurture the bodhichitta, to develop the bodhichitta should be much more important than that for us because it's not only helping us, not only that it makes us free from all the sufferings ourselves, generating compassion and bringing peace and becoming Buddha, but it also helps to bring the highest and the most important in happiness and joy and lasting benefit to all beings. Therefore, there is all the reason to hold on to it, to develop it, to keep it as something really valuable and important.

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This is a transcript of a video talk given for the Bodhicharya Online Shedra by Ringu Tulku Rinpoche. The transcript has only been lightly edited and is meant to be used within the Online Shedra study context.