



Bodhicharya

AWAKEN THE HEART BY OPENING THE MIND

Self Study Questions for Chapter 1 of the Bodhicharyavatara "The Excellence of Bodhichitta"



This is a set of questions you can use to self assess your knowledge and understanding of the teachings and reference material relating to the first chapter of the Bodhicharyavatara, "The Excellence of Bodhichitta".

It is suggested you see how you answer them yourself, either from your memory alone or by referring to the materials you have available. You might refer to Rinpoche's online teachings on the first chapter, the root text *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, the transcript of Rinpoche's teachings from 1997-2001 or the commentary book by Khenpo Kunpal. You can do this in whatever way suits you. For example you might like to set aside a certain amount of time to answer some or all of the questions in writing.

In the traditional Shedra testing one's knowledge and understanding is a crucial component of dharma study. So in this online Shedra we can also take advantage of this tool of learning without feeling the burden of being right or wrong in our answers.

Chapter 1 questions

1. What is the meaning of the title of this text, The Bodhicharyavatara?
2. What does the “translator’s homage” in the beginning of the text signify?
3. What are the three objects of homage in the first stanza?
4. How is the Bodhicharyavatara generally divided into four parts?
5. What kind of conditions are necessary in order to generate bodhichitta in ourselves?
6. What are the five examples given in the first chapter to establish the general benefits of bodhichitta?
7. What are the two kinds of bodhichitta and what is the difference between them?
8. What are the four limitless aspects of bodhichitta, as taught by the Buddha?
9. In which two ways are the benefits of action bodhichitta established by Shantideva?
10. Why is a person who has bodhichitta the best friend for everybody and why is a connection with such a person always beneficial?

EXTRA QUESTIONS 11-13:

11. Rinpoche explained that the first and last chapter is about the paramita of generosity. Can you explain how that is so?
12. Describe, in your own words, what the central idea of the first chapter is?
13. With what you understand, from the teachings and text, how would you prove the benefits of action bodhichitta by reasoning?

Maybe you would also like to consider using the Discussion Forums area of the website to discuss these questions and your understanding with others who are following the Shedra teachings. As the guidelines for a proper way of discussing, please refer to the instructions Rinpoche has given with the video QA9. In brief:

- ✧ *Discuss something that you can understand instead of things that are too high and complicated.*
- ✧ *Use logic and reasons to prove your argument.*
- ✧ *If you don’t understand and can’t prove your argument by reasoning, then refer to textual sources by others who have more understanding, such as quotations of the scriptures.*

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