
Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

༄༅། །བྱང་ལྷུབ་སེམས་དཔའི་སྤྱོད་པ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་བཞུགས་སོ།།

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

29 November 2005

As usual please generate the motivation of bodhicitta thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. In order to achieve that aim, I am going to listen to this profound teaching and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

We have completed praying that all those who are suffering be liberated from their sufferings.

Dedicating for the experience of happiness

May they not experience the sufferings of the lower realms and [47]

*May they without any difficulties
Attain the state of enlightenment
Through the superior (divine) body;*

Dedicating for the purpose of sentient beings

May all sentient beings repeatedly [48]
*Make offerings to the buddhas and
Through the infinite happiness of the buddhas,
May they always be endowed with happiness.*

Praying for the accomplishment of the prayers of the buddhas and bodhisattvas

May bodhisattvas always establish the purpose [49ab]
Of sentient beings in their heart.

The two-fold purpose is the temporary purpose of a higher rebirth, and the ultimate purpose of liberation and enlightenment. *May bodhisattvas always* hold the two purposes of sentient beings *at their heart*, and may they also accomplish those two purposes.

May whatever the protectors think, [49cd]
Also be established for sentient beings.

Here one dedicates that the aims of the buddhas be accomplished. The word 'protector' refers to the Buddha. Of course generally protector has different meanings, but the Protector of the three realms is the Buddha. May the aims and thoughts of the Buddha always be achieved, i.e. the Buddha wishes all sentient beings to have happiness. *May whatever* the Buddha wishes immediately *be* accomplished *for sentient beings*, such as the wish for all of them to have happiness.

Likewise, may self-liberated buddhas [50ab]
And hearers also attain happiness.

Here one dedicates that self-liberators and hearers achieve their aims. Similarly, as said before, *may the self-liberators and the hearers* achieve the *happiness* of liberation that they aim for.

2.2. Dedicating for the fulfilment of one's own potential - the achievement of one's own enlightenment¹

Dedicating for the achievement of the temporary purpose

May I also, through the kindness of Manjushri, [50cd]
Until I attain the ground of supreme joy,

In all my lifetimes I always attain [51ab]
Mindfulness and ordination.

May I in all my lifetimes always be endowed with *mindfulness* and always attain the state of having gone forth. We talked about this state of having gone forth the other day; it refers to the state of having left a household to become an ordained person. These verses show that Shantideva had direct access to Manjushri. That's why it says here, 'May I also through the kindness of Manjushri...' and so forth.

May I be splendours and [51cd]
Live, regardless of my food.

After having prayed to be able to be ordained, one prays that one will always have a healthy and strong body, regardless of whether the food one receives is good or poor. May the body always be strong, healthy and well balanced. Regardless of the kind of food I have, may my body be always look, full with a very healthy glow.

May I in all my lifetimes, [52ab]
Abide in solitude and attain perfection;

'May I in all my lifetimes' refers to all of one's lives, which are like a rosary. There are not just one or two lives, but a vast succession of lives coming one after the other like the beads of a rosary. *May I in all these lifetimes always abide in solitude.*

Then follows the prayer to be endowed with perfection, which does not relate to external perfections such as a perfect body or perfect wealth, but to perfect realisations. Since the first line is the dedication to be able to abide in solitude, the perfection that Shantideva is praying for here is the perfection of inner realisation.

Dedication to be looked after by Manjushri

Whenever I wish to study, [52cd]
Or have even small questions,

May I always be able to behold without obstructions [53ab]

The protector, Manjushri.

This is a prayer to be always looked after by Manjushri.

May I always, when I aspire to the teachings of the Buddha, *or have questions* regarding difficult points of the Buddha's teachings, *be able to* directly *behold* Manjushri.

Dedication to abide in the bodhisattva practices

May my actions, in order to accomplish [53cd]
The purpose of all sentient beings

That pervade all ten directions, [54ab]
Equal the actions of Manjushri.

¹ The headings of the previous weeks have been part of 2.1. Dedicating for the purpose of others.

May my actions always equal the actions of Manjushri, so as to accomplish the purpose of all sentient beings who pervade the space of all ten directions.

Here, it literally refers to all sentient beings who are so vast that they touch the edge of space of the ten directions. That of course is not literally possible, because space is limitless and there is not really an edge of space that can be touched by sentient beings. What he means here is that sentient beings are so vast that they pervade the space of all ten directions. May one's actions equal the enlightened actions of Manjushri, in order to accomplish the purpose of sentient beings.

This is a very nice prayer. Manjushri practiced the bodhisattva actions in order to free all sentient beings, equalling the expanse of space in the ten directions. May I be able to practice the bodhisattva actions likewise.

The prayer for the perfection of the purpose of others

*For as long as space abides, [54cd]
And for as long as sentient beings remain,*

*For that long may I also remain and [55ab]
Eliminate the sufferings of sentient beings.*

For as long as space abides means for as long as samsara abides. *For as long as migrators abide, for that long may I also abide and free migrators from their suffering.*

Here one generates very strong mental courage of wanting to abide until the end of cyclic existence in order to liberate sentient beings.

*May any suffering of migrators [55cd]
Ripen upon myself.*

This doesn't discriminate between migrators or suffering, and Shantideva meditates on taking on all the suffering of all sentient beings.

*Through the power of the transcendent bodhisattva
Sangha, [56ab]
May all sentient beings enjoy happiness.*

Dedication for the increase and spread of the Buddhadharma, the source of all happiness

May the only medicine for the suffering of migrators, [56cd]

*The source of all happiness - the Dharma,
Abide long [57ab]
With praise and high regard*

The Dharma is truly the source for the both the ultimate and temporary *happiness* of sentient beings. Here then, Shantideva prays for the Dharma of sentient beings to *abide* for a *long* while. Not only should it abide for a long while, but *may* it also always be held in *high regard* and may it always be *praised*. There is the scriptural as well as the realised Dharma.

As it says in the prayer: May I be able to perfectly subdue my mind by not engaging in any negativity and by perfecting virtue. This is the teaching of the Buddha.

When one prays, 'May the teachings of the Buddha abide for a long time', it is good to relate it to this verse and to one's own practice. It is not necessary to think about some Dharma over there, but rather to relate it to one's own practice. In this context it is the realised Dharma when one, for example, generates refuge with a prayer.

May that never degenerate, but abide for a long time.

The Dharma is really the source of both temporary and ultimate happiness for all sentient beings. For that reason it is very precious, and so it is very important that it abides. The higher trainings of morality, concentration and wisdom, or whatever practice one has in one's continuum, is the teaching of the Buddha. So one prays, 'May that abide for a long time'.

Prostrating to Manjushri by recalling his kindness

*I prostrate to Manjushri, [57cd]
Through whose kindness the virtuous mind arises*

The words here are quite clear - *I prostrate to Manjushri through whose kindness the virtuous mind arises.*

*And I also prostrate to the virtuous teacher, [58ab]
Through whom oneself develops.*

Here of course, the second half is general: it includes all teachers. But in the first half Shantideva specifically prostrates to Manjushri, which shows that he is a direct student of Manjushri.

I prostrate to the virtuous friends through whose kindness I develop.

Identifying the title of the chapter

*This is at the tenth chapter of dedication [58cd]
Of 'Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life'.*

That completes the tenth chapter.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak
Edited Version*

© Tara Institute