



Dolpo Tulkus Rinpoche - Teachings

The vast intention of Bodhicitta

Bodhicitta is a Sanskrit word. *Bodhi* means Buddha's enlightenment and *citta* is the heart. It is the motivation to achieve Buddhahood, which we call bodhicitta. Now here is a very important point to be clarified: in the verse of the Four Immeasurables there is immeasurable equanimity at the end. This is very important. Without equanimity we might be generating a limited aspiration to reach Buddhahood. For example thinking, that may I, my friends and my family reach Buddhahood. This kind of intention is very small and a very biased kind of intention. The last intention, equanimity, we should practice without any kind of bias; we should make all sentient beings equal, we should pay respect to everyone as equal. Not dividing men and women or in terms of different countries, nor in terms of skin colors, nor in terms of humans and animals. You should respect every sentient being, since they all want to be happy and want to get rid of suffering. On that level all sentient beings are the same. So, when we have empathy or this feeling, then we have respect, we will never consider where they belong to, to which religion, to which country. Automatically this bias will disappear. So, in the end we have to experience love and compassion and that love and compassion comes through the understanding of others. That understanding we should not mix with bias, that's the main point here. And bodhicitta is not only the intention to achieve Buddhahood, but actually it is the mind of trying to motivate ourselves to reach Buddhahood free from any bias and for the sake of all sentient beings. That's what we call bodhicitta. So please generate the motivation every time whenever we start this teaching, that is one thing to develop.

Please generate this great empathy, there are so many people suffering in this world, having very difficult times, like Israelies and Palestinians, or in India and Nepal, where they are really facing a difficult situation with Covid19, and there are various big earthquakes. So, a lot of people are not mentally at peace and are suffering from major problems.

And then many other people that I meet directly and not only through the news, they have very big problems: losing jobs, losing families etc. Therefore,

to cure your own self, the best medicine, best vitamin is the bodhicitta, which is the factory of producing so many altruistic actions. It's time to practice whatever you have heard and learnt from teachings, it's really time to apply it. If we don't apply right now, then the core questions arise: when will you apply bodhicitta practice? It's very important to practice bodhicitta.

Of course, for the individual it's very precious to practice bodhicitta, but nowadays there is an extra reason: the world is facing many different kinds of situations. That gives more reason to apply bodhicitta these days. I always say that we should practice Dharma out of love and compassion, not out of fear and not wishing good results for ourselves only.

In Tibetan, we have a saying that usually we have first the intention to liberate yourself from your own sufferings and then secondly we aim to get good results *for oneself*. Except for the Mahayana practice, most of us have these intentions. And based on the first intention we apply our own religious practice or doctor's or psychotherapists' advice, to get rid of only our own problems. This is always associated with a lot of fear, and not with peace. The other intention is wishing to achieve something good, for example: "Oh, Buddhahood, Arhat, being a Bodhisattva... I can accumulate so many virtues", that is wishing to achieve good results.

There is another intention, which is very important for the environment, for the public, for other sentient beings; and it's very important for oneself: that intention is, no matter if you are sinking

into the suffering of oceans, no matter if you are really going to accumulate a lot of merit, no matter if you are almost getting enlightened, all these are not your concerns or aims, but you only care to benefit all sentient beings. That intention makes you so humble, open minded, it creates a big space in your world. It brings about such wonderful connections, even with your enemies. This is the factory of producing altruistic actions.

For all this I can give you simple examples which you can understand through your own experience: I'm sure there was a great moment that you really felt full of love and compassion, maybe with your children, maybe with some beggar or with a homeless person. At that time, your mind's only concern is "how can I do something good for them?" There is no self-grasping, there is no direct or indirect intention to release your own problems, like: "Oh, I will help these poor guys and then I accumulate a lot of good karma". You don't have these intentions, but you just fully go there to the other persons. You don't have thoughts like: "Oh, I will do it. I'll help there and then I will be reborn in the pure land, I will become much better in my next life", that intention is not at all being full of compassion. That is not what we are reciting

every morning, it's not part of the four immeasurables, it's not the immeasurable love, it's not the immeasurable compassion, it's not the immeasurable joy, it's not immeasurable equanimity.

It is therefore a very simple thing: bodhichitta comes from experiencing love and compassion, and love and compassion come from developing empathy for others. Love does not come from just praying "Please protect me, please make my business flourish, may I have a long life, may I become very healthy" in that way it will never arise, but it will breed more selfishness instead. Therefore, I always like this quote from the great teacher Dza Patrul Rinpoche:

No matter if your handcuffs are made out of iron or of gold, you will not feel better. It is still the same (bondage).

So *ātma-grāha* means grasping to your own self or grasping to phenomena; grasping is always grasping, doesn't matter if you grasp at Padmasambhava, the Buddha, or Green Tara as the object, it is still the same (grasping).

Our study should also be for that, we are going to do that with the same great altruistic intention. Please be careful here and pay attention and don't think "Oh, I should apply my bodhicitta only while listening to Dharma, in meditation..." Don't make that distinction, but apply it to your profession, bring that into the action of bodhicitta. You are doing your profession maybe for eight hours per day. Let's say you are working for a company and they might have 10 workers. When you work there, of course the boss gets benefitted, but the lives of all the 10 people also depend on that company and they also benefit. Therefore it is always good to motivate yourself to not only aim at being happy oneself and getting a promotion, but also to care for all these 10 families involved: "my contribution is dedicated to these 10 people", and not only 10, because each might have a partner, that adds up to 20 people. And they might have children, 10 if you count only one per couple, so think "my contribution is dedicated to these 30 people". When you then work like that and the boss shouts at you, then the amazing thing is, that you don't feel so bad, you don't regret being there, because your contribution is not only about making your boss happy.

Maybe you are a helper in a retirement home. That is a great chance! This is the best place to practice Dharma. Usually we think, the best and easiest way of practicing Dharma is our own couch at home, having a nice time, being away from everything, having everything for your practice in front of you without anybody disrupting you. Then we think "today I did a great Dharma practice" but this Dharma is so sensitive, whenever there is a sound, if somebody shouts, immediately we think "oh this is so disrupting, there are so

many obstacles!” That kind of most sensitive Dharma is not really applicable. We should get the training in dharma at home and we should apply it in public.

Dza Patrul Rinpoche says:

When you are full, and not hungry anymore, and when there is beautiful sunshine, then you appear like a very great practitioner. When then even only for a moment certain conditions happen, small tiny things which you had not expected, like so-called bad conditions, then immediately you are so ordinary, and are full of emotions, like anger etc.

Therefore, it's good to study texts like this. It's not only an intellectual training, but it's more about bringing inner quality and bringing clarity to your practice. It's making it clear where to go.

Finally, I want to tell you that, even though I'm not a great practitioner, every day I'm listening to the problems from people, not like from the news, but when meeting people directly. I am hearing so many things, and if I didn't have Dharma then I think I would be the most depressed person. But Dharma protects me from losing my inner peace, and it gives me joy to not to ignore those who put hopes in me. It also gives me some space to teach people. I am always teaching, here three groups, your groups two times and a big practitioner group in Nepal in Nepali language. And then I am having an internet group with over 30 Dzogchen practitioners, in Bhutan or Tibet, in tibetan. And they are great, some of them are very, very great teachers, high lamas and very learned and somehow I am teaching them some texts. So all that energy comes from Dharma.

And nowadays I'm staying 10 days here and 10 days there, always staying with different hosts, who are great but they are also full of questions, during the lunch time, during the breakfast time; it's still full of heavy talk. I'm not a great yogi, but this energy really comes from Dharma practice. The message I want to transmit to you is that we are ordinary people, but if you apply Dharma in your life, you can handle all of this.

Edited by Arne Shelling

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