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## THE EXPANSIVE ORAL INSTRUCTIONS

OF THE PRECIOUS DHARMA MASTER

CHETSANGPA RATNA SRI BUDDHI

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*The section on bodhicitta provides another example of how a cognitive and behavioural shift on the relative level facilitates the revelation of the infinite intrinsic. The term bodhicitta (Byang-Chhub Kyi Sems) occurs extensively in the dzogchen literature to indicate the uncontrived mind, our vital awake presence. Its expression or energy is denoted by the term Thugs-rJe, which in non-dzogchen texts carries the sense of compassion. This expression of buddha-potential is called forth by the other, but not as an invitation to dualistic interaction. The otherness of the other is resolved in the experience of the ever-open ground. This is not an omnipotent move, a totalising knowledge that incorporates the other into the familiar territory of self. Open responsiveness to the specific situation of another (Gang-la-Gang Dul-Ba) demands an absence of self-referential desire. Responsiveness is a quality of self-liberating awareness; it cannot be generated through an alignment with rigid, dogmatic formulations. With the direct experience of the open play of emptiness, responsiveness is freed from the problematics of reification. Not doubting the perfection of whatever is occurring one need not worry about helping or harming others. In this way the pure energy of uncontrived presence is a ceaseless flow of non-reificatory compassion. If the practitioner momentarily loses this experience, then familiarity with the practice of relative truth bodhicitta will make it that much easier to relax back into the flow.*

# THE TEXT

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF BODHICITTA

*Om Mani Padme Hung Hri*

Now that we have the rarely obtained chance of acting with the freedoms and opportunities of a precious human existence, we should give ourselves and all other beings the benefit of true felicity. To achieve this it is necessary to practise the precious holy dharma. When one starts to practise the dharma one needs the very important preparation of loving, compassionate bodhicitta<sup>1</sup>. This bodhicitta has two aspects, the relative or fictional truth bodhicitta and the absolute truth bodhicitta. Relative truth bodhicitta covers both the bodhicitta of aspiration and the bodhicitta of practice.

The essence of bodhicitta is compassion which has the following three aspects:

- a. Compassion which has the benefit of sentient beings as its object of consideration.
- b. Compassion which has the dharma as its object of consideration.
- c. Compassion which is free of reificatory perception.

### A. COMPASSION WHICH HAS SENTIENT BEINGS AS ITS OBJECT OF CONSIDERATION

Developing the bodhicitta of aspiration is done by reflecting as follows at the start of each period of meditation.

"All sentient beings taken together would equal the extent of the sky. All of them, and in particular my own very kind mother and father who gave me my present body and life, desire happiness. However the actions that they perform are solely those which lead to suffering. I feel compassion for all of them, for they are deluded and have wrong views.

Now all these sentient beings have been my own parents during the course of my countless past lives. Their number is vast beyond calculation. For example, if the flesh and bones of these sentient beings, each of whom has been my own mother many times over, were all collected together, this would make a heap equalling Mount Meru, and if their blood was gathered together it would equal a great ocean.

When I was born as the son or daughter of these beings they did many unvirtuous acts of body, speech and mind in order to raise and protect me. Due to this they are now wandering in samsara.

Some of my own mothers have been born in the hells and are suffering from great heat and cold. Some of my own mothers are in the insatiable ghost realm and are suffering from hunger and thirst. Some of my mothers have been born

in the animal realm and are suffering from mental dullness and stupidity, being slaughtered, being used by others, and being beaten. Some of my mothers have been born into the human realm and are suffering from the three<sup>2</sup>, eight<sup>3</sup> and sixteen<sup>4</sup> troubles.

Some of my own mothers have been born in the jealous god realm and so suffer due to fighting and quarrelling. Some of my own mothers have been born in the god realms and so suffer at the end of a very long life with great wealth and few thoughts about the future, by having to fall into the lower realms.

Thus all my very kind mothers and fathers are wandering in the six realms of rebirth with endless sorrow and without the opportunity for liberation.

For all of them I feel compassion, so what can I do to make them happy? What is the method for separating them from sorrow? What is the method for putting them all on the level of buddhahood? It is my duty, and it is only right and fitting that I should act for the benefit of all these sentient beings who have been my own mother. And why is it my duty?

They are all my own parents and it is shameful that while they are troubled by great misery, I myself am living happily without problems. Therefore I must liberate my parents from the fierce suffering that they have endured for such a long time.

Some of my own parents are wandering in the three lower realms and are not able to say the Om Mani Padme Hung Hri, the mantra of Avalokitesvara even once. Yet I have now obtained this human existence with the freedoms and opportunities. I have all sense organs free from fault and have met with the holy dharma. At this time it is possible for me to do meditation practice which will surely benefit both myself and others. Therefore it is my duty to act for the sake of all sentient beings, who have been my parents. As a temporary measure I must make all these sentient beings happy and free them from suffering, and then as a permanent benefit I must bring them all to buddhahood. In order to do that I will perform only virtuous actions and practice the meditations of the profound path with my body, speech and mind for as long as samsara is not emptied."

We should think in this way for this is the method of developing the bodhicitta of aspiration characterised by compassion which has the benefit of sentient beings as its object.

#### B. DEVELOPING THE BODHICITTA OF PRACTICE CHARACTERISED BY COMPASSION WHICH HAS THE DHARMA AS ITS OBJECT OF CONSIDERATION

Reflect as follows:

"Now I should not just think about employing virtuous actions of body, speech and mind for the sake of sentient beings but should immediately start to actually work for them. So I will practise the relative truth conduct of the six paramitas<sup>5</sup>,

or the profound developing and perfecting systems of sadhana meditation and so on. And I will practise the absolute truth state of balance where mind is void, inherently clear without self-substance, and free of all conceptual elaboration (sPros-Bral), Maintaining this state of balance, the heart of emptiness and compassion, in the post-meditational awareness, my own mind will be the unchanging (gNyug-Ma) intrinsic way (gNas-Lugs).

All these stages to the path of enlightenment which I will follow are not understood by all my mothers and fathers whose minds are blind to methods of gaining awakening. Towards all of them I feel compassion, for considering their sad situation, compassion spontaneously arises."

This is the bodhicitta of practice characterised by compassion which has the dharma as its object of consideration.

### C. THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH BODHICITTA CHARACTERISED BY COMPASSION WHICH IS FREE OF REIFICATION

The intrinsic way of absolute truth bodhicitta is free of conceptual elaboration and is beyond intellectualisation. It is awareness that is void and luminous, free from the causes of obscuration. In this state there are no 'sentient beings' who are bad, and no 'buddhas' who are good, and also no 'compassion' which has a conceptualised object. Therefore stay calmly in the state free of intellectualising and be without the reifying concepts of a self who generates compassion, of sentient beings as the object for generating compassion, or of a linking compassion which is really existent. Stay calmly and unwaveringly in that state which has passed beyond being an object of thought and is also without an object of thought itself, and thus abide in inherent emptiness free of any meditator, free of any object of meditation, and free of any conceptual reification of the compassion which connects them.

This is the absolute truth bodhicitta characterised by compassion which is free of reification.

From the bodhicitta of aspiration characterised by compassion which has the benefit of sentient beings as its object, comes the result of the manifest mode of nirmanakaya when buddhahood is obtained. From the bodhicitta of practice characterised by compassion which has the dharma as its object of consideration comes the result of the display mode of sambhogakaya when buddhahood is obtained. From the absolute truth bodhicitta with compassion free of reification comes the result of the intrinsic mode of dharmakaya when buddhahood is obtained.

If, when you are performing the four actions of staying, going, eating and sleeping, you remember to develop the really pure bodhicitta, then whatever you do will become dharma. However, if you forget to develop the really pure bodhicitta, then even if you believe in the dharma of the advanced systems of mahamudra, atiyoga etc., you will not be travelling on the true path. So it is very important to generate pure bodhicitta.

The difference between the mahayana and the hinayana is only the difference in the extent, great or small, to which bodhicitta is generated. Also the extent, great or small, to which sentient beings are benefited is simply the extent, great or small, to which bodhicitta is generated. If you have this really pure bodhicitta and you practise the profound instructions, then even if in this life you are not able to benefit others, in future the power to empty samsara will truly come to you.

So therefore it is necessary to remember:

1. To start all dharma practice by generating bodhicitta.
2. To do the main practice for the sake of sentient beings.
3. At the conclusion to dedicate the merit of whatever virtue was done to the benefit of all sentient beings.

If you practise in this way you will become a mahayana yogi.

## NOTES

1. Bodhicitta has three general meanings: the intention to gain enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, the practice resulting from that intention, and also the enlightened mind itself.
2. The three basic sufferings:
3. The suffering of change, as when a good situation becomes a bad one, or a bad one becomes good.
4. The suffering of suffering, as when one misery comes on top of another so that there is never any respite.
5. The suffering of compoundedness whereby everything one does, even the very smallest thing, is painful so there is never any deep and lasting satisfaction or contentment. Although this suffering is occurring all the time, it is rarely recognised since our minds are dulled and dazed by the very rough experiences of samsara.
6. The eight further sufferings: 1. Birth. 2. Old age. 3. Sickness. 4. Death. 5. Fear of meeting with enemies one does not like. 6. Fear of being separated from friends one does like. 7. Not getting what one wants. 8. Getting what one does not want.
7. The sixteen sufferings or troubles: 1. The five afflictions of assumption, anger, desire, pride and jealousy. 2. Mental dullness and confusion. 3. Being caught by demons. 4. Laziness. 5. Aimlessness and heedlessness. 6. Having much suffering arising from past karma. 7. Being a servant and not having one's own free time. 8. Showing a religious form, but only as a means to thieving or to get food. (*These first eight are said to be mental in character.*) 9. Binding by desire. 10. Having a very rough and crude character. 11. Having a liking for samsara and being without

renunciation. 12. Having no faith. 13. Making many errors. 14. Not paying careful attention to religion so that the dharma just becomes a noise to which one says “Oh, yes”, but does nothing. 15. Breaking vows. 16. Breaking tantric vows.  
*(These second eight are said to arise suddenly.)*

8. The six paramitas of generosity, morality, patience, diligence, mental stability and true knowing.