

CHAPTER 3

FULLY HOLDING BODHICITTA



4. Rejoicing

1. Rejoicing in worldly virtue
2. Rejoicing in the virtue of śrāvakas
3. Rejoicing in the virtue of Buddhas

1. Rejoicing in worldly virtue

1. Rejoicing in the outcome of merit, which leads to the higher realms
2. Rejoicing in the outcome of liberation, which leads to enlightenment

1. Rejoicing in the outcome of merit, which leads to the higher realms

3.1

**In the virtue which alleviates the sufferings
Of all beings in the lower realms,
And places those who are suffering in happiness,
I gladly rejoice.**

The first two lines are rejoicing in the cause: virtue which alleviates the sufferings of the lower realms. It is this virtue which creates the higher realms. The next line is rejoicing in the result of that: those who are suffering are placed in happiness—the happiness of samsāra, which is like the happiness of scratching an itch.

2. Rejoicing in the outcome of liberation, which leads to enlightenment

3.2

**In the gathering of virtue
Which causes enlightenment, I rejoice.**

2. Rejoicing in the virtue of śrāvakas

**In the complete liberation
From the suffering of samsāric birth, I rejoice.**

3. Rejoicing in the virtue of Buddhas

1. Rejoicing in the result
2. Rejoicing in the cause

1. Rejoicing in the result

3.3

**In the enlightenment of the protectors
And their sons' attainment of the bhūmis, I rejoice.**

This [two line] verse is rejoicing in the result, where the first line is the ultimate result and the second line is the temporary result.

2. Rejoicing in the cause

3.4

**In the ocean of virtue in generating the resolution
To bring happiness to all sentient beings,
And in the virtuous deeds for the benefit
Of sentient beings, I rejoice.**

Rejoicing in the cause is two-fold: rejoicing in the generation of aspiration bodhicitta and rejoicing in the generation of application for the benefit of others, which apply to the first two and second two lines, respectively.

5. Requesting the wheel of dharma be turned

3.5

**Folding my hands, I implore
The Buddhas in all directions:
Please shine the light of dharma
For sentient beings suffering in darkness.**

These four lines indicate the act, the object of supplication, the dharma and the recipients, respectively.

6. Supplicating the Buddhas not to enter nirvāṇa

3.6

**Folding my hands, I implore
The conquerors who wish to pass beyond torment:
Please do not leave these creatures to their blindness
But stay here for countless aeons.**

These four lines indicate the act, object of supplication, purpose and duration, respectively.

7. Dedication of the roots of merit

1. General aspiration for freedom from suffering
2. Aspiration to eliminate the suffering of sickness [281]
3. Aspiration to eliminate the suffering of hunger
4. Aspiration to eliminate the suffering of poverty

1. General aspiration for freedom from suffering

3.7

**Having done all this,
Whatever I may have gathered by this virtue,
May it eliminate all the sufferings
Of all sentient beings.**

2. Aspiration to eliminate the suffering of sickness

3.8

**Whatever sicknesses beings may have,
Until they are all cured,
May I be their medicine, their doctor,
And may I nurse them back to health.**

3. Aspiration to eliminate the suffering of hunger

3.9

**May deluges of food and drink
Eliminate the sufferings of hunger and thirst
And, during ages of famine,
May I become food and drink.**

4. Aspiration to eliminate the suffering of poverty

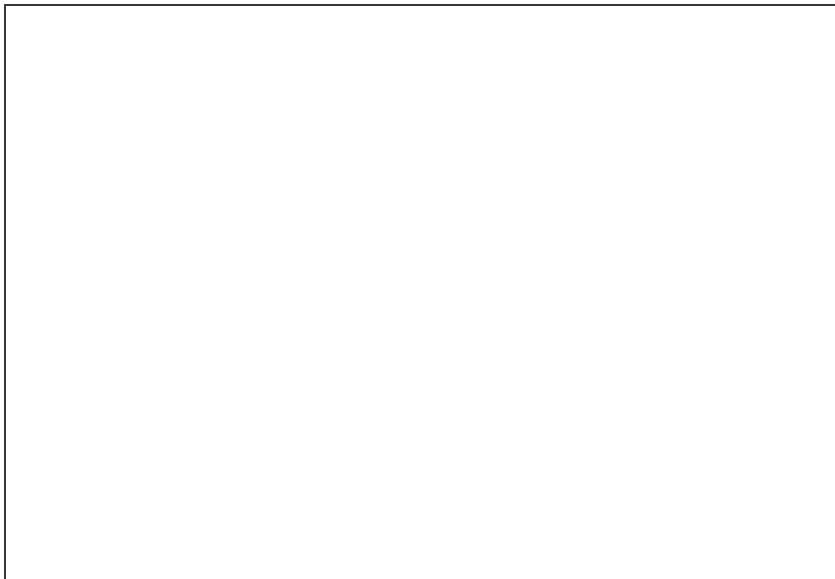
3.10

May I become an inexhaustible supply of riches

**For beings in deprivation and poverty,
And may I be right there in their presence,
As all kinds of provisions and necessities.**



2. The main part: the actual practice of generating bodhicitta



1. Aspiration to give up everything
2. Aspiration for inexhaustible causes
3. Aspiration to be a cause of sustenance
4. Reciting the words of the vow

One can recite the words of the three aspirations once as a preparation to bring about mindfulness and then recite the words of the vow three times to actually take the vow.

1. Aspiration to give up everything

1. How to give up everything
2. The reason for doing so
3. The subsequent practice

1. How to give up everything

3.11

In order to bring benefit to all beings,
I will, without any hesitation, give up
My body, its pleasures,
And all my merits of the past, present and future.

The intended purpose, aspiration to give and substances given are indicated in the first, second and last two lines, respectively.

2. The reason for doing so

3.12

Nirvāṇa is attained by giving everything up.
Nirvāṇa is my goal,
And to give everything at once
To sentient beings is the supreme gift.

Nirvāṇa will be attained by giving up all. Because one's intent is to attain nirvāṇa, that is what should be done. The third line indicates sentient beings as the precious field of giving. Giving up all 'at once' means completely letting go of both that which is appropriate to be given and that which is appropriate not to be given.

3. The subsequent practice

3.13

Since I have now given my body to embodied beings
For whatever end may make them happy,
Let them do with it whatever they like—
Even killing, insulting or beating it.

3.14

Though they may treat my body as worthless,
Or make it a source of ridicule or mockery,
Since I have now given it to them,
What is the point of cherishing it?

3.15

**I will put up with anything they might do to it,
As long as it will not cause them harm.**

The first two verses are countering the habitual presumption of one's own autonomy, while the last two lines indicate what kinds of actions are appropriate, which applies to all the actions mentioned. What are the actions that will not cause them harm? Virtuous actions. [282]

2. Aspiration for inexhaustible causes

1. General explanation
2. Aspiration for their attitudes to become inexhaustible causes
3. Aspiration for their actions to become inexhaustible causes¹

1. General explanation

**Whenever someone sees me,
May it not be without benefit.**

2. Aspiration for their attitudes to become inexhaustible causes

3.16

**Having seen me, regardless of whether they develop
An angry or a respectful attitude,
May that always become a cause
Of fulfilling the benefit of all.**

3. Aspiration for their actions to become inexhaustible causes

3.17

**Whoever may disparage me,
Or harm me in other ways,
However they may insult me,
May they all come to have the good fortune of enlightenment.**

3. Aspiration to be a cause of sustenance

1. Necessities
2. Vast worlds

3. Unconstrained location and duration

1. Necessities

3.18

May I be a protector for the unprotected,
A guide for travellers on the road
And, for those who want to cross the water,
May I be a boat, a ship or a bridge.

3.19

May I be land for those who seek dry land,
A light for those who lack light,
A lodging for those who want lodging
And, for those who want a servant,
May I be the servant of them all.

3.20

May I be the wishing jewel, the wondrous vase,
The vidya-mantra, the great medicine,
The inconceivable tree of wishes,
And the cow of plenty, fulfilling the hopes of beings.

2. Vast worlds

3.21

Like the great elements—earth and so forth—
And, like space itself, remaining without end,
May I be the ground which supports
The countless lives of sentient beings.

3. Unconstrained location and duration

3.22

Similarly, in all places where sentient beings
Dwell throughout the limits of space,
May I be a cause of sustaining life
Until they have all passed beyond suffering.

The first two lines indicate the unconstrained location while the second two lines indicate the unconstrained duration.

4. Reciting the words of the vow

3.23

**Just as the Sugatas of the past
Generated bodhicitta,
And gradually practised
The bodhisattva trainings,**

3.24

**Likewise for the benefit of beings,
I now generate bodhicitta,
And likewise I, too,
Will gradually practise the trainings.**

These words constitute undertaking the generation of bodhicitta:

Just as the Sugatas of the past
Generated bodhicitta,
Likewise for the benefit of beings,
I now generate bodhicitta.

These words constitute undertaking the training:

Just as the Sugatas of the past
Gradually practised
The bodhisattva trainings,
For the benefit of beings,
Likewise I, too,
Will gradually practise the trainings.

These two can be expressed together as they are in the root text or separated in accord with the liturgy of Ācārya Jetāri.² In this system, there are two main points:



1. The cause of generating bodhicitta with nothing lacking
2. The purpose of a proper ritual

1. The cause of generating bodhicitta with nothing lacking

Without a proper ritual, can bodhicitta be generated or not? If not, when an attitude of wishing to attain enlightenment for the benefit of beings arises without a ritual, the essential characteristic of generating bodhicitta would nevertheless be satisfied, so it is an exaggeration to say one must receive the proper ritual. [283] If bodhicitta can be generated without the ritual, is the procedure of going through the ritual not meaningless? [This is the subject matter of ‘the purpose of the proper ritual’, below.]

Yet, if one does not receive the proper ritual, bodhicitta can arise from other conditions. What are those other conditions? There are three:

1. The cause—meditation on compassion
2. The root—stabilizing faith
3. Other supports of bodhicitta

1. The cause—meditation on compassion

- While having attachment to both self and others as immutable, singular sentient beings, when one wishes to free others from their suffering, this is the compassion which perceives sentient beings, held in common with tīrthikas.
- When one cognizes the emptiness of the individual self and others—that they are composed of momentary skandhas and innumerable atoms—and one wishes to free them from their suffering, this is the compassion which perceives dharmas, held in common with śrāvakas.
- When one cognizes that self and others are empty of true existence, like an illusion, and wishes to free them from their suffering, this is non-perceptual compassion, unique to bodhisattvas.

Through reliance upon whichever of these three is appropriate, one cultivates compassion, which is the perpetuating cause.

2. The root—stabilizing faith

If a compassionate person only practises such things as purification rites as the means for freeing others from suffering, like the non-Buddhists do, then bodhicitta will not arise, despite their wish to free others from their suffering. Bodhicitta requires the three kinds of faith:

- Faith in the result—perfect enlightenment
- Faith in the supports—the Three Jewels
- Faith in the cause—the bodhisattva conduct

3. Other supports of bodhicitta

One relies on the prātimokṣa vows, in which one ceases doing harm to others.

Objections: 'It is illogical for the prātimokṣa vows to be supports for the arising of bodhicitta, since hermaphrodites, eunuchs, gods, etc. [284] do not take the prātimokṣa vows but they do generate bodhicitta. It is also illogical as a basis of maintaining bodhicitta, for at the time of death, the prātimokṣa vows are relinquished but the generation of bodhicitta is not relinquished.'³

It is true that [the prātimokṣa vows] as they are specified in the texts of the śrāvakas are illogical as a support for either the arising or the maintenance of bodhicitta because:

- When an act is committed which constitutes a defeat in the śrāvaka tradition, if it is motivated by some opportunity to benefit others, it counts only as a resembling downfall for bodhisattvas.⁴
- Their duration, intention and so forth are incompatible.
- Although someone who offers back their vows gives up the śrāvaka prātimokṣa, he does not abandon the generation of bodhicitta.

Furthermore, the bodhisattva vow is superior to the prātimokṣa vows of the śrāvakas in respect of its continuity, its commitment to others and the practicability of its repair when it is infringed.

However, apart from these incompatibilities with the śrāvakas, both vows are pervaded by a ‘bare prātimokṣa’, which is a support for the arising of bodhicitta: the intention to stop harming others and instead benefit them. This satisfies the criteria for supporting and maintaining the generation of bodhicitta. It is what is held by gods, eunuchs and so forth and is not relinquished at death.

‘Since this bare prātimokṣa is distinct from the final bodhisattva prātimokṣa, they are distinct as support [the prātimokṣa vows] and supported [the bodhisattva conduct], which is contradictory to the explanations that there are only three vows.’⁵

This is incorrect. That the support and supported are distinct in this way is taught in the *Ratnamegha*:

What is perfect moral conduct? It is holding the prātimokṣa vows [support] and it is the practice of the bodhisattva trainings [supported].⁶ [285]

Also in the explanations of the three vows, the bodhisattva prātimokṣa and the lower monastic observances are separately designated, or else they are explained as a graduated training. Otherwise, there would be a contradiction.

Concerning a ritual for the receipt of the bodhisattva prātimokṣa, there is no need to take additional vows. If one has formerly undertaken to hold the śrāvaka training, subsequently, when one embraces the superior attitude, it is transformed into the bodhisattva prātimokṣa because, although one relinquishes the inferior attitude, one does not give up the intention of renunciation.⁷

'If one does not abandon the intention of renunciation, is it not a contradiction to say that a śrāvaka who commits murder for the benefit of others has broken the vow, while a bodhisattva has merely committed a resembling downfall and not broken it?'

There is no contradiction. For someone who has a narrow attitude, killing to benefit others is tainted with a harmful intent, so that is to be abandoned. However, a vast attitude is not tainted by any harmful intent and is not to be abandoned. It is like someone holding the full vows of ordination becoming an elder monk: although they do not have distinct monastic observances and although they do not request or maintain any new vows, nevertheless certain distinct infringements are present and absent.⁸

2. The purpose of the proper ritual

1. That there is a purpose to properly receiving it
2. The method of taking it

1. That there is a purpose to properly receiving it

Since bodhicitta can arise even without a formal ritual, is there any purpose to receiving the ritual? There is a purpose. By generating bodhicitta oneself or in the presence of another in this way, self-respect and shame become causes of its not deteriorating and of its stability.

2. The method of taking it

1. From whom it is received
2. Basis
3. Time
4. The ritual [286]
5. Overcoming the objection that it is not always possible to maintain it

1. From whom it is received

The spiritual friend is
 Learned in the Mahāyāna
 And supreme in the discipline of the bodhisattvas.
 I should never leave him even at the cost of my life.⁹

In this way, the one from whom it is received is someone who has attained the vow, has not violated it and is learned in the means of its restoration. He maintains the discipline of a vow-holder and has the ability to give the vow to others, by communicating the signs of the vow, etc. That is the person from whom it is received, since these are the factors of his having respect for training. However, if there are obstacles to one's life or the maintenance of one's existing vows in finding such a teacher, then one should take the vow in the presence of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

2. Basis of receiving

If it is possible to practise the three activities—the moral discipline of vows, gathering virtuous dharmas and benefitting sentient beings—then one should maintain all three but, if not, practise whichever of these are appropriate, or just rely on some of the rules of conduct of vows.¹⁰ If one does not do so, the vow one has taken will be violated. In the *Foundations of Mindfulness Sutra*, it says that if one does not give what one has promised, one will be reborn in hell and if one does not give what one has dedicated, one will be reborn as a hungry ghost. What can be said therefore of someone who, having made the great commitment to accomplish the benefit of others, leaves it merely to fade away?

3. Time

Through applying one's strength, until enlightenment, and for long as one lives, and every single day, one should practise the training disciplines according to one's circumstances.

'In the vinaya of the holy dharma, it says that vows must be absent of the five exemptions, so the presence of exemptions of time¹¹ contradicts that. Also, since its intermittent timing is unsuitable as the cause of benefitting self and others without limitation, [287] this is in

contradiction to the bodhisattva vow. Also, since the maintenance is intermittent, it will be corrupted by downfalls and the vow will become contaminated with faults which will obstruct the attainment of the bhūmis.'

Since the absence of the five exemptions is only taught in the treatises of the śrāvakas, although exemptions of time are present in this case, nevertheless there is no contradiction. There will be no incompleteness in the cause because one trains in its vastness gradually. Nor will it be corrupted by downfalls because one is not breaking a promise [to train continuously], since one cannot maintain a promise one has not made.

4. Ritual

The preliminaries, main part and conclusion, as has been explained, comprise the ritual. The ritual is for those who are strong enough to maintain the vow. For those who are weaker, they should just receive the training disciplines and maintain them according to however much time, etc., they have.

5. Overcoming the objection that it is not possible always to maintain it

Objection: 'If one promises to train until enlightenment, then at death it will be damaged by a downfall.'

Formerly, Akṣobhya prevented such damage to his vow by making aspiration prayers. Likewise, by maintaining aspiration, one will not damage the vow and it will not be forgotten in future lives.¹² As it says in the *Sutra Requested by Kāśyapa*, one should abandon the four dharmas which damage bodhicitta,¹³ and it says in the *Sutra of Simha's Questions* that by giving the dharma, one will remember it and by leading the sentient beings of all directions to enlightenment, one will not give up bodhicitta even in one's dreams. Therefore one should train in these.

Some say, 'The actions of certain kinds of beings who cannot have a monastic position¹⁴ and certain kinds of killing¹⁵ are not defeats. Therefore, if the direct cause—the intention to engage in the training—is absent, that is not a violation by a downfall and no result will be elicited, like a fire that smoulders under ash.'

This is not the case, for the vow would have no function and a vow empty of any ability to function makes no sense. When something has

a function, it is unreasonable for it to be unaffected by its opposite condition.¹⁶ While not abiding in a certain state of mind may preclude a downfall,¹⁷ it is not the case that lacking any intention to engage in training is not a downfall. If it were, the old monks who were deceived by Upananda due to their not knowing the training precepts would not have committed downfalls.¹⁸

Thus, in accord with line 3.24d, 'I will gradually practise the trainings', beginners should mainly train in [the moral discipline of]¹⁹ the vow, devoted conduct practitioners²⁰ should mainly train in the gathering of virtues and those who have attained the bhūmis should mainly train in benefitting sentient beings.



3. The conclusion

1. Generating joy in the attainment of the benefit of self
2. Generating joy in the attainment of the benefit of others

1. Generating joy in the attainment of the benefit of self
 1. Identifying the benefit established
 2. To have concern not to corrupt it with faults
 3. Identifying the difficulty of acquiring it

1. Identifying the benefit established

3.25

**Accordingly, those who with intelligence
Have lucidly taken hold of bodhicitta,
In order to increase it,
Should praise the mind with these words:**

3.26

**Now, my life is fruitful.
I have properly attained human existence.
Today, born into the family of the Buddhas,
I have become a Buddha's child.**

The four lines of the second verse indicate, respectively, that one's life has meaning, not to waste one's freedoms and endowments, that it is possible to attain buddhahood and that one is an heir of the conquerors.

2. To have concern not to corrupt it with faults

3.27

**Whatever I undertake to do, my actions
Will be consistent with this lineage.
Nothing I do will corrupt
This faultless, noble lineage.**

That which is consistent with the lineage is the Mahāyāna path. Not to corrupt it means not to damage the vow with downfalls.

3. Identifying the difficulty of acquiring it

3.28

**Like a blind man finding
A gem in a pile of rubbish,
Somehow this bodhicitta
Has arisen in me.**

2. Generating joy in the attainment of the benefit of others [289]

1. The power to dispel suffering
2. The power to dispel obscurations
3. The power to establish benefit and happiness

1. The power to dispel suffering

There are five kinds of suffering to be dispelled. The suffering of death:

3.29

**This is the supreme elixir of life,
Vanquishing death's sovereignty over the world.**

The suffering of poverty:

**It is an inexhaustible treasure,
Dispelling beings' sufferings.**

The suffering of sickness:

3.30

**It is the supreme remedy,
Relieving the sicknesses of beings.**

The suffering of fatigue:

**It is a tree to rest under for all beings
Who are wandering and exhausted on samsāric paths.**

The suffering of bad rebirths:

3.31

**It is an open bridge, leading them
Over bad rebirths to freedom.**

2. The power to dispel obscurations

**It is the shining moon of mind
Which dispels the misery of beings' defilements.**

This indicates dispelling the obscurations of the defilements.

3.32

**It is the great sun which brings an end
To the gloom of beings' ignorance.**

This indicates the dispelling of the obscurations of cognizables.

3. The power to establish benefit and happiness

Establishing benefit:

**It is the fresh butter extracted
From churning the milk of the holy dharma.**

Churning the milk of the holy dharma indicates ascertaining the meaning of the explanans, experiencing the excellent teachings. The fresh butter indicates liberation by seeing the truth.

Establishing happiness:

3.33

**Beings wandering abroad on the paths of conditioned
existence,
Wishing to have happiness,
Will encounter this supreme happiness,
And those great wanderers will at last be contented.**

Having wandered on the paths of conditioned existence, if they desire the highest bliss, they may attain the bliss of meditation.

Developing the joy of others:

3.34

**Today, in the presence of all the protectors,
Until they have attained buddhahood itself,
I invite beings to every happiness.
May the gods, demigods and all the rest be joyful.**

This verse constitutes an invitation. By whom is it made? By oneself. Invited to what? To the happiness of the gods for as long as they have not yet attained buddhahood itself. Who is the witness of this? It is done before all the Buddhas.

PART IV

**THE COOPERATING
CONDITION**

PRACTISING THE TRAINING

