

2 Compassion, The Root of the Mahayana

The training in the spirit of enlightenment has 2 parts:

1. The training on the 7 cause-and-effect personal instructions in the lineage descended from the elder Atisha.
2. The training based on the teaching of the Conqueror's child Shantideva

1. The training on the 7 cause-and-effect personal instructions in the lineage descended from the elder Atisha.

This training has 2 sections:

1. Developing certainty about the order of the stages
2. The gradual training

1. Developing certainty about the order of the stages

This has 2 sections:

1. Showing that the root of the Mahayana path is compassion
2. How the 6 other personal instructions are either causes or effects of compassion

1. Showing that the root of the Mahayana path is compassion

This has 3 parts:

1. The importance of compassion in the beginning.
2. The importance of compassion in the middle.
3. The importance of compassion in the end.

1. The importance of compassion in the beginning.

Once your mind is moved by great compassion, you will definitely make the commitment to free all beings from cyclic existence. If your compassion is weak you will not. Therefore, compassion is important in the beginning, because feeling responsible to free all beings requires great

compassion, and because if you do not take on this responsibility you are not ranked as a mahayana practitioner.

Thus compassion is the basis of engaging in the deeds because when you see that you will not live up to your commitment without training in the 2 vast collections, you set about the difficult work of amassing these vast collections.

2. The importance of compassion in the middle.

You may develop the spirit at one time and then engage in bodhisattva deeds, but when you see that living beings are innumerable and act improperly, that the training is very difficult and limitless, and that you need an immeasurable length of time, you may lose heart and fall into the hinayana.

However, by accustoming yourself to increasingly greater compassion that is not just a one-time development, you will become less concerned with your own happiness or suffering and are not discouraged at providing others welfare. Therefore you easily accomplish all the collections.

If bodhisattvas engage in things like this in something that is extremely hard to do, they will fully and quickly complete the collections. They will defiantly attain the state of omniscience. Therefore, the sole root of the buddhas qualities is compassion.

3. The importance of compassion in the end.

Based on the power of their great compassion, buddhas, even when they reach their goal, do not abide in peace like hinayana practitioners but continue to work for the welfare of living beings as long as space remains. For without compassion, buddhas would be like sravakas.

The sole cause of the non-abiding nirvana of the bhagavans is great compassion.

- Kamalashila

Bhagavad, bodhisattvas should not learn many teachings.
Bhagavad, if bodhisattvas grasp and know one teaching, they will have all of the Buddha's teachings in the palm of their hand. What is that one teaching? It is great compassion.

Bhagavad, with great compassion all of the buddhas teachings are in the bodhisattvas palm. For example, Bhagavan, wherever the precious wheel of a universal sovereign is , there also is the assembly of his battalions. Likewise, Bhagavad, wherever the bodhisattvas great compassion is, there are all the Buddha's teachings. For example, Bhagavan, once there is a life force, all other sensory faculties will exist. Simarly, once great compassion exists, all other bodhisattva qualities will appear.

Compendium of the Teachings Sutra

Once you become convinced that compassion is the excellent key to the path through such proof as reason and limitless scriptures, why would you not hold the spirit of enlightenment together with its root -- compassion -- to be the supreme instruction?

Even though I asked for instructions from the Great Elder Atisha, he said nothing except: "Renounce the world; cultivate the spirit of enlightenment"

Upon hearing this Dromptopa was embarrassed for him and said 'You received the great Elders ultimate instruction!'

This conviction is very difficult to achieve, so you must seek a stable and certain knowledge by repeatedly clearing away sins, accumulating merit, and reading scriptures such as the *Array of Stalks Sutra* and the commentaries.

2. How the 6 other personal instructions are either causes or effects of compassion

This has 2 parts:

1. How the first 4 personal instructions -- recognition of all living beings as your mothers through the development of love -- act as causes of compassion
2. How wholehearted resolve and the spirit of enlightenment are the effects of compassion

1. How the first 4 personal instructions -- recognition of all living

beings as your mothers through the development of love -- act as causes of compassion

In general, if you repeatedly consider the sufferings of living beings, you will course develop a simple desire to free them from suffering.

However, to develop this attitude easily, strongly, and firmly, you must first cherish these beings and have affection for them.

Right now your affection is uneven. You are pleased with your enemies suffering and indifferent to persons you don't know suffering.

Consequently, in order to have affection for living beings, cultivate the view that they are close to you, like friends or relatives. Since your mother is closest to you, cultivate a recognition of all beings like your mother. Also recollect their kindness and develop the wish to repay their kindness. These 3 steps are how you learn to cherish and have affection for living beings.

The result of these 3 steps is a love that considers living beings to be beloved just like a mother loves her only child. This love gives rise to compassion.

these three:

1. recognizing all beings as your mother
2. remembering their kindness
3. wishing to repay their kindness

are the basis for which the love that wishes happiness and the compassion that wishes to end their suffering... so you must make effort to cultivate these 3.

The master Chandrakirti, Candragomin, and Kamalashila explained that cultivating the view that living beings are your friends or relatives is the cause of developing the spirit of enlightenment.

2. How wholehearted resolve and the spirit of enlightenment are the effects of compassion

Although sravakas and pratyekabuddhas have the immeasurable love and compassion whereby they think "If only beings could have happiness and be free from suffering", they do not think "I will take on the responsibility to remove the suffering and to provide the happiness of all living beings." You must wholeheartedly assume responsibility of producing this yourself.

Consequently you should distinguish between these ways of thinking -- wishing they had the happiness, and taking the responsibility to help them.

It's like seeing your son in a pit of filth and wishing they were out -- or seeing them and without revulsion jumping in to save them from the pit and pulling them out.

Once you intend to liberate all beings, you realize that in your present condition you cannot fulfill the aims of even a single being. Moreover, even if you attain the state of arhat, you will only be able to help a few beings and will be unable to establish them all into omniscience.

So you think: "Who can fulfill all of the temporary and final aims of limitless living beings?".. you will realize that only a buddha has that ability. Then you will desire to attain buddhahood for the sake of these beings.