



Wednesday Evening Teachings 7-8.30pm

Topic; Shantideva's Commentary on the Bodhisattva's Way of Life (Bodhicharyavatara)

General Course Description

Bodhicharyavatara is one of the great masterpieces of Buddhist literature. Written by the Madhyamika poet and scholar Shantideva in the 8th century CE, it is the most read and practiced text in all of the Mahayana Traditions. This text has been quoted so often by the great Tibetan masters due to its clear and direct presentation of the view and practice of the Bodhisattva path as encapsulated in the Six Perfections. HE Zimwock Rinpoche will present a detailed line by line explanation of the whole text directly in English, relying on Sazang Mati Panchen's and Ngulchu Thokmed's Tibetan commentaries. These commentaries in turn have been translated by Lama Kalsang Gyaltzen and Ani Kunga Chodron two Sakya scholars with deepest respect & appreciation to their spiritual teachers His Holiness Sakya Trizin, HE Ngor Luding Khen Chen Rinpoche, HE Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, Very Venerable Khenpo Appey Rinpoche, Ven. Dezhung Rinpoche and many other masters.

These Wednesday evening teachings, which began at Jamchen early this year continue on. Students who did not participate in the previous semester are welcome to attend but they are requested to please read the previously covered chapters before joining. This current course will cover the remaining five crucial chapters of the text: **Patience, Diligence/Enthusiasm, Meditation and Wisdom**. The tenth and last chapter is a very moving dedication prayer.

Specific Content

The three chapters dealing with enthusiastic effort, meditation and wisdom indicate how to cultivate, progress, and further develops the Bodhicitta mind. The chapter on **enthusiasm** shows how to eliminate all forms of laziness and despondency by finding joy in what is wholesome.

The **meditation** chapter advises us on meditational states in general, and enjoins us to abandon their opposites - by generating a delight in solitude our longing for worldly distractions will diminish. It then gives detailed instructions on how to transform our heart by developing increasing compassion and equanimity. In order to attain the states of relative, and then ultimate bodhicitta, one must first develop supreme compassion and equanimity.

The **wisdom** chapter advises us on how to generate wisdom then how to combine it with compassion and then describes the activities after acquiring wisdom. Shantideva's aim is to establish the right view in beings, which is the correct basis for contemplation and meditation, as well as the basis for the correct practice of the paramitas. Intellectual understanding is clearly a vital part of coming to hold the right view with confidence. The generation of wisdom involves identifying its nature, and then entering into the selflessness which is the object of the path, and refuting phenomena as truly existing. This account of the method for generating wisdom first discusses the nature of wisdom at length. It begins with an exposition on the nature of the two truths and goes on to defend that position in relation to the Relative and in relation to the Ultimate Bodhicittas. It refutes the earlier Buddhist schools and non Buddhist schools.

Teaching

This presentation of the Bodhicharyavatara will be further illuminated by HE Zimwock Rinpoche and other visiting teachers such as Khenpo Ngawang Danchoe with their inspiring commentary. Shantideva's Bodhisattva comes into being with the development of the "Awakening Mind", a shift away from self purpose, towards achieving the limitless benefit of all beings. This "Awakening" process is not linear, nor even cumulative, but fully transformative. Shantideva's bold, insightful reasoning is unforgettably resonant.

Students who attend this course may have read a text translation and/or received teachings on Shantideva's work, and may already have engendered an appreciation for the power and subtlety of this classic Mahayana text. This course will reveal the complexity and brilliance of Shantideva's words, in a depth not possible for students to achieve on their own, even after repeated readings. For those who see themselves as having a future role in teaching Dharma or sharing it with others, it is of special benefit to receive this highly influential Mahayana teaching in line by line detail along with the oral transmission (lung). Such an opportunity, to explore Shantideva at a profound level under skilled guidance, is not to be missed.

