

The Analysis of Awakening of the Bodhicitta

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Venerable Shengmiao, Miss Deng, good morning and good afternoon. My name is Pang Hoina and I would like to share with you the topic on ‘The Analysis of Awakening of the Bodhicitta’. The presentation will be divided into five parts, introduction, definition and content, the practical significance, case study and last part is the conclusion.

1. Introduction

The awakening of the bodhicitta(菩提心) is a very important concept for the Buddhist practice, in *the Sūtra of the Ornaments of the Buddhas*, chapter 12, Buddha emphasis, ‘初心功德與佛齊等 The merit of first developing the mindset on enlightenment is the same with buddha’. ¹ It is the prerequisite for Buddhahood. For practitioners who believe in the pure land of ultimate bliss, regardless of whether you want to reach the upper, middle, or lower levels, it is the root of all. For reaching the ultimate goal, the superficial knowledge or deep understanding of the awakening of the bodhicitta makes huge differences.

2. The definition and content of the awakening of the bodhicitta

¹ (Tang)Chengguan, (唐)澄觀, *the commentary of the Sūtra of the Ornaments of the Buddhas* 大方廣佛華嚴經疏, 大正藏, book 35, (Taipei: Shin Wen Feng Print Co.,1983), 618.

The awakening of the bodhicitta is the reality, ultimate, and perfection of the mind. It translated as *puti dao* 菩提道(the road of the bodhicitta) in the past. It means the way seeking spiritual enlightenment. The latest translation is *jue* 覺(awakening), which means looking for the perfect *zhengjue* 正覺(illumination). In 維摩經 *the Vimalakīrti Sutra*, 佛國品 chapter buddha-land said, ‘菩提心是菩薩淨土 The awakening of the bodhicitta is the same as The Pure Land of Bodhisattva’.² In 觀無量壽經 *the Contemplation Sutra* said, ‘發菩提心深信因果 It means one has deep confidence in the law of cause and effect.’³ In 大智度論 *the Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom*, 四十一 chapter 41, mentioned, ‘菩薩初發心，緣無上道 The first arousal of the aspiration for enlightenment is the unexcelled Buddha-path.’⁴ In 大日經疏 *the commentary of Vairocana sutra* said, ‘菩提心，即是白淨信心義也 The awakening of the bodhicitta means pure and sincere confidence.’⁵ and ‘菩提心，名為一向志求一切智智 The awakening of the bodhicitta is looking for omniscience.’⁶ To sum up,

² Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, *the Vimalakīrti Sutra* 維摩經, chapter buddha-land 佛國品, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T14n0475_p0538b03?q=%E8%8F%A9%E6%8F%90%E5%BF%83%E6%98%AF%E8%8F%A9%E8%96%A9%E6%B7%A8%E5%9C%9F&l=0538b03&near_word=&kwic_around=30, 14/12/2021.

³ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, *the Contemplation Sutra* 觀無量壽經, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T12n0365_p0341c11?q=%E7%99%BC%E8%8F%A9%E6%8F%90%E5%BF%83%E6%B7%B1%E4%BF%A1%E5%9B%A0%E6%9E%9C&l=0341c11&near_word=&kwic_around=30, 14/12/2021.

⁴ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, *the Treatise on the Perfection of Great Wisdom* 大智度論, chapter 51 四十一, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T25n1509_p0362c28?q=%E8%8F%A9%E8%96%A9%E5%88%9D%E7%99%BC%E5%BF%83%EF%BC%8C%E7%B7%A3%E7%84%A1%E4%B8%8A%E9%81%93&l=0362c28&near_word=&kwic_around=30, 14/12/2021.

⁵ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, the commentary of Vairocana sutra 大日經(大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經)疏, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/X23n0438_p0275a04?q=%E8%8F%A9%E6%8F%90%E5%BF%83%EF%BC%8C%E5%8D%B3%E6%98%AF%E7%99%BD%E6%B7%A8%E4%BF%A1%E5%BF%83%E7%BE%A9%E4%B9%9F&l=0275a04&near_word=&kwic_around=30, 13/12/2021.

⁶ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, the commentary of Vairocana sutra 大日經(大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經)疏, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/X23n0438_p0275a04?q=%E8%8F%A9%E6%8F%90%E5%BF%83%EF%BC%8C%E5%8D%B3%E6%98%AF%E7%99%BD%E6%B7%A8%E4%BF%A1%E5%BF%83%E7%BE%A9%E4%B9%9F&l=0275a04&near_word=&kwic_around=30, 13/12/2021.

the awakening of the bodhicitta is opposite to sentient beings, it is turning to enlightenment while the ordinary is turning to ignorance.

The awakening of the bodhicitta includes four parts: sincere mind(至誠心), deep mind(深心), turn towards mind(迴向發願心) and practice. In the dictionary of Buddhism said, sincere mind refers to the true wish to be reborn in the pure land. The deep mind means hunting for the profound meaning in Buddha without doubt, and it is the same representative of deep root to become a buddha. In *the commentary of Jingying* 淨影 said, ‘Deep mind means someone yearn for budhood 求心懇重，故曰深心.’⁷ In the annotation of *tiantai* said, ‘it means one is convinced about the great insight of budhha 深者佛果深高，以心往求.’⁸ In *the annotation of Vimalakīrti Sutra* chapter buddha-land said, ‘It is cultivating the good virtue which cannot be shaken 眾德深固，故難拔’.⁹ In the chapter same bodhisattva mentioned, ‘The deep mind is the Buddhist dojo which can increase merit 深心即是道場，增長功德故’.¹⁰ The *Lotus Sutra* mentioned, ‘It is an effective way to liberate people’s strong stubborn 知諸眾生有種種欲深心所著……方便力故而為說法.’¹¹ The turn towards mind

⁷ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, *The commetery of the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* 無量壽經義疏, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T37n1745_p0110a11?q=%E6%B1%82%E5%BF%83%E6%85%87%E9%87%8D%E6%BC%8C%E6%95%85%E6%9B%B0%E6%B7%B1%E5%BF%83&l=0110a11&near_word=&kwic_around=30, 13/12/2021.

⁸ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, *The commetery of the Sutra of Immeasurable Life* 無量壽經義疏, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T37n1745_p0110a11?q=%E6%B1%82%E5%BF%83%E6%85%87%E9%87%8D%E6%BC%8C%E6%95%85%E6%9B%B0%E6%B7%B1%E5%BF%83&l=0110a11&near_word=&kwic_around=30, 13/12/2021.

⁹ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, *the annotation of Vimalakīrti Sutra*, chapter buddha-land, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T38n1775_p0335c10?q=%E7%9C%BE%E5%BE%B7%E6%B7%B1%E5%9B%BA,%20%E6%95%85%E9%9B%A3%E6%8B%94&l=0335c10&near_word=&kwic_around=30, 13/12/2021.

¹⁰ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, *the annotation of Vimalakīrti Sutra*, chapter same bodhisattva, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T38n1775_p0335c10?q=%E7%9C%BE%E5%BE%B7%E6%B7%B1%E5%9B%BA,%20%E6%95%85%E9%9B%A3%E6%8B%94&l=0335c10&near_word=&kwic_around=30, 13/12/2021.

¹¹ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, Buddhist Canon of Chinese Online, *the Lotus Sutra*, https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/zh/T09n0262_p0007b19?q=%E7%9F%A5%E8%AB%B8%E7%9C%B

refers to someone being willing to return all his merit to the aspiration of being reborn in the pure land. For attaining the stage of Buddhahood, one must deeply believe in the profound principle. For understanding all these principles, one must plant strongly wholesome roots. Practicing good deeds with earnest wishes is awakening of the bodhicitta which can shine universally to the various obstructions from the three periods of lifetimes.

3. The practical significance of awakening of the bodhicitta

Bluntly speaking, the awakening of the bodhicitta means one behaves with sincerity, purity, equality, perfect awakening, and compassion. To practice, the awakening of the bodhicitta means behaving like a buddha. The awakening of the bodhicitta is the fundamental idea of the Bodhisattva path. Therefore, it covers various basic Buddhism practice methods. In the research of Tibetan scholar 仁增才郎, he points out the Awakening of the Bodhicitta in Tibetan Buddhism theory, it refers to two kinds of practice methods, 七重因果觀(Seven Causal Concepts) and 自他相換觀(Empathy Altruism Concepts).¹² To summarize the general idea of both, be grateful and repaying to parents, being compassionate and loving others, helping others to get rid of pain, and giving happiness is very similar to Chinese Buddhism.

Therefore, this discussion will focus on the primary ethic of the awakening of the bodhicitta about the 三福 (Three Blessings). The first blessing is to be filial to parents and respectful to teachers, kind to animals and avoid karma of killing, practice ten wholesome ways of actions. Secondly, it is holding the three conversions and

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¹² Renzeng cailang 仁增才郎, Chentong 陳通, The Prerequisite of the a Awakening of the Bodhicitta about ‘All being is my parents’ and Its Singficant Meaning, *Journal of Guizhou University(social science edition)*, Vol 35, No.2, April 2017.

sufficient precepts and does not violate the prestigious. Thirdly, persist in the awakening of the bodhicitta, the cause-and-effect principle, chanting the Mahayana classic and persuading others to have the same religion. The first step is to cultivate the Three blessings in daily life.

For the first blessing, buddha is one who completed successfully the task of being filial to parents and respecting teachers. By the same practice, Buddha says everyone can achieve the perfection of Buddhism in the dharma realm. The karma of killing not only contains killing lives but also not being the troublemaker. To develop a broad and positive affinity with others, to make everyone happy, and avoid conflict with the opponent. If one cannot be forgiven by others, find out the reason through self-reflection and correct it. The fundamental idea of Buddhism practice shares similar principles with other religions, for example, the *ten wholesome ways of actions sutra* much the same with the ten commandments of the Catholic Church.¹³ The awakening of the bodhicitta is the foundation of thought, filiality and respect are the roots of action.

For the second blessing, holding the three conversions and sufficient precepts, and do not violate the prestigious. It is the path to transcend six realms of existence and scend with the dharma realm of four noble.

The third blessing shows the gate of the higher level – the dharma realm of one truth. The perfect awakening of the bodhicitta is the most important which means one has to practice completely with sincerity, purity, equality, perfect awakening, and compassion in daily life. To genuinely believe in the cause and effect principle in the

¹³ 1. I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before me. 2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. 3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's day. 4. Honor your father and your mother. 5. You shall not kill. 6. You shall not commit adultery. 7. You shall not steal. 8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. 10. You shall not covet you neighbor's goods. <https://www.zhuyesu.org/Faithquest/Info/14>, 15/12/2021.

pure land school convey to believe chanting Amitabha's name is the cause to reborn in the pure land. To deeply understand the pure land classic, one needs to follow the classical teachings and persevere in completing what he didn't do.

When practicing the three blessings, the focus is to prevent pollution. It means do not let our feelings such as joy, anger, sorrow, or happiness control by the environment. For a practitioner, it is important to react with others properly, but his heart still keeps peace from start to finish. The sincere mind is stable, it will not change a lot for suffering or happiness. To clarify since many people may be confused, the awakening of the bodhicitta does not ask for acting. It is just without attachment. No matter love or hate, it is false emotion if it changes frequently. With strong discrimination, people have strong likes, dislikes, and inner turmoil so they are always changing. A practitioner should not be controlled by greed, anger, and ignorance. To treat friend and foe alike, people may still have different feelings about him, but his selflessness will not change. It needs to be kept in mind that Buddha said, 'All sentient beings have the wisdom and virtues of becoming buddhas.' Because the awakening of the Bodhicitta is free of thought, there are no illusions or confusions in this sincere state. It is easy to adjust our minds if we remember this key point. Whatever one does, does not mix up delusions in his thought.

4. The case study

Firstly, Master Lianchi's 正訛集 *collection of Zheng* clarifies the misunderstanding about parents' need to bow down to their child who has become a monk.¹⁴ A monk feels angry with his opinion and argues with the example of the Buddha who accepted

¹⁴ (Ming)Master Lianchi, *Chuchuang suibi baihuaqie* 竹窗隨筆白話解(the annotation of zhuchuang suibi),the corporation republic of HWA DZAN society, 56.

his father's worship. Master Lianchi felt sad about it and pointed out the wide distance between the Buddha and a monk. Furthermore, Buddha can turn his body in the void when accepting others' worship but a monk cannot do the same before attaining Buddhahood.¹⁵ Most of the sentient beings slander the Buddhists do not pay attention to filiality and respect of parents and teachers. The practitioner should be highly alert and avoid being the worm of Lion. It is incorrect to think the monks are superior to their parents, not to mention the lay Buddhists. Following the doctrine of Buddha often brings wisdom, on the contrary, brings defilement. Its core is the unity of knowledge and action, to perform good virtue and improve people's confidence in Buddhism.

The one with the awakening of the bodhicitta, love and treat others in a wise and equal way just like the god. The second story happened in Dynasty Nanqi, Master Daoji learned the Satyasiddhi school and wrote seven volumes of 金藏論 *golden treasury theory*.¹⁶ Every time he expounds the dharma, he shoulders his mother and the Buddhism classics. He told others that making offerings to mother is equal to offering first-ground bodhisattva so he does everything himself. He rejects others' help and said, all of us suffer from the four great physical elements of our body, let me suffer for my mother and do not bother others. Everyone feels touched by his word. He will not give up because of tired, or think the monks are superior to their parents.

If one does not keep filiality and respect in mind, only chanting Buddha's name or worshiping Buddha ten thousand times will be no use. The third story was in Dynasty

¹⁵ (Ming)Master Lianchi, *Chuchuang suibi baihuaqie* 竹窗隨筆白話解(the annotation of zhuchuang suibi),the corporation republic of HWA DZAN society, 56.

¹⁶ (Ming)Master Lianchi, Wu jinhuang annotated, A Brief Introduction to the Chongxing Records of the Mengmen 繡門崇行錄淺述, the Buddha's Excellent Series Chinese Buddsim Series(Fujian:Buddhist Education Fund Committee of Fujian Buddhist Association,1985).

Houzhou, because of the disaster of war, Master Daopi carried his mother on the back and escaped to a remote mountains.¹⁷ The price of rice is soaring, Master Daopi just beg for food to offer his mother and did not eat anything. When his mother asked if he ate something, he always said yes. One day, his mother asked him to collect his father's corpse who died on the battlefield. He collected all corpses and chanted for them day and night. He wished his father's corpse can show up by moving. After several days, a corpse jumped out, and his mother dreamed about her husband. The sincere filiality touches the ghosts and gods, the public respect and listen to him. He was filial in both worldly life and Buddhism enlightenment.

5. Conclusion

The awakening of the bodhicitta is the process for a Buddhist practitioner to judge by wisdom and to think by compassion. One can achieve the Buddha state gradually. It is a complementing theory with practice that clarify ultimate wisdom. The truth of the way is not just practicing the awakening of the bodhicitta in a Buddhist venue but leading an awakening life.

This is all my presentation today. Any feedback and suggestions would be appreciated. Thank you.

¹⁷ (Ming)Master Lianchi, Wu jinhuang annotated, A Brief Introduction to the Chongxing Records of the Mengmen 緇門崇行錄淺述, the Buddha's Excellent Series Chinese Buddsim Series(Fujian:Buddhist Education Fund Committee of Fujian Buddhist Association,1985).

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