

2018

Homework

Answers

Teaching: 9 October 2018

1. It is strongly recommended that you study the bodhisattva's precepts and vows prior to taking them. Why?

1. Essentially when it says 'in the discipline of individual liberation', it refers to the vinaya or vows of individual liberation, and the tantric vows – it is not appropriate to study these vows before taking them. On the other hand, it is strongly recommended that you study the bodhisattva's precepts and vows prior to taking them.

In Tibetan the terms 'enthusiastic' literally means joyful effort, 'if you have an enthusiasm for taking them', connotes heartfelt joy in the bodhisattva's vows and precepts. After studying and learning those vows and precepts, and if you feel joyful, positive and inspired, then it says you should go ahead to take them. Indirectly this means that if you don't feel that way, it is not recommended to take the vows.

2. Explain what the precepts are based upon.

There are limitless clear categorizations, but if you arrange the bodhisattva precepts by type, you can include them all within the six perfections

The six perfections are thus the great condensation of all the key points of the bodhisattva path. The four ways to gather disciples [generosity, pleasant speech, working at the aims, and consistency of behaviour] are also included within these six perfections as follows.

2. List:

a) the six perfections:

The perfections are generosity, morality, patience, joyful effort, concentration and wisdom.

b) the four ways of gathering disciples:

The four ways of gathering disciples generosity, pleasant speech, working at the aims, and consistency of behaviour

c) the two collections:

The two collections are the collections of merit and wisdom.

d) the three trainings:

. The three trainings are morality concentration and wisdom

3. Summarise: A) The fixed number of perfections based on high status.

Thus the *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras (Mahayana-sutralamkara)* says:

High status possessed of excellent resources and body,
Excellent companions and undertakings,

Not going under the power of the afflictions,
And never being mistaken in activities

This passage summarises how the four excellences are the result of the six perfections. Recall that the perfection of giving is the cause of excellent resources, the perfection of morality is the cause for a good body, the perfection of patience is the cause for excellent companions and joyous effort is the cause for the success of all undertakings. Meditative concentration prevents the excellences from being soiled by the power of the afflictions, while never being mistaken in activities is the result of the perfection of wisdom.

4. Summarise: B) The fixed number of perfections based on fulfilling the two aims

To fulfil the aims of others you must first help them with material goods. Since no benefit will come from generosity accompanied by harmfulness toward living beings, you need ethical discipline, ...

To bring this to its full development you also need patience that disregards the harm done to you, for, if you are impatient with harm and retaliate a time or two, you will not attain pure ethical discipline.

When you do not retaliate because of your patience, you prevent others from accumulating a great amount of sin and bring them to virtue by inspiring them with your patience

From this, we understand how the first three perfections of giving, morality and patience enable us to primarily benefit other beings.

You attain your own aim, the bliss of liberation, through the power of wisdom.

Your own aim, which is state of liberation or nirvana, depends on the perfection of wisdom. Then it goes on:

Since you will not attain this with a distracted mind, ...

meaning you cannot achieve wisdom or insight if your mind is too distracted.

...you must set your mind in meditative equipoise by means of meditative stabilization,...

This shows that we have to rely on the perfection of concentration or meditative stabilisation to overcome all the distracted states of mind. And then:

obtaining a mental serviceability wherein you intentionally set your attention on any object of meditation ...

... refers to benefits of the perfection of concentration.

Here a connection is made between the importance of generating joyous perseverance and achieving the state of concentration and wisdom. Without joyous effort, we can fall prey to laziness, and then we cannot achieve concentration and wisdom. So in this way, it summarises how the three perfections of joyous effort, concentration and wisdom are necessary to achieve one's own goals.