

BCA Chapter 1, Verse 30, Text Sections 288-290

It clears away even ignorance.

Where is there a comparable virtue?

Where is there ever such a friend?

Where is there merit similar to this bodhicitta?

BCA 1-30, Text sections 288-290

The reason that beings constantly dwell in misery and lack happiness is their ignorance of the law of karma, the law of cause and effect. They do not know that virtuous deeds lead to happiness and that non-virtuous deeds lead to suffering. Bodhicitta clears away this ignorance with its *great knowledge*. Therefore, *no other power of virtue* can compare to bodhicitta. There is also no spiritual *friend* comparable to bodhicitta and no merit that compares to bodhicitta.

The Tibetan term for merit is 'sonam', 'that which has the capacity to eliminate suffering and has the power of virtue'. Merit connotes something with the power of increasing happiness and virtue while eliminating suffering and negative deeds.

Stanza twenty-nine and stanza thirty teach three special qualities of the bodhicitta of application. 1) Due to its great kindness, bodhicitta brings temporary and ultimate happiness to all miserable beings. 2) Due to its great compassion, bodhicitta disrupts the stream of suffering for this and all future lifetimes. And 3) bodhicitta clears away ignorance about the law of karma, the law of cause and effect. Due to its great wisdom-knowledge, bodhicitta teaches what to adopt and what to avoid. Therefore, bodhicitta is known as the 'internal teacher'. All these qualities of bodhicitta apply to the bodhisattva whose mind is infused with bodhicitta. Because the bodhisattva's mind is endowed with bodhicitta, he can teach beings the path to happiness. He can show them the way out of suffering and instruct them what to do and what to avoid.

Once a practitioner has understood bodhicitta's great qualities, he will not be able to live without bodhicitta. To gain certainty about bodhicitta's benefits, again and again one must meditate on each individual quality of bodhicitta, explained in this first chapter. Only then will a practitioner be inspired to train in

the bodhicitta motivation and its application, the six transcendental perfections. Mere scholastic and theoretical understanding will not lead to practice, to a change of heart.