

BCA Ch. 1, Verse 13, Text sections 231-232

***Although I have committed the most unbearable negative deeds,
By entrusting myself to bodhicitta, I shall be instantaneously
liberated,
Just as one will be liberated from great fear by entrusting
oneself to a hero.
Why do the ignorant not devote themselves to this?***

BCA 1-13, Text sections 231-232:

There are four types of karma which lead to the experience of its fruition: 1) karma experienced within this life, 2) karma experienced in the very next lifetime, 3) karma experienced in subsequent lives, and 4) karma leading to the uncertain experience of its fruition. The first three types of karma are karma that leads to the certain experience of its fruition.

Similarly, negativity is of two kinds: 'a negativity leading to the certain or definite experience of its fruition' and 'a negativity leading to the uncertain experience of its fruition'. When all five factors that constitute a non-virtuous action or a negative deed are completed, one has created a 'negativity that leads to the definite experience of its fruition'. When a negative deed is intentionally committed and carried through to the end, one has accumulated a negativity where all five factors of a non-virtuous action are complete.

For example, the five factors in the act of killing are: 1) The object or basis, identifying a sentient being other than oneself; 2) the motivation, having the concept that a sentient being is there while one's mind is not undeluded about the fact that one intends to kill that sentient being; 3) the application, engaging in the act of killing, either oneself or inciting another to do so, through poison, weapons, mantra and so forth; 4) the afflictions, the three mind poisons, in general, and in particular, anger during the completion of the act; and 5) the completion, accomplishing the death of a sentient being before oneself comes to die.

This accumulated karma is also called 'karma which leads to the experience of its fruition', which means a 'karma the fruition of which one will definitely experience' in the future. A 'negativity leading to the certain experience of its fruition' refers to negative actions committed while one is fully aware and which one can later recall. If you kill your father, you will know you have committed a severe and serious crime, and you will always remember this horrible deed. It will remain in your mind. Such a deed is a negativity for which one would definitely experience a karmic fruition.

Nevertheless, bodhicitta is so strong that it has the power to purify even that degree of severe intentional negativity. Any unintentionally committed negativity is called a 'negativity leading to the uncertain experience of its fruition'. Thus, a negative deed is committed, but all five factors are not complete. For instance: 1) The object or basis: One might have caused the death of a sentient being without having identified it as a sentient being. One walks on gravel but steps unintentionally on a sentient being. 2) Motivation: One has caused the death of a sentient being without having had the motivation to cause its death, because one's mind was deluded through the influence of alcohol and so forth. 3) Application: One has caused the death of a sentient being by unintentionally stepping on it or by carelessly throwing a stone in the dark. 4) Afflictions: The unintentional act of killing was done in a mental state of ignorance or indifference. 5) The completion: The death of a sentient being was caused.

We have also committed countless negative deeds throughout many lifetimes of which we are not aware and which we cannot recount. Such unintentional negativity has an uncertain karmic ripening, uncertain as to when and how it will ripen. When we take a walk, for example, we unintentionally and accidentally kill many tiny insects. We do not know whether or how many sentient beings we have killed or harmed, neither do we experience the bad feeling of having done something wrong. When we experience the ripening of an intentional negativity, however, all of these countless unintentional deeds also ripen together with it. We might have one serious illness and at the same time feel slightly irritated or experience that things are not working out well for us. This minor accompanying suffering is said to be the ripening of unintentional negativity.

Harm against the three jewels can be the negative karma of abandoning the Dharma. Some people fail to scrutinize a teacher before requesting teachings, and likewise some teachers do not scrutinize their students before giving teachings. In such cases the student may become unhappy after a time with the teachings or the conduct of the teacher. The teacher may become unsatisfied with the student's performance. These feelings can lead to a split between them, so that the student develops wrong views about the Dharma and even gives up the Dharma. In this way the student accumulates the negative karma of abandoning the Dharma. Abandoning the Dharma comes under the category of wrong views and is an extremely serious misdeed among the ten non-virtuous actions. Furthermore, destroying statues of the Buddha, Buddhist scriptures, or stūpas, slandering Sangha members, negative talk about one's teachers and the like are all considered harm against the three jewels. Whatever great evil one has committed, including killing one's father, breaking bodhisattva training, or violating tantric samāyas, all can be purified by entrusting oneself to bodhicitta.

Suppose you have committed the crime of killing someone's father. You will always fear that his children may take revenge on you. If you entrust yourself to a great hero and make him your ally, however, you are under his protection, so that the family of

the father that you killed cannot retaliate. That is the example of the helpful hero who grants protection. Just like entrusting yourself to a good friend or a good physician, entrust yourself to bodhicitta. Make friends with bodhicitta, rely on bodhicitta, and live your life according to bodhicitta.

Contact bodhicitta through constant remembering, through aspiration and contemplation. At first, bodhicitta is like an aspiration. Slowly, it will develop into a commitment. Once the wisdom of egolessness is realized, you will never be separated from bodhicitta. Only when you have realized wisdom will you be able to have true commitment. That is called 'wisdom commitment'.

Similarly, if you totally entrust yourself to bodhicitta, despite having committed severe and negative deeds that should lead to certain rebirth in the hell realms, you will, nevertheless, be instantaneously liberated from the consequences of your negative actions. But even in the unlikely event of taking rebirth in the hell realms, you will stay there only briefly, being liberated from hell as swiftly as a *silken ball* thrown on the ground bounces back.

The Tibetan term 'bag-chen nam' connotes 'deluded ones', 'those with habitual patterns' or 'those who are fearful'. It should not be confused with the term 'bag-yö-chen nam', meaning 'those who are heedful', 'those who are conscientious'. The Indian commentary by Prajnakaramatil uses the term 'bag-chen nam' to ask: "Why do all those ignorant beings, those foolish ones who lack wisdom, not devote themselves to it or rely on it?"

Meditation on bodhicitta is very powerful and effective. The Indian master Asanga meditated for twelve years on his meditation deity, Maitreya, without having any vision. The moment he developed bodhicitta, however, all his negative deeds were purified, and he encountered Maitreya. Through the purifying effect of bodhicitta, he was able to make that instant leap of progress in his practice. For all these reasons, bodhicitta is the supreme method for purifying negative deeds.