

## ***BCA Chapter 1, Verses 21 & 22, Text Section 274-275***

*If a person with a helpful intention  
Thinks, "I shall merely relieve  
The headaches of a few beings,"  
And this thought is already endowed with boundless merit,*

*Then it is needless to mention that  
Wishing to dispel the boundless misery of every single being,  
And wishing for each of them  
To accomplish boundless qualities also carries boundless merit.*

### **BCA 1-21, Text section 274-275**

Both stanzas twenty-one and twenty-two allude to this story. If the mere intention to benefit a few people, such as the intention of Maitrakanyaka, is endowed with boundless merit, even without actually doing anything to relieve their pain, then how much greater will be the boundless merit of the bodhisattvas, who wish to free all sentient beings from their suffering and to establish them on the level of perfect buddhahood?

By simply having the beneficial intention to relieve the suffering of a few people, you already gain enough merit to achieve rebirth in the god realms. The wish of the bodhisattvas, however, who strive to relieve all sentient beings of their individual and personal suffering, and who strive to establish all sentient beings, without excluding a single one, on the level of perfect enlightenment, is endowed with boundless qualities. Such a boundless wish brings equally boundless merit.

The Tibetan term *mdza' bo* can also be translated with 'Vallabha', a Sanskrit synonym for 'Maitra'. But in the context of the Maitrakanyakaavānaana, the proper translation of *mdza' bo* is Maitra or Mitra.

Another story shows the power of merit of a compassionate mind. Once a daughter and her mother fell into the river Ganga. The mother, while she was drowning, thought only about saving her daughter; the daughter thought only about saving her mother. Neither thought about saving her own life, and they both drowned, but due to the merit of their benefiting intention, they were born in the god realms. To this very day, people in India jump into the river Ganga

and commit suicide with the wrong view that the blessing of this holy river will take them to the god realms. They do not realize that it is not the river that causes rebirth in the god realms but the power of one's altruistic motivation alone.

Once buddhahood is achieved, one has acquired the actual power to dispel the suffering of beings. This means that a Buddha forms the 'condition to dispel misery' and the 'condition to accomplish happiness' for all beings. The causes for attaining happiness must be created by sentient beings themselves. The Buddha provides the perfect condition by showing the path to enlightenment. Though the Buddha showers all sentient beings constantly with his blessings, beings need to walk the path to enlightenment themselves. Beings are supported on the path by the Buddha, but they themselves have to overcome their obscurations and actualize their innate buddhanature. It is not the case that the blessings and powers of the Buddha relieve beings of all their suffering. Under the perfect guidance of the Buddha, beings must traverse the path to enlightenment themselves.

Even though I am the Muni, I can neither wash away deeds Nor wipe off the suffering of beings with my hand. Although I cannot transfer my realization to others, I can lead them to liberation through my teachings on the peace of the natural state. A Buddha can only reach beings with whom he has a connection through his aspirations from former lifetimes when he was still a bodhisattva. When the good karma of beings and the aspirations of a Buddha ripen, beings may reach instant realization. That is reported in life stories of the Buddha and the great masters. But again, this reflects a strong connection from former lifetimes. For us, our bad karma has placed us at some distance from the Buddha.

Through our practice and aspirations, however, we can move closer quickly. The blessing of the Buddha works constantly in our minds, whether or not we are aware of it. The blessing of the Buddha creates the circumstances for the force of negative thoughts and emotions to decrease and for virtuous thoughts and emotions to increase.

The activities of Buddha's body, speech and mind enter into the mind-streams of beings. His teaching activity is described by the great Tibetan master Gorampa: "Sounds, words and letters appear in the individual mind-streams of the audience on the basis of a Buddha as a condition".