

## ***BCA Ch. 1, Verse 6, Text Section 218***

***Hence, virtue is feeble while at all times  
the great power of negativity is utterly unbearable.  
Except for perfect bodhicitta  
What other virtues could overcome this negativity?***

### **BCA 1-6, Text section 218**

In the case of sentient beings like ourselves, virtuous intentions to practice the Dharma are rare, short-lived and feeble, as short and weak as a flash of lightning that illuminates the darkness of the night only briefly. We might think about practicing Dharma, but a second later we remember to phone a friend. The virtuous thought disappears, and we are involved in a long conversation. Once again we think about practicing the Dharma, but another friend comes by and persuades us to go see a movie. In this way our feeble intention to practice the Dharma is easily overpowered by our mundane inclinations.

Only rarely, when the right circumstances come together can we follow up on a virtuous thought and actually begin to practice. In most cases, whenever the intention to practice Dharma arises in our mind, either we ourselves or other people, like our friends, relatives and acquaintances, destroy it. From the viewpoint of bodhicitta, such friends and situations that destroy bodhicitta are considered to be bad friends and negative circumstances. The moment a so-called friend comes by and invites us to have a good time, our intention to practice is destroyed. True and sincere Dharma practice does not spring from an ordinary mind but from a positive frame of mind bent on virtue.

When the intention to practice is very feeble, our involvement in non-virtuous thoughts and negative deeds of body, speech and mind are very strong. We constantly engage in the ten non-virtuous actions: taking life, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, speaking lies, sowing discord, harsh words, worthless chatter, covetousness, wishing harm to others, and wrong views.

Constant involvement in non-virtuous thoughts, speech and actions builds up a tremendous power of negativity. This unwholesome force throws us into the three lower realms and is very difficult to reverse. Only the precious and perfect bodhicitta has the power to overcome all this negativity and its consequences. No other ordinary virtues have the power to truly eliminate the great mass of negativity. Only the sun that illuminates the whole world system can overcome the darkness of the night.

Ordinary virtue refers to the ten virtuous actions, to a positive attitude, or to any kind of virtuous action not embraced by bodhicitta. Other forms of ordinary virtue and merit can be worldly virtues or the virtues of the sravakas and pratyekabuddhas. Ordinary virtuous thoughts can easily become negative thoughts. If the mind of a practitioner is infused with bodhicitta, however, he cannot commit negative deeds. A non-virtuous thought cannot co-exist with bodhicitta. Non-virtuous thoughts cannot even enter into the mind of a practitioner who has generated bodhicitta. On the other hand, ordinary virtuous actions, such as generosity not embraced by bodhicitta, can very well be performed when one is angry.