
Verse 2: Consider Myself as the Lowest Among All

*Whenever I'm in the company of others,
I will regard myself as the lowest among all,
And from the depths of my heart
Cherish others as supreme.*

Wherever I am and whomever I interact with, I will view myself as the lowest of all and humble myself before them. From the depths of my heart, I will think constantly of benefiting others. By constantly holding others as superior to me, and treating them with reverence and respect, I will tame my pride and arrogance, and hold others above me.

a. The perfect examples of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

In Lama Tsongkhapa's *A Commentary on the Fifty Verses of Guru Devotion*, there is such a line in the homage verse that says, "Constantly residing above all, but also as a servant to sentient beings." This is meant as a praise for Manjushri: although he is the teacher of all Buddhas, and is supreme among all sentient beings, Manjushri still attends to all sentient beings like a servant. And this is also the conduct of all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and great spiritual masters, who, although filled with transmudane merits and virtues, still serve the world as servants. Just as Venerable Longchenpa said in his *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind on the Great Perfection*, "The guru's enlightenment is far beyond that of secular beings. In spite of this, he still attends to the world and carries out compassionate activities for the benefit of sentient beings. As Dharma practitioners, we need to follow this marvelous example."

b. Observe our mind and tame arrogance

This verse mainly teaches us that we need to observe our mind, and to make sure that it will not give in to feelings of arrogance or pride towards any other sentient being. There is a Tibetan adage that goes like this: "The peak of arrogance cannot hold the spring water of merits." Therefore, all people, even those who are already full of sublime merits, must be free of arrogance or pride, and constantly hold, in their mind, the aspiration to respect and benefit others. Only when we think of benefiting others single-mindedly, are we able to regard sentient beings as wish-fulfilling gems and revere them as supremely precious, in the way that we do towards Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and our supremely kind gurus.

For instance, Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's great vow is: "If hells are not completely emptied of suffering beings, I vow never to attain Buddhahood; and furthermore, only when every last sentient being has been converted and saved, shall I achieve Bodhi." If Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha had not seen sentient beings as superior and nobler than himself, he would never have made such a great vow. If he had set himself high above the others and acted like an emperor, how could he realize the perfect accomplishment of such a deep aspiration? In our everyday conduct and in our interactions with others, we need to, on the one hand, generate great Bodhicitta towards sentient beings, and on the other hand, to see ourselves as the lowest among all, and

to truly think of benefiting others from the depths of our heart.

Lord Atisha, throughout his life, gave three great pith instructions for training the mind. First, examine the mind constantly; second, tame the mind with mindfulness and alertness; third, by constantly doing so, generate Bodhicitta in the mind stream. It is also recounted in Thogme Zangpo's *The Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva*, that:

*In short, wherever I am, whatever I do,
To be continually mindful and alert,
Asking, "What is the state of my mind?"
And accomplishing the good of others is the practice of a bodhisattva.*

From this we can see, the intention of Lord Atisha and Thogme Zangpo is exactly the same.