

Difference between the Svatantrika Madhyamika and the Prasangika Madhyamika tenets

As mentioned in the previous handout (Handout 06), even though the main difference between the two Madhyamika (Middle Way) tenets lies in their interpretation of the ultimate truth, there are several other differences, one of which is outlined during the presentation of aspirational and engaging Bodhicitta. The difference that is outlined here arises from the two tenets' different assertions regarding the nature of vows.

Svatantrika Madhyamika (Autonomy Middle Way) tenet

From the point of view of the Svatantrika (Autonomy School) tenet -- which includes the Yoga Svatantrika and the Sutra Svatantrika tenets -- aspirational Bodhicitta arises even in the continua of Bodhisattvas who have taken and not transgressed the Bodhisattva vow. The reason for this is that, according to this tenet, vows are a mental factor. Vows are the mental factor of 'intention' which is one of the five omnipresent mental factors that is concomitant with every main mind. This means that whenever vows manifest in someone's continuum they manifest in the form of the mental factor of intention. However, this does not mean that every mental factor of intention (even in the continuum of someone who has taken vows) manifests in the form of vows.

In the case of the Bodhisattva vow, it refers to the mental factor of intention that is concomitant with Bodhicitta. Thus, when Bodhisattvas newly take the Bodhisattva vow the vow first arises in their continua in the form of the mental factor of intention that is concomitant with Bodhicitta. In other words, during the ritual of taking the Bodhisattva vow the Bodhisattvas initially generate aspirational Bodhicitta. Then when they receive the vow, the manifest mental factor of intention that is concomitant with Bodhicitta becomes the vow (transforming aspirational Bodhicitta into engaging Bodhicitta). As that intention is mainly responsible for keeping the vow and as it is concomitant with Bodhicitta it becomes the practice of the perfection of morality. Therefore, whenever Bodhicitta is concomitant with the intention that is the Bodhisattva vow it is *engaging Bodhicitta* because it accords with the definition of engaging Bodhicitta. It accords with the definition of engaging Bodhicitta because it is '*Bodhicitta that is directly conjoined with the function of practice of any of the six perfections such as generosity etc. which is included in the discipline of the Bodhisattva vow*'.

Let us investigate every aspect of the definition: Bodhicitta which is concomitant with the intention that is the Bodhisattva vow is *directly conjoined with the function of practice of any of the six perfections* because it is directly conjoined with the function of practice of the perfection of morality. Bodhicitta which is concomitant with the intention that is the Bodhisattva vow is directly conjoined with the function of practice of the perfection of morality because it is directly conjoined with the intention that is the Bodhisattva vow and that intention is in turn *the function of practice of the perfection of morality*. The intention that is the Bodhisattva vow is the function of practice of the perfection of morality because it is the mental factor that engages in the practice of the perfection of morality by keeping the Bodhisattva vow.

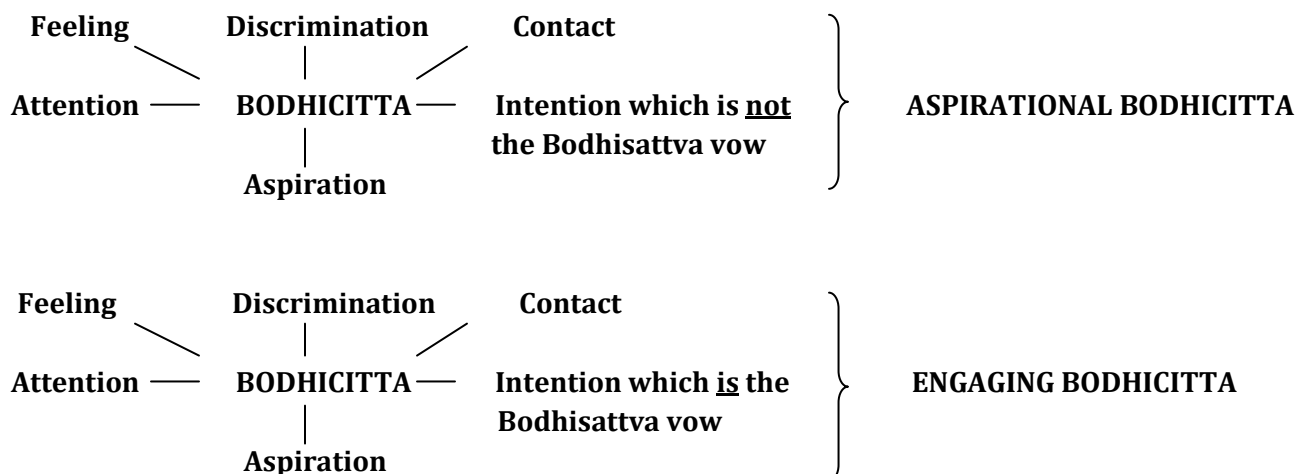
Likewise, Bodhicitta which is concomitant with the intention that is the Bodhisattva vow is *included in the Bodhisattva vow* because it is Bodhicitta in the continua of those who have taken and not transgressed the Bodhisattva vow.

However, Bodhicitta in the continua of Bodhisattvas who have taken and not transgressed the Bodhisattva vow is not necessarily engaging Bodhicitta (and thus Bodhicitta which is concomitant with the intention that is the Bodhisattva vow) because sometimes the Bodhisattva vow may lie dormant. In other words, even after

having taken and not transgressed the Bodhisattva vow Bodhicitta may manifest while the Bodhisattva vow may lie dormant and not manifest.

In this case, even though Bodhicitta is concomitant with intention, the intention is not the Bodhisattva vow. Therefore, Bodhicitta in Bodhisattvas' continua at the time when the Bodhisattva vow lies dormant is *aspirational Bodhicitta* because it accords with the definition of aspirational Bodhicitta. It accords with the definition of aspirational Bodhicitta because it is '*Bodhicitta that is not directly conjoined with the function of practice of any of the six perfections such as generosity etc. which is included in the discipline of the Bodhisattva vow*'.

Let us again investigate every aspect of the definition: even though aspirational Bodhicitta in the continua of Bodhisattvas who have taken and not transgressed the Bodhisattva vow is included in the discipline of the Bodhisattva vow, it is '*not directly conjoined with the function of practice of any of the six perfections such as generosity etc. which is included in the discipline of the Bodhisattva vow*' because it is not directly conjoined with the function of practice of any of the six perfections. It is not directly conjoined with the function of practice of any of the six perfections because the intention it is concomitant with is not the practice of any of the six perfections.



Demarcation of aspirational and engaging Bodhicitta according to the Svatantrika tenet

Aspirational Bodhicitta arises in the continua of Bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation, the path of preparation, the path of seeing and the path of meditation. However, it does not arise in the continua of Bodhisattvas on the path of meditation once they attain the eighth bhumi / ground because from that ground onwards Bodhicitta is always concomitant with the intention that is the Bodhisattva vow. From the eighth ground onwards awarenesses that grasp at true existence do not arise anymore and Bodhisattvas always realize emptiness, i.e. at all times they have in their continua an awareness that realizes emptiness (either directly or conceptually). In that way once they reach the eighth ground they overcome some major obstacles and their Bodhisattva vow naturally arises whenever Bodhicitta manifests. Therefore, the demarcation of aspirational Bodhicitta is explained to be from the Mahayana path of accumulation until the seventh ground of a Bodhisattva. Engaging Bodhicitta arises in the continua of Bodhisattvas on all five paths. Bodhisattvas take the Bodhisattva vow at the latest on the middling path of accumulation and the

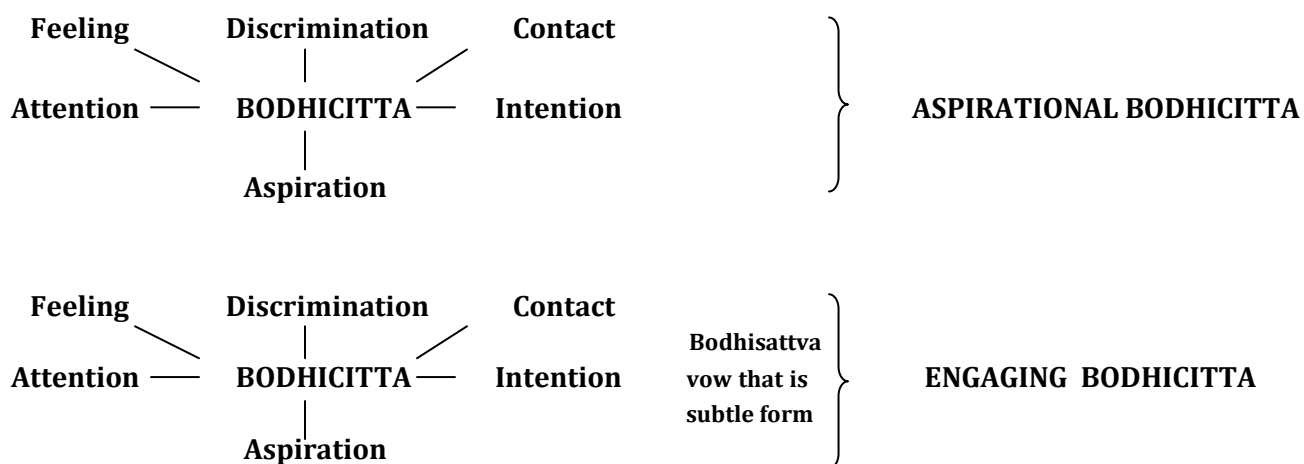
demarcation is thus explained to be from the Mahayana path of accumulation until the Mahayana path of no-more-learning.

Path of Accumulation	Path of Preparation	Path of Seeing	Path of Preparation										Path of No-More-Learning					
			1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.						
A S P I R A T I O N A L										B O D H I C I T T A								
E N G A G I N G														B O D H I C I T T A				

Prasangika Madhyamika (Consequentialist Middle Way) tenet

According to this tenet, vows are very subtle physical form which is why when Bodhisattvas newly take and receive the Bodhisattva vow a very subtle form manifests in their continua. This form remains as long as Bodhisattvas keep the vow.

Hence, aspirational Bodhicitta only arises on the small path of accumulation because Bodhisattvas take the Bodhisattva vow at the latest on the middling path of accumulation and once they have reached this level of the path of accumulation there is no transgression of the vow. Therefore, from the middling path of accumulation onward Bodhicitta in the continua of those who have taken the Bodhisattva vow is always engaging Bodhicitta.



Demarcation of aspirational and engaging Bodhicitta according to the Prasangika tenet

As explained above, aspirational Bodhicitta only arises on the small path of accumulation whereas engaging Bodhicitta arises on the small, middling and great path of accumulation as well as on the path of preparation, the path of seeing, the path of meditation and the path of no-more-learning.

Path of Accumulation			Path of Preparation	Path of Seeing	Path of Preparation	Path of No-More-Learning
small	middling	great				
ASPIRATIONAL BODHICITTA						
E N G A G I N G B O D H I C I T T A						

Please note that another difference between the Svatantrika Madhyamika and the Prasangika Madhyamika tenets lies in their different assertions regarding the time when Bodhisattvas overcome the afflictive obstructions (the obstructions to liberation). According to the Svatantrika Madhyamika tenet Bodhisattvas overcome the afflictive obstructions and the cognitive obstructions (obstructions to omniscience) simultaneously and thus becomes an Arhat and a Buddha at the same time.

According to the Prasangika Madhyamika tenet Bodhisattvas overcome the afflictive obstructions (and become an Arhat) on the eighth Bodhisattva bhumi/ground and therefore become an Arhat *before* they become a Buddha.

Precepts and Vows

Aspirational Bodhicitta:

There is a ceremony for aspirational Bodhicitta in which we may take part because either

1. We formally affirm our aspiration (which creates tremendous merit), or
2. On a deeper level, we make the commitment to never give up Bodhicitta, to preserve the precepts of aspirational Bodhicitta and to prevent its decline

The person who confers aspirational Bodhicitta should hold the aspirational Bodhicitta precepts and the Bodhisattva vows. The person who takes aspirational Bodhicitta should have generated Bodhicitta or at least take refuge in the three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), have some renunciation, and appreciation of their precious human rebirth.

Four precepts of aspirational Bodhicitta

1. To maintain the enthusiasm for Bodhicitta by meditating on it again and again,
2. To increase the strength of Bodhicitta by training ourselves in it three times during the day and three times as night
3. To train ourselves to never abandon a single sentient being - no matter how someone behaves.
4. To make an effort to create the two accumulations of merit and wisdom.

