



similar substance. It is not because women's bodies are so pure that they are attached to such bodies, but because they have a similar impure body themselves, so having an impure body to begin with is the reason why one is attached to other impure bodies.

The meaning of the verse is also explained in the commentary, however the main point that one should understand is that the verse serves as an answer to the assertion by using the analogy of lepers. If those who have contracted leprosy were pure and clean, then they would not be shunned, abandoned or avoided. The fact that those who have contracted leprosy are shunned by society and kept at a distance is because leprosy is seen as being impure and contagious, and that's why others fear it. Using that as an analogy, it explains how women's bodies are not pure and clean. The reason that sages and the like have attachment to a woman's body, is because they have a similar type of body themselves, not because the other's bodies are by nature clean. As the commentary reads:

Although women are full of urine, these sages do not give them up because they themselves are the same.

It is quite explicit that the reason for not giving up women is because they have the same type of body. The commentary continues:

If only some and not all were full of urine, those full of urine would be shunned by those who were not, just as one holds one's nose and avoids contact with lepers.

Women are not avoided because all are alike, not because they are clean.

As explicitly indicated here with the leper analogy, the reason why those who don't have leprosy are almost disgusted by those who do have leprosy, is because it is seen as being dirty, or something which one does not like to have contact with. That's why they are kept at a distance and generally shunned in society. If there were some women who were considered dirty and some others who were pure, then that would also be the case with women. But all women are alike, and those who are attached to women also have the similar bodies. Therefore attachment arises for anyone who has a similar body. That is the main point.

The main points to be understood here is that while in reality, male and female bodies are unclean by nature, the reason we are attached to the body is because of the erroneous notion of seeing the body as being pure and clean. Out of that ignorance attachment to the body arises. The analogy making the meaning of the point clearer is:

A man without a goitre visited a place full of people with goitres and was thought ugly.

Apparently there are certain areas (especially in old times) where almost everyone in the village would have a goitre. It was very normal to have a goitre, and not considered as ugly. Whereas of course in a larger society, having a goitre is considered as ugly. However, in an area where everyone has a goitre, it becomes the norm, and so when someone without a goitre comes to such a place, they would be seen as being very strange. Some goitres are really quite large, as big as the head, so if that is the norm, then someone without a goitre looks very strange, as if something was missing.

When you derive the meaning of the analogy the point is that even though a goitre is not normally considered to be a beautiful feature of the body, in a place where everyone has a one it is considered to be nice and normal, and maybe even beautiful. Therefore when someone who does not have a goitre arrives, they are seen as being ugly. The notion of a goitre as a beautiful extension of the body arises out of their ignorance, and out of their misconception they consider it as being beautiful. That is similar to our attachment to the body.

### 1.3. Refuting the idea of cleanness because of wearing perfumes and so forth

Assertion or doubt:

Though a woman's body is unclean, the uncleanness can be removed by beautifying it with perfumes and so forth.

Answer:

*Just as someone lacking a part  
Is delighted with a substitute nose,  
Desire holds that impurity is  
Remedied by flowers and so forth.*

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Even after having accepting that a body is by nature impure and unclean, and therefore any contaminated body including a woman's body is also in the nature of being unclean and impure, a further doubt may arise that uncleanness can be removed with perfumes and so forth.

This is something that we definitely see, and that we don't have to ponder. People rely upon external substances such as perfume, make-up and so forth to beautify themselves, and by doing so, they have the feeling that they are clean and pure. The main doubt is that even though the body is unclean, the uncleanness can be removed and the body can be beautified through perfumes and so forth, so isn't that reasonable? Therefore, the argument goes, it is appropriate to have attachment to the body, because it can be beautified.

This mode of thinking really does occur, doesn't it? We have this notion when we are dirty that the moment after cleaning up and putting on perfume and makeup we have become clean and beautiful. So, we feel that it is appropriate to have attachment to such a beautified body. As was pointed out earlier, the need to clean and beautify the body, indicates that the body by its very nature is impure and unclean. It is only when it is beautified and made clean through external substances and conditions, that it is then viewed as being clean and pure, and thus attachment arises.

In explaining the meaning of the verse, the commentary gives this analogy:

It is like a man lacking a part because his nose has been cut off, who is delighted with and proud of a golden artificial substitute.

In reality, it is considered as ugly when a such a prominent limb of the body as the nose is missing. However if the person puts on a beautiful substitute they can actually generate a sense of pride by thinking that the substituted nose makes them beautiful. In fact, because the natural nose is missing, it is not a situation to be proud of at all, but because other external conditions have created a nose, then a sense of pride arises from that. However, in reality, despite the artificial nose, it is still a person without a nose, so there is nothing to be really proud of. Even if they put on an artificial nose, it still remains the fact that they are a noseless person.

As the commentary further says:

Attaching flowers and so forth to the body as a means to remedy its foulness and holding that this will make the body clean, will not do so.

This is the same as the earlier analogy: the notion that one can beautify the body by attaching perfume, flowers and so forth to it, thinking that such external objects make one beautiful. In reality, the body remains by its very nature unclean and impure, and nothing can really change that, but still the notion arises, 'I am beautiful'. The analogy given in the commentary is that

It is like smearing butter on a cat's nose, which makes it think even a handful of insipid food is rich and tasty.

This particular analogy refers to tsampa. Normally if you make

a tsampa meal with a lot of butter and sugar, it is considered to be rich and tasty. In particular, adding butter to the tsampa makes it rich and tasty. So if you smear butter on a cat's nose and give it tsampa made with just plain water and no butter at all, it thinks that it's eating a very delicious tsampa meal with butter, just because of the fact there's some butter smeared on its nose. The cat can smell the butter and it assumes that the meal it's eating is also rich with butter.

#### **1.4. Refuting the idea that anything towards which freedom from desire may arise is clean**

Assertion:

There are fragrances and so forth for which one invariably feels desire.

Answer:

*It is inappropriate to call clean that  
Toward which freedom from desire arises.  
Nor is there anything which is  
A definitive cause of desire.*

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The meaning of the verse as the commentary explains:

There is no thing which is a definitive cause of desire since in the end one will become free of desire toward all things. To call clean the body, toward which exalted Foe Destroyers have generated freedom from desire, is inappropriate.

The main point being made here is that if an object was truly desirable and therefore attractive from its own side, then Foe Destroyers would not lack desire for the object, but will also see it as being attractive. However the fact is, Foe Destroyers have overcome the state of seeing desirous objects as being attractive. This is because the very nature of objects are not desirable, and there's no real attractiveness within the objects themselves.

The analogy that is given in the text is:

A merchant not recognising his daughter, felt strong desire for her, but when he recognised her, he was free from desire.

The analogy indicates that even in worldly circumstances, there can be similar situations to the Foe Destroyers in their rejection of objects as desirous. This analogy is of a merchant who left on a trading mission while his wife was still pregnant. He was gone for a long period of time, and did not know that the child was a girl, who had grown up by the time the merchant returned. When he came back to his home town he saw some older girls playing, and noticed that he had an attraction towards one girl. When someone pointed out to him that that this girl was his daughter, the attachment immediately went away. Suddenly what seemed initially attractive was no longer an object of desire.

#### **1.5. Nominally all four non-erroneous features are possible with regard to one thing**

The outline refers to the way the four erroneous features of impermanence, uncleanness, suffering and selflessness can be all posited in the one object.

Assertion:

Is it possible or not for a single thing to comprise all four of these undistorted features, such as impermanence and so forth?

*In summary, all four, that is  
Impermanence, uncleanness, suffering  
And selflessness are possible  
With regard to a single [thing].*

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As the commentary explains the meaning of the verse:

In summary, all four – impermanence, uncleanness, suffering and selflessness – are possible with regard to a single [contaminated] thing [for example, even a

contaminated body]. Whatever is a product is impermanent, because of being momentary. Whatever is impermanent is unclean because it produces aversion. Whatever is unclean is suffering because it harms. Whatever is suffering is selfless, because it is not under its own power. Therefore, developing aversion to cyclic existence, the uncleanness of which is exemplified by one's own body, make effort to gain the path to liberation.

This summary refers to all of the points that were made earlier, by thinking about the body as being impermanent and unclean in nature and so forth. Contemplating that, one develops renunciation. Having developed renunciation, one then strives to train in the path to achieve liberation.

The actual verses from the root text have already been completed, however the next stanza is from the author of the commentary, Gyel-tsap Je himself:

Understanding that sentient beings are also bound  
Like oneself in this unclean prison,  
With energy generate compassion observing  
transmigrators,  
And make effort to accomplish highest enlightenment.

'Unclean prison' in the context of the first two lines of this summarising stanza, refers particularly to our contaminated body. To think of any inmate being attached to their prison would be quite absurd. However, we are in a similar situation of being attached to our own unclean body. This chapter has gone into detail about explaining how the body is unclean, and impure by its very nature. If we can then understand how we are obsessed with this impure body and therefore attached to it, we clearly see the absurdity and the inappropriateness of being overly obsessed and attached to this body. One can then begin to develop renunciation, which means, 'I wish to abandon such an impure body which is a source of suffering for ourselves'.

#### **Renunciation and compassion**

Once one develops that attitude of renouncing the impure, contaminated body in particular and samsara in general, then using that same attitude we divert our attention toward other sentient beings. Then we can see how other sentient beings are also in a similar situation to ourselves, being overly obsessed with our impure, prison-like bodies, and how they experience great suffering because of that. When we can understand that and develop the wish to free other sentient beings from that situation, that is what is called compassion. Renunciation and compassion are similar attitudes but they differ in terms of their focus. When the focus is on oneself, wishing to be free from samsara it is called **renunciation**. **Great compassion** is when the focus is on all other sentient beings, wishing them to be free from the prison of cyclic existence.

It is a fact that it is not possible to develop compassion for other sentient beings without first developing renunciation for oneself. If, however, one focuses only on oneself, wishing to be free from suffering only for oneself and just remains with that attitude, then it is only a cause to achieve self-liberation. With that attitude one cannot achieve enlightenment, only liberation. Therefore the emphasis here is, as it has been from the very beginning of the text, on developing love and compassion toward other sentient beings, thus creating the causes to achieve enlightenment, which is the ultimate means to benefit other sentient beings.

In the process of contemplation, one first contemplates one's own situation, seeing how we are bound by the chains of desire and grasping to samsara. After contemplating thoroughly on how we are in the prison of samsara, we then use that as a basis to understand how others are also suffering just like ourselves. Then, as one directs one's focus towards other sentient beings,

contemplating the fact that other sentient beings have all been equally kind to oneself, as well as suffering just like oneself, one begins to generate love and compassion for others.

It is feasible to think about the welfare of other sentient beings. Because everyone is in the same situation as oneself. Furthermore there is much more reason to focus on other sentient beings and their welfare, because each and every sentient being has been equally kind to oneself. When the mental state of recognising the kindness of other sentient beings becomes very strong, then the wish to repay their kindness can be developed.

Then one goes further, looking into how one could possibly free other beings from suffering. One then comes to understand that the only way to free all sentient beings from suffering is to achieve enlightenment for oneself first. Since there is no other way, striving to achieve enlightenment to benefit other sentient beings, becomes the ultimate way. When one contemplates in this way, then bodhicitta can be developed. This is the way we train our mind, by doing the essential practice which we can derive from these teachings. It is very useful therefore, just even to recite this last stanza. As we recite it, we think about the meaning and then spend some time just contemplating that meaning. That in itself can be a great daily meditation for ourselves.

### **Seven-fold cause and effect method for developing bodhicitta**

Using the earlier contemplation as a basis, one can further enhance the method for developing love and compassion and thus the bodhicitta attitude, by using the seven-fold cause and effect sequence of developing bodhicitta. The first four are the basis for developing love and compassion and helping other beings. They serve as a basis by reinforcing the need to benefit other sentient beings. Whereas the fifth, sixth, and seventh are the actual tools for helping other sentient beings, the seventh one being the actual bodhicitta mind. Five and six are great compassion and special intention.

**1. Perceiving all beings as one's mother:** In answer to the question, 'Why do we need to help other sentient beings?' we contemplate how, all sentient beings have been kind to us, particularly through the kindness of having been our mother over many lifetimes in the past; and how they have helped and cared for us in so many numerous ways, just like our own mother does in this life.

**2. Remembering their kindness:** The next step is remembering the kindness of all beings who have been kind to us as a mother.

**3. Repaying the kindness:** Based on remembering the kindness, the wish to repay that kindness can be generated. When the wish to repay that kindness becomes strong in the mind, then the real purpose of benefiting other sentient beings is stabilised in our mind.

**4. Great love:** By now we have gained a little bit of insight, so we can lead, help and guide others sentient beings who are blinded by the ignorance of not understanding reality. Most beings don't have the means to gain the insight, which is the Dharma and the teachings. Most of us have the teachings and perfect teachers who expound the teachings by explaining them clearly to us, and we have the intelligence to understand the teachings, so we have a much greater advantage. We already have many qualities, techniques and methods to help other sentient beings.

Therefore it is most appropriate that we extend our help to them, with both temporary help and ultimate help. Temporary help is giving the things that other beings might need now – practical needs such as food and clothing, medicine and so forth. That help is however only of temporary benefit. The ultimate means to help other sentient beings is to guide them out of samsara - the cause for all suffering. By giving them the

means to come out of samsara, you're helping them out of their prison. By guiding and helping others, and giving advice you are helping them to free themselves, so that they do not have to experience the sufferings over and over again. That is the ultimate way to help them.

You can relate the seven cause and effect sequence in a very practical way in every-day life, if you can consider you mother as being kind to you in this life. As one thinks about the kindness of one's mother, one comes to a point where remembering her kindness becomes spontaneous and natural. Then the next stage which follows naturally, is the wish to repay that kindness. We can see that there are people who say that they would do anything to help their mother; it is really a spontaneous wish and they will go out of their way to help their mother in whatever circumstances. When the earlier stage of recognising and remembering the kindness becomes strong, then the wish to repay the kindness to one's mother in this life becomes very strong. Naturally, one then wishes to do anything. When one wishes one's mother to be happy and joyful that is what is called love. When that is extended to all sentient beings, it becomes great love.

**5. Great compassion:** When the wish for one's mother to be completely free from all suffering is generated, then that is what we call compassion. When this wish is extended to all living beings, it becomes great compassion.

**6. Special intention:** When the wish for all mother sentient beings to be happy and free from suffering is generated to the point where one feels that there is no-one else but myself who has that responsibility. Just as one would think that 'I have the responsibility to make my mother as happy as possible and to see that she does not suffer in any way', taking upon that responsibility oneself, similarly when that sort of responsibility is extended to all sentient beings, then that is when special intention is developed.

Furthermore, one comes to understand that even though one is willing to take on full responsibility for bringing about the happiness for one's own mother, one may find that one does not have the capacity or ability to do so right now. When that understanding is extended to all sentient beings, and one searches for a solution, one comes to realize clearly that it is only by achieving enlightenment that one can help all beings to be free from suffering. It is only an enlightened being, a buddha who has the means to do that. So, in order to benefit my mothers-all sentient beings, I have to achieve enlightenment and become a buddha myself. That is the only way.

**7. Bodhicitta:** When that confirmation is developed, and the determination to achieve enlightenment in order to fulfil the responsibility of helping one's mothers-all sentient beings is developed in one's mind, that is when bodhicitta is developed.

This is the process of the seven-fold cause and effect training of the mind in developing bodhicitta. Contemplating this again and again leaves a very strong imprint on the mind for developing bodhicitta. So it is very useful and very important for us to meditate in such a way.

## **2. Explaining the name of the chapter<sup>1</sup>**

This traditionally comes at the end.

*This concludes the commentary on the third chapter, showing how to abandon erroneous belief in cleanness, from Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the "Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas".*

This concludes the outlines of the main part of the text as well as the commentary.

<sup>1</sup> In the teaching of 18 July 2006 this was given as 2. Summarising the purpose of the chapter.