

# Study Group - "Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand"

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་གྲོལ་ལག་བཅུངས།



3 August 1993

## 422.122.12: How To Contemplate Karma In Specific<sup>1</sup>

སོ་སོར་ཕྱི་སྟེ་བསམ་པ།

This has three subdivisions:

### 422.122.121: Thinking About The Black Side Of Cause And Effect

ནག་པོའི་ལས་འབྲས་བསམ་པ།

### 422.122.122: Thinking About The White Side Of Cause And Effect

དཀར་པོའི་ལས་འབྲས་བསམ་པ།

### 422.122.123: Thinking About The Doors Which Unintentionally Lead To Powerful Karma

ཞར་ལ་སྟོབས་ལྡན་གྱི་ལས་ཀྱི་སྐྱོ་བསྐྱུས་ཏེ་བསྟན་ཤིང་གྲུབ།

## Why Specific Explanation Follows The General

In the previous section "Contemplating Karma in General" firm understanding of karma is cultivated. Then faith and conviction in the law of karma is generated. As the topic of karma is very broad and very subtle in its deeper levels, there are specific explanations of karma given after this general explanation. The specific explanation of karma shows that the practice of karma is to:

- abandon the ten unwholesome actions and
- practise the ten wholesome actions in our daily life.

### 422.122.121: The Black Side Of Cause And Effect<sup>2</sup>

ནག་པོའི་ལས་འབྲས་བསམ་པ།

This has three subdivisions:

#### 422.122.121.1: The Actual Black Karmic Process

<sup>1</sup>Liberation...p442 The title used here in the text is "Thinking about some of the specifics of cause and effect."

<sup>2</sup>Liberation... p442 The title used here in the text is "Thinking about the black side of cause and effect."

ནག་པོའི་ལས་ལམ་དངོས།

### 422.122.121.2: The Differences That Make For Heavy Or Light Karma

### 422.122.121.3: Teaching What Are The Results Of These Karmas

དེ་དག་གི་འབྲས་བུ་བསྟན་པ།

## Abandoning The 10 Non-Virtues: The Root Of All Spiritual Practice

It is said that preserving the morality of refraining from the ten unwholesome actions is the foundation practice for all practitioners. Without observing this morality of refraining from the ten unwholesome actions no-one can reach their spiritual goal. Even if we have not yet entered the spiritual path, this morality needs to be maintained in order to attain a higher form of rebirth as a human or godly being. This morality is the root cause for attaining higher status, which is the higher rebirths within cyclic existence. Whereas for those, who have already entered onto the path of the hearer or solitary realiser, in order to reach their goals must maintain this morality of restraint from the ten non-virtues. Similarly, bodhisattvas also need to observe this morality to achieve their goal, which is the complete enlightenment for all sentient beings.

## Benefits Of The Practice Of Morality

Regardless of whether one is a celibate or lay person, practising morality or moral ethics is very essential, not only for one's own survival, peace and happiness but also for the sake of others. For this reason, in Buddhism, there is a great deal of emphasis on morality or non-harmfulness. In ancient India when Buddhism first flourished, it became very popular and gained a great deal of respect from most people in those days. In fact, everyone can appreciate or see the value of Buddha's teaching on non-harmfulness.

It is said that upon this basis of this teaching on morality, it makes sense to say the dharma is a source of peace and happiness in the world and for individual beings. No matter what sort of living being, whether animal or human, they cherish their own life more than anything else. In the face of a threat to one's life we become very scared. Even as small a creature as a tiny ant will react to

a threat to its life. Even to a sound it responds with fear. It cherishes its life. Consider attitudes towards peace, happiness and security in one's life. When no threat at all is perceived to one's life, there is no concern about receiving harm from others, that is when one relaxes, feeling secure and happy.

Therefore, the Buddha's teaching or dharma of non-harmfulness serves as the source of happiness and peace for all living beings.

In this way it is essential to know just how much one cherishes one's own life. One wishes for a peaceful, happy life, because one cherishes life. In this way one should also understand other beings. They also cherish their lives. Consider, for example, the life of an animal. When that animal lives in a very peaceful environment, it can conduct its affairs normally. But if it perceives some threat to its life, it cannot even enjoy the food in front of it and must turn around.

Therefore, to enjoy peace now and a future good life, and to benefit others, the practice of non-harmfulness is important.

Chandrakirti said:

There is no other cause of higher rebirth than the practice of morality.

Therefore one should practise morality for the sake of:

- one's present life
- one's future lives
- others

### Relationships In This Life Improve By Understanding Karma

Learning about karma, or cause and effect, is a good way of developing common sense and a sense of discriminating wisdom. The advantage of developing this discriminating wisdom is that life becomes more stable, more honest and there is more knowledge about truth in this life, past lives and the future lives.

Therefore there are advantages in practising karma at all times, in this lifetime and all lifetimes.

The immediate benefits of practising karma are:

- one's relationships with others improve
- a good and clear sense of discrimination can be utilised in day to day life, since every occurrence in life is cause and effect. If one is aware of that causal link there will be no cause to have disharmony between friends.

Disharmony is the harming of other beings in the form of harmful speech, etc. Therefore, if one tries to prevent those actions, which are a cause of disharmony, then as a causal nature, disharmony will not happen. Since one's life is shared with others, we cannot always be the same person and act the same towards one another. At those times, when a friend acts abnormally, if one is aware of that, one should try to be more helpful to that friend. Whereas, if one shows impatience, then the relationship

will get worse, one's friend will get worse, thereby the friendship will become worse and beyond repair. The law of karma, one is basically about how to alter one's actions into a more skilful way in order to benefit oneself and others.

### 422.122.121.1: The Actual Black Karmic Process<sup>3</sup>

ནག་པོའི་ལས་ལམ་དངོས།

### Recognising The Ten Unwholesome Actions

མི་དགེ་བ་བརྒྱ།

The actions which need to be abandoned are included in the ten unwholesome actions.

Three of Body: ལུས་ཀྱི་མི་དགེ་བ་གསུམ།

### 422.122.121.11: Killing

སྲོག་གཅོད་པ།

### 422.122.121.12: Stealing

མ་བྱིན་པར་ལེན་པ།

### 422.122.121.13: Sexual Misconduct

ལོག་གཡིམ།

Four of Speech: ངག་གི་མི་དགེ་བ་བཞི།

### 422.122.121.14: Lying

ཏཱ་ན།

### 422.122.121.15: Divisive Speech

སྤྲོས།

### 422.122.121.16: Harsh Speech

ཚིག་རྩུབ།

### 422.122.121.17: Idle Gossip

ངག་འལ།

### Three of Mind

<sup>3</sup>Liberation.. p442 The title used here in the text is "The actual black karmic process."

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## ཡིད་ཀྱི་མི་དགོ་བ་གསུམ།

### 422.122.121.18: Covetousness

## བརྟོན་སེམས།

### 422.122.121.19: Harmful Thought

## གནོད་སེམས།

### 422.122.121.110: Wrong View

## ལོག་ལྟ་བ།

Firstly we must be able to confidently recognise the ten unwholesome actions in order to observe the practice of refraining from them, then later they can be studied in terms of their results, etc and then put into practice. It is this practice from which benefit and meaning are derived. The main purpose of studying and trying to recognise the ten unwholesome actions is so that we can practice abandoning the ten unwholesome actions. In this way some benefit can be drawn from one's own practice for one's own life.

### **The Four Components Of An Unwholesome Action:**

Each of the ten unwholesome actions requires these four components in order to qualify as a complete action.

#### 1: Basis གཞི་བ།

#### 2: Thought བསམ་པ།

This has three subdivisions:

##### i. Recognition འདྲ་ཤེས།

##### ii. Intention ཀུན་སྡོང།

##### iii. Delusion ཉམ་མེད་ས་གསུམ།

#### 3: Deed ལྟུང་བ།

#### 4: Finalisation མཐར་ཐུགས།

In each of these ten unwholesome actions, all four of these components should be present for that action to be completed. For example, in killing, the basis is the qualification of the object to be killed or it is the basis of creating that action of killing. In the case of killing, the basis is some living being other than oneself.

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Headings with outline numbering are derived from the Text. Headings without outline numbering are derived from Geshe Doga's commentary.

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*The original typescript is prepared from Alan Molloy's original transcript, which has been checked against Damien Busby's notes. Adair Bunnett then checks the typescript against a tape recording, and edits the text, which is finally checked by Alan Molloy.*

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