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

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering



འཇིགས་རིམ་རྣམས་གྲོལ་ལག་བཅུངས།

**21 September 1993**

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To achieve the ultimate goal of full enlightenment to benefit all beings, one must meditate on the Lam Rim path, but prior to this one must contemplate the path. Before contemplation is possible we need to study the path.

When discussing the ten non virtuous actions, one should relate them to Atisha's advice, which is "when in the company of others examine one's body and speech." This advice is in relation to the first seven of the ten non-virtues. These are the four of speech and the three of body. The last three of the ten are related to Atisha's advice "when by oneself examine one's mind."

In spiritual practice the focus is one's own mind, which must be utilised to gain spiritual knowledge and put the dharma into practice. If we do not relate the topics of dharma to our own mind, such knowledge will be no different to worldly knowledge. Whereas if this knowledge is related to our own mind, we can see what dharma actually means. On the basis of this knowledge we are automatically inspired to put dharma into practice and so receive the benefits in our own life. If one does not see dharma as something to be practised in daily life then dharma is no different from other studies we undertake. Such studies can become a source of increasing delusions and similarly our dharma study, if not related to daily life, could also have the same negative effect on our life.

Dharma is a means of taming one's mind, and so helps to calm the mind. If dharma is not related to the mind, then we cannot actually practise meditation, because meditation is a practice which reverses the mind from heading down the wrong path. Examining our mind and its thoughts is essential to spiritual training.

Unless dharma is practised, it will have no effect upon our life. As a result our mind will always be very turbulent and undisciplined and always in misery. There is no point in criticising the dharma by saying that it has no potential to help us out of suffering and misery. The blame lies with ourselves for not putting the dharma into practice. The potential of dharma is not something that can be demonstrated through material objects. It is revealed in our own mind through our practice. Then we can see the results of dharma in terms of calming our mind from within. When we are calmed from within, we will not be easily disturbed or influenced by other people

or outer factors in life. If our mind is not controlled, then no matter how much effort we make, or how much success we have in life, there will always be suffering, whether we live alone or with someone else. Whereas if we have very good self control and a very calm mind, then even though we may live alone, there is an abundance of peace, happiness and satisfaction in life. The source of all the problems which we experience in life and cause others to experience lies in the mind. Even as a follower or student of dharma we will be no different to any others if we do not put it into practice.

Where there is conflict between the followers of different religious sects, this conflict is not due to some fault in the system, rather it indicates that the minds of those people are uncontrolled. Their minds are not only restless but they cause the same to others.

## The Ten Unwholesome Actions

མི་དགེ་བ་བརྒྱ།

The reason for studying this topic is to calm and pacify our mind and only practice can help us to do this.

### 422.122.121.18: Covetousness

བརྟོན་པ་སེམས།

#### 1. Basis

Is any property or possession which belongs to others. As a mental factor it is a type of desire or attachment. Covetousness arises when the mind is not fully contented with what we have. If the mind were fully contented, then when various things are seen in the market, there should be no desire to acquire any more of them. Because the mind is not fully contented, it is so easy to generate desire and covetous thoughts whenever we see attractive things. It is an almost automatic response that as soon as we see a beautiful and appealing object, we have the wish to possess it. Covetousness is when the thought arises, "I wish that I had something like that." It indicates the lack of contentment. Covetousness has a detrimental effect on the mind because the moment we generate the thought of wanting an object, which we do not possess, it leaves a kind of scar on the mind, which generates discomfort.

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## 2. Thought:

**Recognition:** This means to correctly recognise the object which is desired.

**Motivation:** Is one of the three poisonous minds.

### 3&4. Deed And Finalisation:

The motivation, deed and conclusion are all a continuation of the same thought i.e., in the same state of mind. In the motivation stage, one only wishes to possess an object. As the thought becomes stronger, not only do you wish for it, but also want to include that object as part of your own possessions. At that stage the thought has become the deed. The conclusion is when you decide that not only do you wish to acquire that object, but you start to plan how to achieve that wish.

End of discourse

Geshe-la suggests that in the discussion group next week, in addition to our usual discussion group topic we add the Three Principals of the Path - Renunciation, Bodhicitta and Emptiness. It is hoped that from the discussion, everyone will be very clear about the Three Principals of the Path. What is Renunciation, what is Bodhicitta and the correct understanding of the theory of Emptiness?

We should continue leading meditations before the teachings. As Geshe-la has said the purpose of this is to develop good knowledge about the dharma topics. This knowledge is developed from other sources as well as from one's own reasonings, study and investigation of the topic. For this reason Geshe-la first suggested that, when doing the brief meditation prior to the teachings, the leader should make a list of the topics of the meditation beforehand and who will be leading the meditation. This will help others in the class to study the topic before the class. Otherwise, if people are not familiar with the topic it will be too hard for them. Also it helps the leader to prepare the topics before the meditation. This is a good exercise to help develop knowledge.

Geshe-la: The difference between a Buddhist and a proponent of Buddhist Tenets?

Student 1: A Buddhist is someone who takes refuge in the Buddha, dharma and sangha. A proponent of Buddhist Tenets is someone who asserts the four seals:

All phenomena are contaminated. All contaminated things are suffering. Nirvana is Peace. All phenomena are empty.

Geshe-la: The Four Seals are:

All products are impermanent.

འདྲེས་བྱས་སྐྱམས་ཅད་མི་རྟག་པ།

All contaminated things are suffering.

ཟག་བཅས་སྐྱམས་ཅད་སྤྲུལ་བསྐྱེད་པ།

All phenomena are empty and selfless.

ཚོས་སྐྱམས་ཅད་བདག་མེད་པ།

Nirvana is peace.

སྤྱི་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ་ཞི་བ།

Geshe-la: What is dharma and what is Buddhism?

Student 2: Buddha's teachings.

Geshe-la: You need to clarify this. The Buddhist dharma is the practice one performs out of one's deep faith in Buddha, dharma and the sangha. It is the practice one does as a result of taking of refuge in the Buddha, dharma and the sangha. This is dharma in Buddhism.

The divisions of the refuge object dharma are:

the *actual* refuge object dharma has two types that correspond to the last two of the four noble truths:

-the truth of path and

-the truth of cessation.

Geshe-la: What is the cessation?

Student 3: It is a realisation that overcomes a misconception. Path is the path to those realisations.

Geshe-la: The truth of cessation is called the "Liberated", because it is the cessation or the total abandonment of any obscurations. The truth of cessation is a state of being liberated or free from a specific obscuration.

The truth of the path is the realisation, or the actual antidote, to any obscuration. So it is the cause to the truth of cessation.

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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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