

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

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

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ལྷན་སྐྱོད་ཀྱི་ལཱ་ལག་བཅུ་དཔེ།

30 November 1993

One again we reinforce the wish to achieve the ultimate state of enlightenment for the good of all beings and think "For this reason I am listening to and practising the stages of the path to enlightenment."

The Purpose Of Studying The Ten Non-Virtuous Actions

The practice of the law of karma is to abandon the ten non-virtuous actions. So we have studied the ten non-virtuous actions, their results and the various components determining the completion of each of them. These are all to encourage us to abandon these ten non-virtuous actions.

422.122.122: Thinking About The White Side Of Cause And Effect¹

དཀར་པོའི་ལས་འབྲས་བསམ་པ།

In the text there are two subdivisions to this topic:

422.122.122.1: Teaching The Actual White Karmic Process

དཀར་པོའི་ལས་ལམ་དངོས།

422.122.122.2: Teaching Its Results

དེ་དག་གི་འབྲས་བུ་བསྟན་པའོ།

422.122.122.1: Teaching The Actual White Karmic Process² :

དཀར་པོའི་ལས་ལམ་དངོས།

The Three Components Of The Ten Virtuous Actions

For the complete action or karma of killing, there must be three stages. Firstly there must be an object, any other being who you are intending to kill. There must be the thought of killing and the performance of the actual deed. That is we actually have to perform (directly or

indirectly) the action of killing. Otherwise even with a strong thought or motivation the action is not completed.

In the same way completing any of the ten virtuous actions also has these three components:

1. Basis
2. Thought
3. Completion (Finalisation)

For the virtuous action of non killing, for example, they are described in this way.

1. Basis

Same as for the action of killing - any other being who is to be killed or who one wants to kill.

2. Thought

Not killing or preventing the action of killing. This can be generated by thinking of the results of killing we shall experience by killing. There are three different types of result for a completed action of killing. The ripened result is not easy to endure, and there are another two results. Not wanting to experience the result of killing is the motivation to restrain from that action.

3. Completion

The completion of that virtuous action of not killing is when out of that thought, you finally make a definite decision to refrain from killing.

So we can see here that virtue is something which we need to create or develop in oneself. It is not so much different from our other actions. To cultivate the morality of not killing is simpler than creating the complete act of killing. Killing is not something that you can simply create mentally. You also need to physically cause death to other beings to complete the action. Developing virtuous qualities depends on our own state of mind, an opportunity possessed by everyone.

Benefits Of Non Harmfulness And Developing Love

To see the benefits of refraining from harmfulness towards the life of other beings, you can learn from your own experiences. Think of how strongly you cherish and value your own life. You cannot tolerate accepting any form of harm. If you hear that someone you hate is plotting to kill you or is chasing you, then you feel so insecure and frightened. Imagine that the person who

¹Liberation.. p454 The title used in the text is "Thinking about the white side of cause and effect."

²Liberation.. p454 The title used in the text is "Teaching the actual white karmic process"

wishes to kill you is right in front of you, with a knife at your neck and your death is a moment or second away. This is very frightening. Even if you hear that there is someone that is trying to kill you, that in itself is very distressing to your mind. Try to understand the importance of other people's lives to them. Anything you say to them to cause harm to their life is very disturbing news for them. Think of a tiny ant. If you make a noise, it will try to run away and it feels there is a danger to its life. In this way you provide benefit to others if you refrain from harmful action, just as you benefit if others follow this path of non-harmfulness.

If you live in a place where all the neighbours care about each other and are very sensitive then you find that place secure. People will be very friendly and harmonious, because there is no reason to feel any fear or insecurity. There is no reason to become very suspicious or worried so it is very peaceful. If one practises this non-harmfulness then you are creating the cause for peace, not only for yourself, but all other beings. In this way you are benefiting other beings.

Most of us need to make a consistent effort to maintain love and good heart towards other beings and to prevent harmful actions towards others. There are a very few people who, even if they have no background of religious study, naturally respect the life of others. They are always very generous and kind to other beings. These people are like this because of having practised or cultivated such loving attitudes in their past life. Most people can see the importance of practising and showing love towards others and ones friends.

Generally we understand that harmful thought, even a fraction of one is very negative. However we easily forget the value of the practice of love and compassion. We do not know how or for whom we should practise compassion and love, and stop the harmful thought. In fact this love and prevention of harmful thoughts should be practised towards those people who are part of our daily life. It is wrong to just cultivate love and compassion, for someone in a distant place as there is no opportunity to actually make any progress in cultivating that love. Whereas if we begin the practice of developing love or minimising harmful thought, with those people we live with, you have something to do in your life.

If you already have some special friendship then try to maintain this, no matter what the circumstances. Whatever the disagreement or unhappiness, it is not a reason to replace the love you have shown up until now. It is quite natural that others have different views, interests and predispositions. So some dispute is inevitable. If there is a dispute with a friend, then it should not generate harmful thought towards that person. There may be some differences, but still one should not cause any harm to the other person. Try not to lose whatever love and positive attitude you always have for that person. Even if there is some unresolved dispute and, in the interests of both sides, the relationship is closed, still you can continue to look after

each other. There are many who finish a relationship with a previous friend, but still maintain a good very caring form of relationship.

Tsong Khapa says if our thought is positive, then all the rest will be positive. If the thought is negative then all that follows, actions and consequences of actions will be negative. Therefore everything depends on our thought or state of mind.

If we see these teachings and the dharma as having something to do with our own mind and daily way of thinking then, whatever the subject of the dharma, it will have an immediate benefit in this life. Then we don't have to wait for the result of dharma in the next life. In our day-to-day life, we see its role. It is not a physical state but a state of mind that you should try to develop and work hard to maintain all the time. That mental attitude is strong love to others and trying to prevent harmful thought towards others. If one maintains this attitude it makes a lot of difference to one's own life and the way others see one. It makes for better relationships with others.

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

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

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