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Study Group - “Liberation *in the Palm of Your Hand*”  
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22 March 1994

Please make sure that your motivation for studying the Lam Rim is to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Such a mind is bodhicitta. To cultivate this mind is not something that happens naturally. So we must make an effort to cultivate at least some kind of artificial bodhicitta.

### **The Meaning Of The Generation Of Bodhicitta Motivation**

The meaning of the motivation of bodhicitta, which we generate before starting any practice, is quite complex because it shows the purpose and goal of your practice. The motivation of bodhicitta contains the thought "I shall achieve the full state of enlightenment for the sake of all living beings. For this reason I am engaging in the study and practice of Lam Rim". This motivation shows that our aim or goal is to achieve the highest or complete state of enlightenment. Before actually developing a wish to pursue this ultimate spiritual goal, there should be some belief that such a goal is possible to attain. One should also understand the meaning of the complete state of enlightenment, which is that it is the highest state, where one is free of all faults, and possesses all excellent qualities.

So of course, we must at least have some vague knowledge of what faults we need to remove and what qualities to we need to develop in ourselves. In general faults are all negative qualities such as desire, hatred, jealousy and so on. They are faults because they are obstacles to our own enlightenment as well as being obstacles to benefiting others.

Uprooting all these faults depends upon whether we can separate our mind from the stain of those negativities. In daily life we always utilise these minds of desire, anger, hatred and so on. These negativities are the cause of all our problems and they also cause others to experience the same problem. If we investigate we see that although these thoughts are often in the mind, they are not always there. Therefore they are not an inherent or intrinsic part of the mind. That is, they are alien to the fundamental nature of the mind. They can therefore be removed from the mind.

So even without much knowledge it is possible to generate faith that these negativities can be uprooted from the mind. We can then develop positive qualities

and in this way achieve the highest state, which is buddhahood - free of all faults and possessing all qualities.

We say "For the sake of all sentient beings I shall attain enlightenment." Without reaching this state for ourselves, we are not in a position to lead all sentient beings nor to fully benefit all sentient beings. That is why this motivation is at the beginning of all practice. It is to give purpose to the practice and to remind ourselves of all living beings' unique potential, which is to achieve the full state of enlightenment.

There is no need to feel disappointed at your rate of progress. Whatever knowledge is gained, no matter how small, leaves some imprint on the mind, and is not wasted. In some way the cause to achieve enlightenment is still being created.

### **All Learning (Spiritual And Ordinary) Depends Upon Motivation**

Starting our practice with the correct motivation is very important, if our meditations are to be an effective means of developing ourselves. If we think about other types of learning, that we have achieved, we usually think that the more qualifications which we have obtained, the more we have valuable skills or qualities. This does not necessarily mean that we are a better person with less faults. There are many cases where it seems that the more you learn, the more you become full of pride, and so look down on some and compete with others. So you become more restless and negative in the eyes of others. What is wrong with these qualifications you have achieved? It goes back to the motivation or intention with which you began your studies.

The intention to make progress within oneself and to gain qualities to help others is the spiritual goal or motivation. In the mundane life this motivation is not important. There it may be more important to appear to have a lot of skills. So if we really want to make progress within ourselves, we must rely upon spiritual practice. This involves knowing more about the faults in ourselves, and the methods to overcome those faults. We must at least be aware that having such negative attitudes as anger, hatred and jealousy, is not only an unpleasant experience, but is also very self destructive.

If we investigate our mind we see that all these faults can

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be removed. Sometimes we see strong anger, and at others we see intense attachment. By investigating this continuum of the mind as a whole, we see that there are fluctuations in the arising of emotions such as anger and desire. If we are angry with some object or person, then whatever attachment previously existed for that object or person, is now gone. Logically, if attachment were a natural part of an object, then the we would always experience same intensity of attachment. It is like a cloud, which is not the real nature or colour of the sky. Clouds come and go, so they are not the real colour of the sky. Similarly all the negative states of mind are temporary and adventitious, so they can be separated from the real nature of the mind. Every sentient being has the seed of Buddhahood inside themselves.

Therefore, before engaging in practice, it is good to have a general knowledge of why you practise.

### **Advice On Presentation Of Meditations Prior To The Classes**

In the past Geshe-la has suggested that the topics, for the meditation held at the beginning of the classes, be handed out prior to the classes. This helps people to study before the class and to familiarise themselves with the object of the meditation. Then, when doing the meditation they will not have to learn the idea as well as meditate on it. Tonight we meditated on the karma of killing. Of course we follow the leader, but one advantage of handing out the paper beforehand is that the leader can say fewer words and people can think for themselves.

What is the karma of killing? It is just one action but it can be broken into:

- the object
- the thought one has when killing
- the deed
- completion

In this way we see the detail of the action of killing. Then we can focus on the result. In this way, although during the meditation not all the points are covered, there is still enough presented to enable the students to gain knowledge

### **The Practice Of Karma In Daily Life:**

With regard to the topic of the teachings, we still have not finished the topic of karma. But before going into this topic we should consider practical things about studying the law of karma. In our daily life, if we try our best to be a very honest and tolerant person, then naturally we are following the practice of the law of karma. We can also see the benefit of engaging in this spiritual training for ourselves. We can see how we have become a happier and calmer person than we were before meeting with the dharma. All learning or practice outside of the dharma has its focus on external things, seeing them as the source of happiness or problems. We then make our effort accordingly. To determine if one is making

progress with spiritual practice one looks inside. We try to see what good qualities we are developing and what shortcomings we are reducing. The real advantage of dharma is something we see developing within ourselves e.g. more patience but less pride and jealousy.

If we live our life outside dharma, whatever progress we achieve can become the source of more conflict, confusion and problems within ourselves. Through pride we see people below us as very inferior. At the same time there is jealousy towards those above and strong competition with equals. All these feelings are unpleasant and bring discomfort. It is important that the same thing does not happen with spiritual progress. No matter how one's learning increases there should be no jealousy towards those who have more learning. Nor should there be pride about one's progress, or competition with equals. Spiritual practice should enable one to think "Why should I feel jealous towards someone more learned than myself? They are just like me in seeking knowledge". Therefore, instead of jealousy one rejoices in that person's knowledge.

The essential practice of karma is to be very honest and truthful. Then we can show patience and tolerance to others. With both spiritual and mundane projects there are always two sides - obstacles and favourable factors. In order to be successful you need to practise patience toward the obstacles, and make an effort to meet the favourable factors.

The reason for spending time on this is because everyone here shows some interest in the dharma. We do this because we have learnt that the material world does not hold the solution to our problems, and that material possessions are not the only purpose to life. With this kind of background in our mind it is important that we put the dharma into practice effectively.

End of discourse:

Geshe-la: In the subdivisions of "General Explanation of karma," karma has two main subdivisions, general and specific. What are the four subdivisions of the general explanation?

Student 1: I can not remember.

Geshe-la: There are four. Geshe-la says that there is no difference between him and you since neither of you have a big family to look after.

Student 2:

- Karma is increasing
- Karma is definite
- You can not experience karma which you have not created
- Karma does not expire

Geshe-la: Why is karma definite?

Student 2: Karma is definite because once it makes an imprint it will definitely ripen. *(Editor: this is not the*

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*correct answer. Karma is definite because virtuous actions leads to positive results and non virtuous actions lead to negative results.)*

Geshe-la: There are ten virtuous actions and opposite to them ten non-virtuous actions. Now list the ten non-virtuous actions and then list the three results of karma.

Students: Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, idle gossip, covetousness, harmful thought, wrong view.

The three results of karma:

1. ripened result
2. result similar to the cause
3. environmental result

### **Etymology Of "Path Of No More Learning"**

Geshe-la: List the five paths?

1. Accumulation, Preparation, Seeing, Meditation, No more learning

Geshe-la: Is the hinayana path of no more learning a path of no more learning?

Student 3: No. The hinayanist must still remove obstacles to all knowledge.

Geshe-la: In the texts, the path of no more learning is defined as the path of no more learning to abandon obstructions to liberation, i.e. abandoning afflicted obscurations. When this is reached then one is free from all afflictive obscurations.

The reason why the hinayana path of no more learning is called the path of no more learning is because when they reach this path there is no more to learn about their path.

### **Definition Of Generosity**

Geshe-la: Name the six perfections.

Students: Generosity, morality, patience, enthusiastic perseverance, concentration and wisdom.

Geshe-la: What is generosity? When giving a cup of tea to someone, is the cup of tea generosity?

Student 3: No, generosity is the mind of giving.

Geshe-la: But do not people benefit from generosity? Does generosity benefit others?

Student 3: Yes.

Geshe-la: There is no doubt that someone who is thirsty will be benefited by the cup of tea. Therefore is not the cup of tea generosity?

Student 3: It is generosity because it is not harming them.

Geshe-la: Your original reason was that the cup of tea was not generosity. Then you stated that by generosity you benefit others. Then you stated that you benefit others by not harming them. This is a faulty reason.

According to you, the sky would be benefiting others because it does not harm them.

Student 3: In actuality you benefit others by that person receiving something which benefits them.

Geshe-la: In a tea shop they serve you. Are they benefiting you?

Student 3: Yes.

Geshe-la: Is it generosity?

Student 3: It depends on their mind.

Geshe-la: They are giving something but they do expect you to pay. They are selling tea not giving tea. Obviously tea benefits you. However every time you are paid for something that you give, this is not the act of giving.

Student 4: I thought generosity would have to be the whole action of giving - thought, basis, deed and completion.

Geshe-la: One has to use the thought or intention of giving. Depending upon the strength of that thought the action of giving is performed. Some people may have so much wealth but are not generous because they lack the thought of giving or they are unfamiliar with that thought.

### **Direct And Indirect Benefits Of Giving**

Giving tea to someone else is direct giving. There is direct benefit to another as a result of giving. In meditation we think of giving happiness and good things to all sentient beings, and imagine that they receive happiness from this. Such a meditation indirectly benefits other sentient beings, and is also very effective in developing the practice of giving. By having this strong intention of giving, then when the time comes, we shall utilise our whole ability to do so. If we cultivate compassion in meditation and extend that feeling of love to all beings, then the benefit of that reaches all beings. In this way the practice of giving has both a direct and indirect benefit.

### **Geshe-La's Life Story: The Mendicant Who Practised Giving Unusually**

A Story concerning the lack of attachment:

In India one of Geshela's friends lived life as a mendicant. However he would also do some selling and business and at other times do some cleaning. All the money he made he gave to the poor. He had no attachment to the money. At night he left it in an old tin which showed he did not worry. Perhaps it was also the safest as well! Sometimes he slept in the crowded streets. He would keep the money box at some distance from him rather than beside him. This behaviour and attitude to money is hard for a normal person to understand.