Study Group - "Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand" A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

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29 March 1994

It is important that you reinforce your motivation for listening to the teachings. First generate the genuine wish to achieve full state of enlightenment in order to benefit all sentient beings. Secondly, think "To fulfil this wish to achieve enlightenment for sake of all sentient beings, I am listening to these teachings and I will put them into practice".

422.122.123: The Four Doors That Lead To Powerful

422.122.123.1: Powerful Owing To The Field ଜ୍ମ.୷ୄଞ୍ଜ୍ୟ.ଞୂ୍ଧ୍ୟ.ହୃ.ଧ

422.122.123.2: Powerful Owing To The Base हेत्र'में'र्झे'त्र्रा'र्झेप्रा'के'या

422.122.123.3: Powerful Owing To The Thing

422.122.123.4: Powerful Owing To The Intention ପଶ୍ୟ । ଏହି : क्षेष्ठ । उ

We have now learnt a great deal about this subject of the law of karma. It is a very complex and deep subject. To put this profound subject into practice, is to refrain from the ten non-virtuous actions and to practise the ten virtuous actions. We have previously studied the ten actions and their respective results.

The next topic shows the factors that determine whether or not karma is powerful. There are four doors to powerful karma.

Literally these are:

- the door of field
- the door of basis

- the door of things
- the door of intentions

422.122.123.1: First Door: Powerful Owing To The Door

The first door is the field, or the object, towards whom the action or karma is created. This depends on the person to whom you create the karma. For example compare giving charity to an ordinary person and giving the same to one's parents. The charity to one's parents is more powerful giving. Giving the same to a celibate or ordained practitioner is an even more powerful action. If the recipient is a lay bodhisattva, an ordained bodhisattva, a Buddha or one's guru, the karma is, respectively, even more powerful.

The karma we create becomes more powerful because of the object to whom the action is directed.

Not Creating Negative Actions To Any Living Being And Respecting All Beings

Conversely negative karma also becomes more powerful depending on the field or object on which it is created. Of course creating any negativity towards any living being is bad, but to create negativities towards one's parents, to spiritual practitioners or high bodhisattva's is even more serious negative karma. Relating this to our daily practice, we must be especially careful to not create negativities towards anyone close to oneself. This means not only parents, but also friends and those to whom we are grateful.

Furthermore, we need to remember that we do not know whether our parents or friends are ordinary beings. It is possible that they are bodhisattvas or the manifestation of Buddhas who are present in our lives as our parents or friends.

Great beings are like a fire buried under ashes. From the outside we can not see the fire, but if we dig into the ashes we can feel the heat. The implication here is to not

¹Liberation... p455 In this text the title is "Teaching about the doors that unintentionally lead to powerful karma"

²Liberation ...p455 In this text the title is "Powerful owing to the field"

create any negative action towards any living being, and to be particularly careful with our parents, teachers and well known spiritual practitioners.

Sometimes, because of our own lack of merit, virtue or our own ignorance, the person in front of us may appear as an ordinary person, when they are in fact a highly realised practitioner, bodhisattva, or Buddha. Those who study secret mantra will recall the manifestation of Vajra Yogini as an ordinary woman. To despise women is breaking one of the root tantric vows. This should inspire us to always show respect to others since we do not know the level another person may have reached.

To engage in spiritual practice such as the law of karma we do not need to live in some quiet isolated place and engage in meditation. Rather the practice of karma must be integrated into daily life.

At work we must practise karma. Since the practice of karma means to be very honest we contribute to our workplace and also we benefit ourselves. If you are employed for ten dollars for one hours work, then you are obliged to work for that hour. Even to misuse a few minutes of our paid time for something else (apart from work) is stealing. Our spiritual learning must be integrated into our lives at all times. Then we will see the benefit of dharma through our improved relationships with others.

As a causal nature, if we are kind and friendly to others they will respond in the same way. Humans are very kind to pets and other animals. When they respond to our kindness in the same way we experience much joy and pleasure.

The Practice Of Karma Leads To Stable, Peaceful Relationships

The essence of practising karma is transforming our actions and deeds into a positive form. If we examine our speech we see that it can be either pleasant or hurtful to others. If we are aware of that and try to correct it, then naturally we can safeguard ourselves from bringing disharmony into relationships. The people with whom we live and work are part of our daily life. If you always show friendliness and help to those people, then generally you get the same in return.

Whereas if we do something wrong, it usually affects those closest to us. They receive harm from us and automatically we receive harm back. So unless we improve our attitudes and deeds in daily life there is no solution to our continuous problems. If we make an effort we can make gradual progress. Think for example of HH the Dalai Lama. To his followers, he is a fully enlightened being who has achieved the perfections of giving, patience and so on. Even non Buddhists see his tremendous qualities of patience and tolerance. They are amazed that he doesn't show bitterness or hatred to the Chinese, who have brought so much suffering to Tibet and its people.

As a human beings there is this potential for us to fully develop our practice of giving and patience. The practice of patience is an especially good cause to minimise the suffering in our lives. Often a weakness in showing patience or tolerance to a situation results in even more problems and suffering.

Therefore we must develop tolerance in relationships so that there is harmony in those relationships. This will also ensure that the relationships will last longer. It is always said that most of us have desire or attachment in our mind. An element of this is always involved in our relationships. So when something goes wrong in a relationship, or if it dissolves, there is tremendous pain and suffering into the mind. If there were no desire or attachment, then there would be no pain. But because there is desire, there is great suffering and pain when the relationship ends.

Realising this consequence, we know that we must show great tolerance to small conflicts. If our friend shows anger we must try to tolerate that, otherwise the conflict may destroy the relationship. To prevent serious problems in the future, we have to tolerate minor difficulties now.

The practice of karma must be combined into our daily activities. From the time we rise in the morning, and day by day until the last moment of this life, it is something which we need to practice. We live in a very crowded society, so we must be very responsible for our speech, actions and thoughts. We must constantly practice bringing some discipline to our thoughts and actions.

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 Bunnett then checks the typescript against a tape recording, and edits the text, which is finally checked by Alan Molloy.

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