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

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

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ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅངས།

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Try to generate motivation by thinking "I must achieve the state of Buddhahood and it is for this reason that I shall practice the Lam Rim teachings".

Of the four doors of powerful actions the fourth is the Door of Intention.

422.122.123.4: The Door Of Intention¹

བསམ་པའི་སྣོན་ནས་སྟོབས་ཆེ་བ།

The intention which decides the action is a very important factor which determines the intensity of that action. Here the emphasis is on having the altruistic mind of enlightenment or bodhicitta as the intention.

It is said that if we say Tara prayers out of the motivation of bodhicitta, the benefit of saying that Tara prayer once, is equal to the benefit of saying Tara prayers thousands of times without the motivation of bodhicitta.

Benefits Of Bodhicitta Intention

In relation to the benefits of using bodhicitta as a motivation for our practice Shantideva says in the Bodhisattvacharyavataara:²

All other virtues are like the plain tree, which after yielding its fruit once it ceases to produce more. From the tree of bodhicitta the yield is everlasting.

When it says here that "all other virtues are like a plain tree", a banana tree is such an example. The "other virtues" are those virtuous actions, that are not motivated by bodhicitta. As a benefit of these actions one may obtain a happy life as a human being. However after that, the virtuous action can no longer produce any good results in the form of happiness. Therefore, they are like a plain tree the fruit of which is only enjoyed once. Thereafter there is no fruit to be enjoyed.

Bodhicitta, however, is likened to a tree which can produce fruit constantly. As a result of virtuous actions

motivated by bodhicitta we obtain any of the high rebirths, and having produced that rebirth that same virtue continues to produce more results and keeps increasing.

Whenever we create any virtuous action, for example the meditation practice we did at the beginning of this session, we generate should bodhicitta as our motivation. Then while engaging in the practice we should remind ourselves "I am doing this practice for the sake of all sentient beings". At the end we should dedicate the practice to the benefit of all sentient beings.

Including the bodhicitta motivation from the beginning to the end of the practice will cause the merit from the practice to continue to increase, and ensure a good result.

Joy And Repetition - The Way To Accumulate Great Virtue

Using bodhicitta as a motivation for our practice helps us to reduce the selfish mind. It is said that there are also two other factors to remember besides bodhicitta to make our practice very positive:

1. Always feel delight in one's practice. When you start feel joy and delight, and maintain those feelings throughout the practice until the conclusion.
2. Repeat the practice as often as possible. It is very difficult to make progress if you are always stopping and starting

If we fulfil both of these factors we will accumulate much virtue. To neglect one of these factors reduces the virtue.

Fulfilling One's Own Aims By Caring For Others' Welfare:

It is very clear that performing the same actions with thought of the need of other beings is much broader in scope than performing them solely for our own benefit. If we think of all living beings when we perform some action, the virtue from that action is very extensive since it is being shared with all living beings. Immediately this gives us a sense of joy. Whereas if we always do things with a very selfish mind, somehow we end up unhappy and disappointed. If we act from a selfish mind, there is no consideration for other beings' needs, because we have no respect for them. Even to those close to us such as our parents or friends we cannot admit we were

¹Liberation...p458 The title used in the text is "Powerful because of the intention."

²Verse 12 chapter one. In the LTWA translation of this the verse reads:

"All other virtues are like the plaintain tree;
for after bearing fruit they simply perish.
But the perennial tree of the Awakening Mind
Unceasingly bears fruit and thereby flourishes
without end."

wrong and suffer any loss at all. Generally there is no way we can completely disregard the well-being of others and still fulfil even our own selfish purpose.

To start with, we should try to share our happiness with those who are closest. It is worthwhile to think "At least I shall not hurt the person closest to me". Then any actions will be influenced by that thought rather than any selfish motivation.

When a couple both think of each other then naturally there will be harmony in that relationship. They can enjoy their life regardless of other factors such as financial circumstances. Because of their love for each other there is no harm, so then there is harmony, and then they can find meaning in their relationship.

After seeing the benefit of showing love to others - either to one or a few friends - surely it is easy to extend this love to more beings. Then we can think of the welfare of all other beings be they friend, enemy or stranger. If we lead our life like this, then every virtuous action we create is shared with every living being, and so it becomes a very powerful action indeed. That one action can be a cause to find countless happy rebirths is the future.

Developing Trust In Relationships

Suppose two people try to help each other as much as they can. After a while they relax and completely trust each other. With this complete trust there is no room between them for conflict and unnecessary disputes. Without this trust, it is very easy to be suspicious, even though they may like or love each other. If one of them makes a slight mistake in conversation or says something at the wrong time, this can be a source of great conflict and dispute. Trust in each other comes as a result of proving that you love and care for one another. Without this trust there is room for conflict. The main thing is to reduce the self-interest, especially within relationships. If we have a very strong self interest then any friendships or relationships will not work and life will be difficult, miserable and confused. With a strong selfish mind it is difficult to find peace and happiness. Everything you possess seems to create more unease in the mind. With a selfish mind, you feel pride in any success or wealth, but there is not much meaning in that success. Whereas someone who thinks of the needs of others uses whatever skills or knowledge they acquire for the benefit of others. Similarly any wealth gained is used in the most beneficial way.

The motivation of caring for other beings not only helps them, but also becomes a true source of happiness and fulfilment in one's own life as well.

End of discourse

Mantras For Purifying Meat And When Accidentally Stepping On Animals

Here are two mantras for the Picnic day which Geshe-la says should be recited three or seven times.

"OM KHE-CA-RA GHANA HUM HRIH SOHA"

We should do this first mantra in the morning. Its purpose is for when we kill any living creatures by stepping on them during that day.³

"OM A-BHI-RA KHE-CA-RA HUNG"

The second mantra is for those of you who eat meat. This mantra must be recited seven times prior to eating, then blow on the meat. This is effective in getting rid of any negativities from eating meat.

In the Scriptures it says:

By reciting this mantra, the sentient beings whose meat it is, will be caused to be reborn in a higher rebirth.

It is best that we try to practise saying the mantra. It is more important to have faith rather than worrying about the correct pronunciation. To do so that would have to go back to the Sanskrit which would be very difficult. If two people one who is blind and one who is mute, go begging in front of a house they will both get food from the householder who will understand their intention for being at the door begging. The mantra is transliterated into English from Tibetan. The original mantra was in Sanskrit. It is hard to get the sound right in Tibetan let alone then turning into English. Therefore do not worry about getting the sound right. If we listen to others they say it differently anyhow.

The main purpose of this is to clarify any doubt that by saying the mantra unclearly one gets less blessings. Receiving the benefit from a mantra depends not on how we say it but on how much faith we have in it.

Even English has different pronunciations for the same word. For example 'apple', which is the correct word for apple. In Australia we say "tea is hot", in the USA they say "tea is hut". Canadians and New Zealanders have different pronunciations again and yet they all say that they speak English.

In China when they recite Chenrezig mantra, their original is derived from Sanskrit just like the Tibetan. However the Chinese version sounds very different from the Tibetan. It may sound different but that does not mean it is wrong.

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

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³It is also stated that one should recite this mantra three times then blow some spittle onto the soles of your feet. Then any living beings that die beneath your feet that day will be reborn in the land of the Thirty three gods.