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

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering



ལྷ་ཡང་ན་ཡང་དུ་འདོར་བའི་ཉེས་པ།

6 December 1994

Just make sure that you establish the motivation of bodhicitta by generating the thought that "I am listening to and practising the stages of the path in order to attain full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings."

422.211.3: The Fault Of Having To Change Over The Body Again And Again

ལྷ་ཡང་ན་ཡང་དུ་འདོར་བའི་ཉེས་པ།

Last week we finished at the fault of cyclic existence of having to change bodies over again and again. What does this mean? It means you cannot always have the same body, and that any type of body you assume cannot be fully trusted.

We keep changing our body and as said in Nagajuna's Letter to a friend¹:-

No matter what type of body you find in cyclic existence there is no real benefit of it to oneself.

You might have found the body of life as a very powerful godly king like Brahma or Indra countless times, but of what use are those at the moment.

You might also have been born as godly beings of sun and moon - beings capable of illuminating light from your body to all three continents. But soon after one falls into very dark realms where you cannot even see one's own hand.

This shows how we assume various forms of body, and that none of these bodies are of any benefit ultimately. Just as samsaric bodies lack purpose or meaning,

similarly samsaric wealth and pleasures also lack the essence of meaning. In fact there is not any one valuable form of wealth in either the human or godly realms which we have not had in the past.

In the past we took life as very high godly beings. Our wealth was such that the house in which we lived was made of precious jewels; the place where we sat was of diamond or vajra stones. Needless to say, despite this wealth of godly beings or humans that we have obtained in the past, where we now sit is just on ordinary cushions on ordinary ground. All the wealth we once possessed has not been with us for a long time, and has not benefited us in the long run.

In the past we have also experienced all the pleasures and joys of samsara. For example when in the past when we were born in the godly realms we experienced such pleasures as playing with the breasts and waists of beautiful goddesses. However when that life was over we were born in the hell realms where we were surrounded by fearful, ferocious hell beings whose only task was to cause us pain by, for example, cutting off our limbs from our body.

Therefore in cyclic existence there is no essence. There is nothing which is reliable and trustworthy in the various forms of life in terms of the body type we find; the possessions we own; or the experiences we have. Nothing can be trusted.

422.211.4: Fault Of Being Conceived And Born Over And Over Again²

ཡང་ཡང་ཉིང་མཚམས་སྐྱེར་བའི་ཉེས་པ།

This means that there is no freedom when the time of death comes, and soon after it comes, one has to take rebirth in various forms of life without any freedom or choice. Since beginningless time we have continuously taken rebirth in various forms of life. Yet this chain of our life stream, this stream of life and death has not stopped. As Nagajuna said:³

¹ Liberation.. p481 The translation used in the text is

Gain the enormous bliss and pleasure
of the god realms, gain the bliss
free of attachment of Brahma himself,
and later you will fuel the fires
of the Hell Without Respite,
where the suffering is unbroken and constant.
When you were sun or moon gods,
the light from your bodies
shone on all the world.
Later you went to pitch-black darkness
where you could not see the movements of your own hands.

² Liberation.. p482 The title used in the text is "The bane of being conceived and born over and over again."

³ Liberation.. p483 The translation used in the text is
When you were dogs and pigs,

If we were to count or imagine how much food we ate in the past when born as an animal, then that pile of food we ate in the past would more than equal Mt Meru, the king of all mountains. Think of the quantity of water we drank as an animal. It cannot equal all the oceans.

This infers that in our contemplations we should think back and see that the various forms of life we have taken is beyond count. It is as if we have been doing the same work for a very long time. If we also think forward to the future, there is even more of the continuum of the stream of life to go through. Think of having done the same work for a long time, with no rest or time to ourselves. Then looking to the future we see we must do the same thing with no rest in sight. Just as we tend to get sick of work, in the same way we are conceived in cyclic existence and are being born over and over again. Even though we have already taken infinite lives so far, still the continuum of lifetimes has not shortened. There is even more to go. This contemplation will help to develop a renunciation of cyclic existence.

422.211.5: Fault Of Becoming High And Low Over And Over Again⁴

ཡང་ཡང་མཐོ་དམན་དུ་འགྱུར་བའི་ཉེས་པ།

This indicates that any status that has been achieved is not lasting. It is part of the nature of cyclic existence that after being raised up, we fall down to a very low status and visa versa. We can think of four end results of conditional phenomena. These four are said In the text these four are described thus:⁵

The end result of collecting is losing,
The end result of raising high is falling down,
The end result of meeting is separation,
The end result of birth is death.

We shall stop the teaching here. Next week Geshe-la suggests we do the meditation on seven fold cause and effect of bodhicitta. There will not be anyone to lead the meditation so everyone must prepare to do it for themselves.

For example: begin with immeasurable equanimity which makes your mind completely even. Then we follow the seven fold cause and effect:

- Recognising all beings as one's mother,
- Recognising their kindness,
- Repaying their kindness,
- Loving kindness,
- Great compassion
- Superior intention
- Bodhicitta.

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.

© **Tara Institute**

the amount of all the filth you ate
would be much greater
than Meru, king of mountains."
then,
Each of you has drunk more milk
than the four oceans, and yet
because you are a samsaric being
-an ordinary being of the common herd-
you will be drinking even more.

⁴ *Liberation.* p484 The title used in the text is "The bane of moving from high to low over and over again."