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Study Group - “Liberation *in the Palm of Your Hand*”  
A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga  
Translated by Samdup Tsering



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13 December 1994

For just a few minutes let us meditate on the precious mind of bodhicitta. This meditation is to cultivate bodhicitta in your mind if not yet cultivated, and to increase it if it already exists.

After giving great thought to the benefits of generating bodhicitta, one should examine whether one possesses that bodhicitta. Possessing that precious mind gives one a great sense of joy and delight. Even if one does not have actual bodhicitta but sees the potential in the form of some other quality of mind which can become that bodhicitta, then one should rejoice in that quality as well.

#### **The Purpose Of Dharma Practice - Cultivating The Good Heart**

We must be clear about the purpose for which the practice of dharma is undertaken. It is to cultivate the good heart if it has not yet arisen or to make an effort to cultivate that good heart if it does not yet exist. As Buddha said:

Even if you examine over hundreds of aeons, what is the most beneficial for the others, it is the good heart or a beneficial attitude towards others.

Bodhicitta, or the altruistic mind to enlightenment, is the fullest growth of good heart. So therefore as practitioners of dharma, we should always have the realisation that the good heart (or this benevolent thought which can be generated in yourself), can be the source of benefit and happiness for all other beings. Especially if you are following the mahayana path, you should regard this quality of good heart as the most valuable jewel which you possess. Therefore you should think it is your responsibility to safeguard it and to increase that quality of good heart in the mind.

As you have been putting a great deal of effort into practising dharma, like receiving teachings and so on, the most important thing to remember is the actual goal or essence of following the spiritual path. If we apply the practice of study and of dharma to actualise this essential purpose of dharma then naturally we shall be fulfilling our spiritual goal or purpose. As a result of that our lives will be very meaningful and happy. In addition we share this peace and happiness with those those others with whom we associate.

As mentioned earlier, the essential purpose of dharma is to calm our own mind and cultivate a good heart within. If you do not have such good heart or show any care or kindness to others, especially to those with whom you associate this will bring unnecessary problems and misery in your life as well as to those others. If we examine our minds we see that most of the time our mind becomes upset or worried is because of being very selfish and not having kind thoughts toward our friends for instance. On the other hand if we always show care and good heart to those surrounding us, then our attitude will be the same as that of very kind parents towards their children. Such parents rejoice with a sense of pleasure and delight when their children do well.

If we lack such caring thoughts towards surrounding people, then instead of sharing our good thoughts with them, we feel jealous if they are successful or feel competitive towards them. Giving way to such thoughts of jealousy and competitiveness only brings discomfort and unease in our mind which makes us very restless and unhappy. So we can see that the main source of our own day-to-day experience of dissatisfaction is our lack of love and compassion to others.

#### **Thoughts For The End Of The Year**

Geshe-la says it is really great that you have all exerted so much effort in attending teachings and meditations. If we have to synthesise the main purpose of the effort we put in, it is to develop good heart and to subdue our mind. If as a result of undertaking the Lam Rim teachings we notice our mind is becoming subdued, or if we see that we have cultivated more kind thoughts toward others, then we can say we have achieved the purpose or fruit of dharma. The purpose of calming the mind and generating good heart is achieved by practising the three higher trainings;- higher morality, concentration and the wisdom realising emptiness. Therefore in practising dharma we are not only talking about passing time in this life, but are aware that life goes on.

Geshe-la takes this opportunity to thank you for making the effort to come to these Lam Rim teachings throughout the year. It is important that you think of all the merit you have accumulated from your effort. Just try to feel very positive and rejoice in the fact that you

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have made the effort throughout the year. If you rejoice in your own merit, then it will multiply.

Also Geshe-la thanks those of you who have taken Monday Night talks. Also some of you have taken responsibility for the children's Sunday School which was also very successful. It seems that the children also enjoyed it a lot.

Geshe Doga really appreciates those who give their time to also give meditation talks outside the centre. To all of you Geshe-la gives thanks for sacrificing your own time and comfort to benefit others. In terms of one's own spiritual practice there is nothing better than helping others through action. When we talk of love and compassion we can do this in quiet meditation by thinking of their needs and then generating the thought to fulfil those needs. This is helpful. But the actual test of the love and compassion which we generate in meditation is when we face actually face others in very desperate situations. In these situations it is not easy because you have to sacrifice your own comfort, undergo hardships and be tolerant. Geshe-la feels that those who lead Monday nights, Sunday classes or other teachings have made some sacrifice. By their efforts the children and others have benefited. Even if only one single being benefits, that is the purpose of dharma.

This practice of helping others is admired equally by both spiritual practitioners and non believers of religious traditions. Such attitudes are universally respected. Therefore the benefit of showing love and helping others is not necessarily religious. Keeping this in mind Geshe-la requests you to continue your contributions to the benefit of others in future.

Geshe-la is going to recite some prayers that this good heart and bodhicitta be generated in the minds of all beings. You should also make the prayer 'May I generate pure bodhicitta in my mind. Just as this year has been successful for attending teachings and practices, may the coming year be the same.'

Since this is the last Tuesday night of the year Geshe-la wishes you Merry Christmas and sends hundreds of thousands of Tashi Deleks and love to you. The twenty seventh of December is Lama Tsong Khapa day which will be celebrated with a special Guru Puja. Geshe-la also wishes to remind you that there will be four sessions of Tara meditation beginning on January eighteenth. It will be very beneficial if as many people as possible can attend those teachings. You should also feel free to use the gompa when there is no other function happening. Come here if you like to use it for your meditation practice, or do that with a few friends who want to do the same thing.

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

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*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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