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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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21 March 1993

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Try to generate a strong motivation to attain the state of Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings; and that for this purpose you are listening to these profound teachings on the Lam Rim, and practising them.

### **The Importance Of Correct Motivation**

At the start of any practice, such as listening to a teaching, we need to check our mind, because it is not worthwhile to allow our actions to be directed by a negative state of mind. When we generate a motivation we are trying to change our frame of mind. If our mind is in the grip of some mental delusion or negativity we must change that state, and in doing this we must also generate the wish to attain the state of enlightenment for sake of all beings. In order to generate this wish for state of enlightenment you must have some understanding of Dharma; of the teachings. With this understanding of Dharma, then simply generating a proper motivation gives you an overall view of the entire stages of path leading to enlightenment.

### **Contemplating The Faults Of Cyclic Existence**

With regard to the Lam Rim teachings we are discussing the faults of cyclic existence in terms of the fault of frequently rising high and falling low. We cannot avoid this fault of cyclic existence as long as our mind is attracted (or attached) to the beauty of cyclic existence, and as long as our life is bound to these contaminated aggregates. The main purpose of contemplating the various faults of cyclic existence is to overcome attachment to the seeming beauty of cyclic existence; towards this life as well as all the lives to come in cyclic existence. We must realise that if we are to challenge and reduce this attachment to cyclic existence, we have to see the pitfalls in this and future lives.

If we truly examine the source of all the problems and unending difficulties (both mental and physical) that we continuously face in this life, we shall see that the real cause of our suffering is our attachment to this life, and the seeming beauties of cyclic existence. Seeing this will motivate us to begin to try to diminish that attachment.

So how do we overcome this attachment? For this we need to engage in meditation practice, according to authentic teachings. By following this practice, our mind will be turned away from those objects and conditions

which produce attachment and increase mental delusions in our mind. Then our mind will be turned to a virtuous object with which we become very familiar. With this approach we have the power to overcome, challenge and prevent mental delusions from arising in our mind. By overcoming these mental delusions our verbal and physical actions become very pleasant, positive and free from all misconduct.

### **The Faults Of Attachment**

The teachings tell us that the wealth, friends and so on, which we accumulate in life, ultimately have no personal benefit. Yet this is not the way we normally view things. Normally we view these samsaric objects as a very reliable and lasting source of happiness, and as a result we have strong desire to possess these things. In fact this desire is itself very deceptive. It is one of the worst forms of deception, because out of this desire we believe that the possession of those desired objects will make us very content and satisfied. But if by luck we obtain all those desired objects, which are supposed to content our mind and body (good food, shelter, in fact everything we think of as bringing comfort to our life) still we desire more. Therefore even though there is sufficient comfort, it does not content the mind, and since the mind is not content it wanders after other things.

Furthermore no matter how much wealth you acquire it can always be removed, either by force, or through death (when you have to leave everything behind). So ultimately there is no continuing benefit from these possessions.

This talk of suffering and the negative side of samsaric objects is not intended to depress; rather it is to help our mind to see things realistically, and thereby gain some benefit. If we train our mind to understand this negative aspect of samsaric objects then it will minimise our attachment to them. Then our view of them will change. Then, with a decrease in our attachment and a changed view, when death comes it will not be a shock to leave all these objects of attachment behind. We shall already know that this will happen, and be able to do it easily.

So our attachment to samsaric objects not only brings immense problems when we are alive, but also when we are dying.

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## Safeguarding The Pleasure We Already Have

Even the lasting experience of the sensual pleasures also depends upon contentment. It is important to content yourself with whatever comfort and happiness you already possess. So try to see the benefits and advantages of whatever comforts you already have. Then make every effort to safeguard and protect that. Because as soon as something else is seen and desired, all the existing comfort and joy is completely forgotten. Then if the next goal is not achieved there will be disappointment, but on top of this you have lost whatever joy and comfort you had previously. So there is a sense of total failure, and there is no pleasure in that.

Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey advised that you should always feel positive and try to safeguard the lasting peace and joy you have now, rather than about thinking and worrying about things you have not got. In terms of sensual pleasure you must safeguard the pleasure you already have, and make sure that it is not lost, before making an effort to find something else.

The true sense of peace and happiness derives from one's own mind. This is why celibate monks or nuns have moral ethics restraining their three doors from any wrong actions. As a benefit of this restraint, the vows serve as a source of peace and joy. In a similar way lay people can practise moral virtue and restraint of their three doors of body, speech and mind.

These teachings help us gain more understanding of our own mind. With this knowledge we can heal the diseases of the mind and enhance the peace and joy within. With this we finish the teachings on the sutra which gives the four end results of impermanence.

- 1 The end result of accumulating is losing
- 2 The end result of meeting is separation
- 3 The end result of rising is falling
- 4 The end result of birth is death

Contemplating these faults of cyclic existence should inspire us to want to free ourselves from cyclic existence, and in this way cultivate the aspiration to achieve the state of liberation.

### Regarding Leading Meditations

Geshe-la asked Dennis to check with everyone whether you prefer to do a Guru Shakyamuni Buddha meditation, or to do meditation on each topic as we have in the past.

If you decide to vote for the Guru Shakyamuni Buddha meditation, Geshe-la would like to ask Dennis and Ven. Kaye to put the form of the Guru Shakyamuni Buddha meditation, and dedication together on paper. With the mantra just say "Om muni muni...svaha." There is no need to say the "Tayatha". Everyone needs to have a copy, so they can memorise the whole prayer, and so do it in silence, with no need to have someone in front to

lead.

Part of the reason for this second option is that in the past the usual meditations have not been organised properly. People need to have some preparation before doing the meditation. The idea was for the people leading the meditation to distribute some information about the topics one week prior to the meditation so that everyone can become familiar with the topic. Then on the night, the leader could just give an outline of the main points of the meditation.

You can recall that Geshe Doga suggested that part of the purpose of the Study Group dinner was to raise funds to pay for photocopying. If you decide to continue with different meditations then it must be properly organised. The person doing it has to write down the outline in advance and give it to everyone one week before. If people read the outline of the topic on which you will lead the meditation, they will be able to read up on subject beforehand. Then they can build up a framework from further study. The person leading the meditation should speak from the heart without papers.

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

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