
Study Group - “Liberation *in the Palm of Your Hand*”

A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga

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ལྷན་སྐྱེས་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅངས།

9 May 1995

Establish the right motivation for listening to the teachings.

422.212.215: Suffering Of Being Separated From Desirable Objects¹

སྐྱེས་པ་དང་བྲལ་བའི་སྐྱེས་བཞུལ།

We have finished discussing the suffering of human beings in terms of the sufferings of birth, sickness, ageing and death. Next is the suffering of being separated from desirable objects.

As a natural part of being born as a human in samsara, we are subject to being separated from close people, such as our parents, partners, relatives and friends. We are also subject to being separated from the social position or status we may have. We must also suffer due to losing our own power, fame and reputation. There is the suffering due to losing our wealth and possessions. Even if you are a celibate Sangha, one day you will be separated from your own vows.

All this suffering results from being separated from things which we cherish. It is not something unpredictable or unexpected; it has to happen and it is a natural result of being born in cyclic existence.

Overcoming The Suffering Of Being Separated From Desirable Objects

Two things need to be done to overcome this suffering of being separated from desirable objects. Firstly the cause should be known, and secondly, that cause must be removed.

The true spiritual practitioner, has detachment from all mundane objects, and so does not experience suffering as a result of not attaining wealth or friends, or being separated from them. Whereas for most of us, all

samsaric objects - friends, wealth and so on - are a source of suffering. The more friends or wealth you have, the more problems you face. Why do all these objects bring suffering to our lives? It is due to our grasping at them. So the main cause of suffering is our strong attachment to mundane objects such as friends and wealth.

In order to free ourselves from being enslaved by these worldly objects (and therefore undergoing suffering), we must turn our mind away from attachment to them. This can be done by seeing faults in those objects, because if we see good qualities in them we may become attached. Excluding our parents who have true affection within their hearts, what worldly friends will not eventually deceive or disappoint us? We must be careful upon whom we rely, since most other people are intent on pursuing their own selfish goals. We shall be lucky if, through friendship with another, one quarter of that friendship will provide satisfaction. The other three quarters are likely to be a cause for dissatisfaction - worldly friends are uncertain and unreliable.

Through realising the faults of various samsaric objects, we can cultivate a sense of renunciation towards them. Then, the more we turn away from these objects, the more we can enhance and generate peace in the mind, and the more freedom from suffering we shall enjoy.

The True Cause Of Suffering

The true cause of suffering is the desire which is within the mind. We may attribute the cause of our suffering to someone else, but actually it is a direct outcome of our own desire or attachment. We can understand this by thinking of a person to whom we were very attracted to in the past, but who is an object of hatred at the moment. You currently have a picture of that hated person as being very negative, ugly, and undesirable, so you are not unhappy if that person is far away. Indeed, not having that person around you makes you happy. However five years ago, when you saw that same person as very attractive and desirable, to be separated from them caused suffering. If the direct cause is not our mental attitude of desire, there is no reason to feel happy about being separated from that person now, or unhappy about being separated in the past. It is the same person!

¹ Page 493 *Liberation In The Palm Of Your Hand*. The title used in the text is The Suffering Of Being Separated From The Beautiful

Changing Your Mental Attitude

Suppose you are rejected by a friend to whom you are very attracted. You will feel unhappy and disturbed every time you think of that attractive and desirable person. Obviously if your attitude to that person changes (from seeing them as desirable to seeing them as antagonistic) it will not upset you if you do not see, or talk to, that person.

If you have not overcome desire for someone, the initial step to stop the misery they bring to your life, is to stop thinking of them. Do not bring them to mind. Try to forget them, because there is no point in thinking of them if the relationship cannot be restored. It is better to completely forget about it, since it only brings suffering.

Just as we meditated today on uncertainty, so in our own minds we should try to realise the reasons why the various samsaric objects (friends, relatives, etc) are so unreliable. If, in your mind, you gain some conviction in that fact, then meditation can be very effective in calming the mind. However, you cannot meditate with paper; listing reasons on a piece of paper will only aid memorisation, not inner peace and happiness.

Try to see that the purpose behind learning and meditating on the various types of suffering in cyclic existence, is part of cultivating a sense of renunciation – of liberation from cyclic existence. Try also, to incorporate all these reflections on suffering, and all the faults of cyclic existence to produce that renunciation.

Geshe-la would like to thank Vanessa, Caroline and the others who helped organise the Sunday picnic, which was a great success. Geshe-la was glad to see so many there.

Once again Geshe-la has to ask your patience, and help, to roll more mantras. There is only one month before the blessing ceremony, which will be attended by many other geshes. Geshe-la does not feel comfortable about asking for help, but he feels close enough to the study group to ask them to assist.

As usual on these mantra rolling nights, we shall have tea ready in the hall. Please do stay for the tea even if you cannot stay longer.

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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