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

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ལྷན་སྐྱོད་ཀྱི་རྒྱུ་ལྔ་པ་བཅའ་སྒྲུབ་ཀྱི་ལུགས་ཀྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་

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Ensure that you generate the right motivation.

We are discussing the six primary, or root, delusions. Of the six primary delusions, last time we discussed attachment, and also the meditational remedy to counteract that desire.

422.221.111.2: 2nd Root Delusion: Anger

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The next root delusion is anger. In order to overcome anger we need to know not only the antidote, but also all the disadvantages of anger.

Although desire, which is the thought of wanting things, can result in great dissatisfaction in our life, it is not something which we always see as a negative state, since it can sometimes become a temporary source of pleasure. Anger, on the other hand, has no such effect. Whether it be directly or indirectly, if anger dominates or is present in the mind, it will always bring disturbance to us and other people.

Seeing all the drawbacks of anger, we need to generate the strong motivation to be rid of it; not allowing the mind, or our actions, to be overpowered by it. We must make every effort to remove it, because if anger arises in the mind we know the result will be a great unhappiness and loss to ourselves, and those around us. So we should try to take countermeasures as soon as possible, and generate the prayer, “May I not be overpowered by anger.” To enjoy lasting peace and happiness in the mind, it is essential to try to free ourselves from the influence of anger.

Anger Is Easier To Overcome Than Desire

The difference between anger and desire is that anger is easier to recognise as a negative state. Also the remedy to overcome anger is easier than the remedy to overcome desire. It is said that desire can take over the mind just like a drop of oil on a piece of cloth; it can spread right through the cloth and be very difficult to remove. Once desire is generated in the mind it is hard to see its disadvantages. The longer it remains in our mind, the more firmly it becomes entrenched, and this makes it extremely difficult to overcome. Whereas with anger, if we make some effort it is easy to see all its drawbacks,

and we can reduce it more easily than attachment.

Relating The Teachings On Anger To Our Own Life

The most important thing for our spiritual development or progress is applying the teachings to our own life. Simply studying on an intellectual level is not making any real progress in spiritual terms; because then our knowledge of the disadvantages of anger is used merely to blame others for lacking patience or being short tempered, and so on. Often when we are under the influence of anger, we accept it and find some excuse, so there is no benefit from our knowledge. So as we learn of disadvantages of anger, we must try to relate this knowledge to our own life, and then make an effort to apply the meditation that will reduce the anger within.

If we recognise the faults of anger in terms of the consequences of our own actions, then our understanding of those faults will become clearer. We can see how, within the context of our own actions, we lose self-control when under the influence of anger. Recollect a situation when your mind was overpowered by anger, and try to see how the driving force of that anger forced you to undertake actions which would normally be unwanted ones.

Seeing what anger does to yourself, we can then see how, when a close friend comes under the control of anger, that their loss of control is not necessarily intended personally but comes through the force of anger. In this way we can practise tolerance. As a result of this we see how overcoming anger, and developing tolerance, has an immediate benefit to our life.

The Nature And Object Of Anger

If anger has many faults, what then is the nature and object of anger?

The nature of anger is a very gross state of mind, that has an attitude of holding resentment, or even wanting to harm others.

There are two objects of anger: animate things and inanimate things.

These inanimate things include not only those outer or external objects, which serve as a cause of pain or dissatisfaction, but also one's own pain, discomfort or unwanted feelings.

Thus the object of anger is not necessarily something very tangible which can be seen with our eyes or heard with our ears and so on - it can even be the discomfort we experience in life.

However not knowing that your own unhappiness or pain is also a cause of anger, can mean that some people feel that they have no control of their temper - they feel angry at everything. When asked "At what are you angry?", there is no specific object. Because we have this life and body, which has the nature of suffering and which can give rise to suffering, the cause to give rise to anger is always present.

If we perceive objects as very beautiful then attachment or desire arises in our mind, but when the object appears as very ugly to us, then we generate anger. It is almost automatic, that whenever we perceive an object as unattractive or unpleasant, anger arises within, and as mentioned before, with anger in our mind there is no room for inner peace or happiness.

Therefore we must explore what our life would be like if we did not control emotions like desire and anger. Individually it will be very unstable, and our relationships with the people around us will also be very unstable and unpredictable. Desire arises when we see our friend as very attractive and pleasant, and so want to be very close to them. On the other hand, when we see something unwanted in that friend we generate anger, and this creates actions which will distance us from that friend. Throughout our life if we generate anger one day, and attachment the next, then we are caught in some unsolvable confusion. Not only does it make our life unhappy and miserable but we cause the same misery to others: we cause pain to a close friend for instance.

So it is important to ask ourselves the question "Is there any good in showing anger to others, even when someone shows anger to me?" According to the worldly way of dealing with things the way to win over an enemy is to retaliate successfully. Of course it is not very worthwhile or wholesome to do so, but that is the way we see things. However we cannot do the same to someone very close to us. Even if they show anger to us, we cannot retaliate like we would with an enemy. Rather we have to think of showing tolerance, because that helps everyone.

Is there any advantage in showing anger even in terms of our own benefit? When we look carefully we see that there are no advantages whatsoever. If we don't control anger it will bring misery and harm to both our own, and our friend's life, and that will damage our relationship. Then how would your life be, with no-one close to you and supporting you? Because our life is one of interdependence it is a very harmonious relationship with the people and friends around us that brings most peace and pleasure in our life.

As well as seeing that spiritual practice has benefits in future lives, we must also see its benefits for this life.

When we see that we will be practising the spiritual teachings in this life, and at the same time creating the causes for benefit in future lives. Practising tolerance and patience towards a friend in this life, not only brings happiness now, but also creates causes for happiness in future lives.

In the *Bodhisattva Charyavatara* Shantideva said: "There is no non-virtue like hatred, and no ascetic practice or hardship like patience."¹

The first Dalai Lama His Holiness Gendun Drup said "Anger takes away the life of liberation and higher rebirth." In this way we should first try to understand all the benefits of practising tolerance, and the shortcomings of anger at a very gross or obvious level, then we can go into detail about the sort of meditation technique to develop patience and to overcome anger.

Firstly we must transform ourselves into a more stable happy and peaceful person, and then we can naturally help others. If we do not practise ourselves then our own life will be very unsettled and unhappy, and therefore cause harm to others.

If we practise tolerance, and the right way of thinking, then it is natural not to retaliate to someone who is trying to harm you. Staying calm, and showing a very friendly gesture forces them to change their attitude and to smile back at you. If we fully utilise our discriminating mind about what is most beneficial and harmful to ourself, then on the basis of this discriminating knowledge you seek the right way of living, which can bring joy, happiness, and stability in life.

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

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¹ *Bodhisattva Charyavatara* chapter 6 verse 2