

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

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

འདྲེན་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུང་ས།



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Before starting the discourse both students and teachers recite prayers taking refuge, and for the generation of bodhicitta. If we put these prayers into practice, it means that right from the beginning, we generate the right motivation.

The significance of reciting the refuge prayer - taking refuge in the three jewels - shows that the spiritual path we are following is not perverted. When, after taking refuge, we recite the bodhicitta prayer and generate bodhicitta, this shows that this path which we follow is not an ordinary one, but is a superior path. This is just to remind you.

In the teachings so far, we have finished:

- identifying the delusions, and
- the stages in which delusions are generated.

The current section we are studying is the causes of delusions. There are six main causes, of which we have finished five.

422.221.136: 6th Cause of Delusions: Mental Intention

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The sixth cause of delusion is mental intention. This cause helps us to trace back to the original cause of delusion.

“Mental intention” means the initial thought process by which our mind becomes associated with an object. In the beginning we just have a thought of a particular object. The next stage depends upon how we view that object. When the object appears to our mind, our mind immediately starts to project its own view onto that object.

If the mind views that object as very attractive then it begins to think over and over about that object’s qualities in terms of its shape and colour. Such an object can be animate, for example a man or a woman. These thoughts can develop that object into one which is absolutely beautiful from the top of the head downwards, in all respects - colour, shape, smell. Then our desire for that object will become very strong. As a result of our strong attachment we become completely absorbed in the object, even if it is not near us, or we have not actually possessed it. As a result we then suffer out of fear of losing that object or not obtaining it.

Likewise if we superimpose negative qualities on an object, then hatred will arise as a result of thinking about that object. Thinking of someone and generating that thought not just once but over and over for a whole year, and thinking of how that person has caused trouble and

loss to us, will naturally increase hatred towards that object.

Knowing about mental intention gives us a very good knowledge of the source of delusions such as anger and hatred. The main reason is that we are attached to an object due to its superficial qualities, and those qualities have been created by our own thought processes. This gives rise to the attachment and hatred which are such a source of suffering in our life.

Understanding this on the basis of our own life, we can also see how others are in the same situation. We can see how their delusions started, and how those delusions are the cause of their suffering; we can see that they are victims of their delusions. So we are in a good position to give helpful advice to others.

How do our Thoughts Change our Experiences?

It is said that of the six causes of delusion, the fifth and sixth causes are the most serious. Learning about the sixth cause shows that our way of thinking is a very influential cause of delusions. We must know what kind of thinking or thought process can stimulate desire, (and similarly with other delusions such as hatred). Knowing that a particular way of thinking about an object can stimulate desire for it, we can prevent that desire by thinking of that object in a way which is the opposite of the previous way of thinking. If we have one particular state of mind or thought, then we cannot also have the opposite type of thought, because the two cannot exist simultaneously.

This can be applied to a situation where we find it difficult to go to sleep. The reason is that the type of mind which occupies us wanders after very gross objects. To go to sleep we have to subdue all those very gross thoughts.

If we do not eliminate desire for a particular object, it will continually make us suffer. Desire arises when we view an object as very attractive, and this view can become very fixed and instinctive. Because it is so strong we may believe that it is impossible to view that object in any other way, and so we believe that we cannot decrease desire. But if we ask “do we have potential to view the object of desire as ugly or unattractive?” then the answer is “yes”. It may be difficult in the beginning but we do have that potential to view the object as unattractive.

Of all the types of suffering which we experience in life, that which we experience in our mind due to the disease of delusions is the most lasting and serious. On the other hand, if we are free of the disease of delusions, and

always know how to cure ourselves of that disease, if we enjoy sound health and body, then we can say there is no other reason which can be a real cause of problems to our life. All other conditions - food, clothes, shelter - are very minor.

Applying this to our daily experience, we see that the reason why there is no balance and stability in our life and in our relationships with others, is also because of the lack of a stable view of things. This is, of course, due to the ignorance which obscures our perceptions. So, in relation to our partner, our view can change from like to dislike, in even a single day even though our partner will not change a lot physically. In the morning our view can be that of a very lovable partner to whom we are attracted. We feel that we can trust them completely and we feel very certain in our knowledge of them. But in a short time this changes. All it takes is to see something unpleasant. Then our attitude also becomes very unpleasant. Instead of feeling close we feel very distant. We lose trust and feel uncertain towards them.

So it is hard. The basic cause is ignorance in the mind, but the immediate cause is our view - the constant change in our view from like to dislike, and vice versa. The result of this is that it is difficult to not only assess our own life, but also that of another. We feel that there is no-one who we can wholeheartedly trust.

This finishes the causes of delusions. Of course if we went into detail about these causes we could go on for months!

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

Edit methodology

The initial transcript is prepared from Alan Molloy's notes. These are checked with Damien Busby's notes by Alan Molloy and any differences noted.

Adair Bunnnett then compares her notes against the typed transcript and prepares this edited version.

Edited version checked by Alan Molloy

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