

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

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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ཕྱུ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུངས།



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Try to establish the bodhicitta motivation, and think that with this bodhicitta motivation we shall listen to the teachings, and put them into practice.

422.221.14: Faults of Delusions

ཉོན་མོངས་པའི་ཉེས་དམིགས། །

We are now up to the study of one of the major headings which is the faults of delusions. The purpose of knowing about these faults is to overcome delusions, and all their results.

We must relate this to all the types of suffering which exist. In the meditation we have just done we contemplated six types of suffering: uncertainty, lack of satisfaction, the lack of friends and so on. Last week we meditated on the three types of suffering: suffering of suffering, suffering of change and all pervasive suffering. All these sufferings derive from delusions, and without stopping those delusions we cannot stop suffering. If we investigate the link between suffering and its cause we find that suffering is the result of the karmic actions we have performed, and these karmic actions were in themselves driven by the force of mental delusions which dominate our mind. The whole purpose of knowing about mental delusions and the truth of suffering is to arouse a sense of dissatisfaction in order to reduce our desire for this world of cyclic existence.

The Intention to Actually Remove Delusions

Let us review the order of the teachings leading up to this topic of the faults of delusions. We firstly identified the types of delusions. Then came the topic of causes of delusions. By knowing the cause of delusions we then know the reasons why delusions arise in our mind, so we learnt about those. Delusions arise because of certain causes and conditions. When all the conditions are present, then naturally delusions will arise within us.

Therefore this next topic of the fault of delusions is important because without knowing about their faults we won't do anything practical to remove them.

All these teachings have to be integrated as a practice for our mental development, in order for us to find lasting peace, happiness and stability in life. With delusions in our mind it is said that we cannot achieve either mental or physical happiness which is what we seek in either the short or long term. On examination we see that we do not find enough inner peace, and even if we do find a degree of peace and happiness, it is very temporary and short lasting. Normally, when we think of the causes of

happiness or suffering in life we focus on the outer conditions of our life. But if we consider our own experience, we see that the cause is actually within us, and any moment our mood can change from a very stable, happy and content one, to a very discontented state of mind.

In our experience we know that sometimes the cause of our restlessness is not something which is visible or concrete, yet we feel that inside us there is something causing this restlessness. It is something which drives us to do something to be happy: to do something, to go somewhere, to see someone or to touch something. Under such circumstances it is important to look for the real cause of that suffering, which is something within us.

Suppose you have chosen to live with one thousand people in the hope that they can support and protect you. In fact it is possible that out of the one thousand people the majority might actually dislike or even hate you! The cause of this is the lack of stability or control over your mind, which makes you generate delusions such as attachment and hatred towards the various objects you confront in life. If the objects are very pleasant then we generate desire, which then causes the mind to be distracted and agitated, so that it cannot easily be calmed. Or if you meet with some unfavourable situation or unpleasant object your mental response to that situation is hatred or dislike. With hatred in the mind there is no mental peace. It is mainly because of the lack of a balanced view of things that we cannot find a balance in our daily life.

The reason we become very agitated, restless and unhappy is not because of external situation or objects. If we could stabilise our mental perspective of things, then even if the outer objects we meet are very attractive, we shall not become too mentally attracted to them. If the object is unattractive we won't feel hatred towards it. If we are strong enough in our practice it is possible to transform all our experiences (even unpleasant ones) into a means of spiritual development. For instance if we confront an unfavourable circumstance which normally stimulates hatred we can transform that circumstance to reinforce our practice of patience.

These teachings instruct us to change our view from the very mundane view of things to a very spiritual, beneficial and realistic view. It is a matter of contemplating very deeply which view is better. It is as a

result of such deep contemplation that we gain some sense of wisdom in the mind.

What is the general view which most normal people believe is the normal response to things? In this mundane view when someone expresses desire towards us we must return it because not doing so is suppressing our feelings of pleasure or joy. Likewise if someone shows hatred to you, and if you do not in return show hatred, there is a feeling that you are somehow losing something. In terms of a spiritual perspective this mundane view is all very misleading, and of no benefit to anyone. With a spiritual perspective on the other hand, happiness can be obtained by abandoning both desire and anger.

As part of our spiritual training we must know that abandoning desire, anger and other delusions is the path to lasting peace and happiness, and so we must know how to abandon these delusions. We must also see how all other beings are tormented by delusions. For it is delusions which are responsible for bringing conflict into our relationships; it is delusion which turns friends into enemies. With delusions there is no basis for the formation of any true or beneficial relationship with others. We start a relationship with desire and lust for each other. When someone shows desire and attachment for you, then you respond in the same way believing that it is a very meaningful relationship. However if we investigate the basis of this relationship, we see that it has no good foundation as it is based on desire which we know can change quickly. As soon as the desire of one partner decreases, the other feels hurt and rejected. This feeling is all the outcome of desire. Thinking of desire for each other, as the main substance which keeps a relationship intact can be a source of a great deal of suffering, because desire by its nature changes very quickly. Great numbers of people suffer because of this view. They have the disease of suffering, because they have the disease of delusions.

The outcome of anger is very apparent, and so is the suffering it causes. The moment it arises in our mind we lose all peace and happiness. It may start with an exchange of a few harsh words, but if it is not stopped the conflict will become a great problem to resolve. We can see how in our practice we must suffer because of not overcoming delusions. So to minimise suffering we must minimise delusions, or at least stop them from increasing.

Mental suffering or misery is not something we can see with our eyes, but it can be very intense. In fact it is more harmful to us than any form of physical suffering. Therefore when we talk about feeling compassion, it is not only towards those in physical pain, but also to those experiencing mental suffering. If it can be generated such a compassion is very profound.

The compulsory exam question will be, explain the verse which is a quotation from Maitreya's "Ornament or Sutra" which is about the faults of delusions - p 519 Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand:

Delusions destroy you,
Destroy sentient beings,
And destroy your ethics.
You hold your equals as inferiors,
Guardians and teachers criticise you,
And you do not heed opponents.
You will be born in unconducive states.
Your acquisitions and non-acquisitions
Will decline, and you'll have great suffering.

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

Edited version checked by Alan Molloy

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