## Study Group - "Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand"

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga Translated by Samdup Tsering

# ७७ यम रेम इस में यायवा परर्या



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Generate the bodhicitta motivation, which is one of wishing to achieve the state of buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. Then, knowing that the purpose of studying and practising these stages of the path is to fulfil this spiritual goal, generate the strong intention to achieve that goal by means of study and practise.

In spiritual discussion we talk a lot about cultivating the right motivation, and through this focus we are directing our attention to our own mind. The quality of whatever actions we undertake is mainly predetermined by the thought which preceded them, so it is the mind that presides over our actions.

What we all truly want is a very positive and good frame of mind, and to live in an environment of good deeds. Whether or not we have abundant wealth, we can be fully satisfied as long as we have peace, contentment and joy in our mind, and our daily deeds are very meaningful to both ourselves and others.

It is very important therefore, for us to correct our mind and the daily thoughts that we generate. As much as possible we should try to remove all the negative and destructive habits of our daily way of thinking. For example whenever we engage in spiritual practice, whether it is meditating or studying, we must remind ourselves that the purpose is to tame our own mind.

In the beginning, because of the lack of training, we find it very easy for the mind to go out of control. When that happens, we know from experience the damage it does to our own life, to our circle of close friends, and to our relationships with others. If we could become accustomed to the daily practice of training our mind to be more generous, kinder and more supportive to our friends and others, we shall see some result. Then unlike its present untamed state, we shall find it easier to maintain that more positive state of mind. With such a positive frame of mind, there will be more peace and happiness in our own life, and those with whom we come in contact will see good qualities in our personality. In this way we automatically develop good relationships with others.

We may blame the cause of our problems on some outer factors, or some other person. However it is the mind which is the source of all our troubles, as well as happiness, joy and contentment in life. For instance at the beginning of a relationship there is a sense of friendship and care for each other. But as time passes, and the real nature appears, there is no consideration for the other. Then the other may even be blamed for one's

own mistakes and faults. If we examine this we see that right from the beginning all the causes are in the mind, and this shows us the importance of utilising our own sense of discrimination.

#### **Divisions of The Twelve Links**

To return to the subject of our teachings. What follows the description of the twelve links is the way they can be subsumed into four branches.

#### 1 Propelling branch:

पक्षेत्र चुेद्र ग्री प्यतः त्यवा।

This includes the links of:

- ignorance
- compositional karma
- causal consciousness (which is the first of two parts of the link of consciousness)

As said in the previous teachings, *ignorance* is like the one who sows the seed, *karma* is the actual seed, and *causal consciousness* is like the seed being sown in the ground.

#### 2 Propelled result:

यसर्गारायः प्रच्यान्यः प्रमाना

This branch includes:

- resultant consciousness (the second part of the link of consciousness)
- name or form
- source
- contact
- feeling

#### 3 Establishing (or forming) branch:

य्यायाचीरागीःप्यमाया।

This includes:

- craving
- grasping
- existence (or becoming)

### 4 Established (or formed) result:

भर्षेतर र्वियत्तर, यवंश विष्ट त्या

These are:

- birth
- · old age and death

So we see how the twelve links can be grouped into four branches.

Ignorance, karma and causal consciousness are called propelling branch because they are the main causes

which bring about the propelled result. The term "propelled result" has the indication that the result is subject to conditions, i.e. is subject to the establishing branch of craving, grasping and existence.

In other words, after the karmic seed is implanted in consciousness by ignorance, whether or not it yields its result depends upon the conditions of craving, grasping and existence. Once nourished by craving and then grasping, by the time it becomes the link of existence the result is inevitable. So then the resultant links of birth, old age and death are the established branches.

# How Many Lifetimes are Required to Complete a Set Of Twelve Links?

We can see how twelve links are completed in two lifetimes by considering the example of creating the karma to be born as a god in a god realm. The initial cause which motivates us to create that karma is the first link of ignorance concerning the nature of ultimate reality. Then, soon after its creation and in that same lifetime, the karma is implanted in the consciousness. With this karma planted in the consciousness, it can later on be nourished by the eighth link of craving. Just before we finish this life we may generate the wish "How good if in the next life I were born in the god realms!" This is the eighth link of craving. As this craving becomes stronger, one might want to make some effort to achieve this wish, and this is the indication of grasping, (which is a further increase of craving). This craving and grasping. it is said, will fully nourish the karma to be reborn in god realms. The link of existence is when this karma will definitely produce its result.

Six of the twelve links including the three of the propelling branch and the three of the establishing branch are all completed in the same lifetime. Then, on being born in the god realms in the immediate next life, the rest of the twelve links are completed. They are the branches of propelled result (name and form, source, contact and feeling) and of established result (birth, ageing and death), which are the six resultant links.

So in terms of two lives: the six causal links finish in the one life and the six resultant links finish in the next life.

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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