

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

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

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ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུངས།



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Once again try to cultivate the right motivation to practise and study the dharma teachings. It is very important that our motivation is not a selfish one. The best motivation is bodhicitta: through our study and practice to attain the highest and unsurpassed enlightenment to benefit all living beings.

422.321.123 The Third Stage: Repaying The Kindness

དྲིན་གསོ།

As to the subject of our teachings we have finished the first two stages of how to generate bodhicitta through meditating on the seven-fold causes and effect.

The first stage is recognising all sentient beings as having been our mother, and the second is remembering their kindness.

The third stage is wishing to repay their kindness. This is very important since it is not enough to just recognise all sentient beings as one's mother, and then remember their kindness. These first two stages must culminate in the wish to repay that kindness.

To develop the seven-fold cause and effect meditation, it is necessary to progress from one stage to the next. Just realising that all sentient beings have been one's mother is not enough. Nor is remembering their kindness sufficient. You have to develop the third stage which is wishing to repay that kindness.

In this third stage we have to consider the best way of repaying the kindness of all the motherly sentient beings.

There are two main ways.

1. Repaying the kindness in a worldly, mundane way
2. Repaying the kindness in a spiritual way

Firstly, we consider repaying the mother's kindness in a worldly sense. This is very important, and regarded as very worthwhile even by ordinary, worldly people. It is widely held that if you receive help or kindness from another, then you should repay that kindness.

Take for example our own mother's kindness. We received a great deal of material help and support from her. If we required food, drink, clothing or shelter she provided them; if we were sick she served us. So, in the worldly sense we should repay her kindness in the same way, and this is a very widely held view.

Repaying our mother's kindness in a spiritual way means repaying her with benefits even far greater than these material ones.

You have this wonderful opportunity to hear the profound Mahayana teachings from Mahayana teachers. You know how beneficial these teachings are, because

they show the path to full enlightenment or buddhahood. However you have to realise that you have had this opportunity because of the kindness of your mother who protected and sustained you. So you try to cultivate the wish that your mother will benefit from the teachings in the same way that you have done.

How To Develop The Wish To Repay That Kindness

Imagine that your mother is blind and with no guide, and is also insane. You see her walking very close to the edge of a cliff. In this situation upon whom should the mother rely upon for help? Of course it would be her child. In this situation you have the responsibility of protecting her from danger.

Next you imagine that all other sentient beings are wandering about in a strange country, with which they are completely unfamiliar. They are blind in both eyes: the right eye is blind to the conventional or relative truth, being covered with a veil of ignorance of the law of cause and effect, while the left eye is covered with the veil of ignorance of the ultimate truth. Furthermore these beings have no spiritual guide to show them the right path, or even friends who have faith and conviction in the karmic law of cause and effect. Their minds are filled with the three poisonous minds, and completely darkened by ignorance. Therefore, all their actions are faulty, and are the causes for them to remain in that state of bewilderment and suffering for a longer time. In other words all sentient beings are about to fall in the great abyss, or the cliff of the three lower realms.

Then you think of your own situation which is better than most, because you have at least met the Mahayana teachers and teachings, and you have some faith and conviction in them. In this way you try to generate the strong thought that because you are in a better situation you have some sense of responsibility for rescuing others from suffering.

What is important here is to see within oneself the capacity to benefit other motherly sentient beings. As we have discussed we can do this by comparing our own situation with that of others, and see how our situation is very good, compared with the very pitiful situation which the others endure. So you develop the thought of benefiting other sentient beings, or in other words a sense of universal responsibility strongly arises. What is the way to benefit others? It can be in material terms such as with food, clothing and so forth. Of course these are beneficial but they only serve temporarily. So you seek to benefit others in the long term or in the ultimate sense, which is to extend happiness to them, whilst

freeing them from all types of suffering, that is placing all sentient beings in the state of buddhahood. In this way you strongly develop the thought of benefiting other sentient beings by placing them into a state of buddhahood.

Firstly, focus upon your mother in this current life, and generate a strong sense of wishing to repay her kindness. Then extend this to all other sentient beings, including your enemies. In the commentary text there are clear instructions on how to do this.

For the test the compulsory question will be to explain the following verse from Chandrakirti's *Supplement To The Middle Way*.

“Hearers and middling realisers of suchness are born from the kings of subduers.

Buddhas are born from bodhisattvas.

The mind of compassion, non-dualistic understanding and the altruistic mind of enlightenment are the causes of children of conquerors.”

We have discussed the meaning of this verse in the past, so you can do some further study on these lines.

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

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Note on authentication

The original typescript is prepared by Jenny Molloy 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.