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

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ཕྱུ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུངས།



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Try to establish the bodhicitta motivation which is a genuine wish to achieve the state of buddhahood to benefit all sentient beings. It is for this reason that you are receiving these teachings on the lam rim, or the stages of the path to enlightenment. At the same time, try to cultivate the strong intention to put these teachings into practice in order to calm the mind.

Giving: Enhancing our Love

Having finished the compassion meditation on Taking, we now focus upon the love meditation of Giving, the main purpose of which is to perfect or enhance our love for all beings.

This meditation of Giving begins by first cultivating love for all beings. This is done by imagining as many beings as possible, for example all beings in the three lower realms and also all those in the three happy realms, and observing how they lack happiness and joy. With this observation of the way all other beings lack happiness and joy, you then cultivate love for them in the sense of wishing them to have that happiness and joy.

Of course it must be clear in our minds that the aim of engaging in this meditation of Giving is to quickly achieve a state of complete enlightenment or buddhahood. The main quality we try to perfect or develop in this meditation is genuine love for all others. To make real progress in this meditation it is very important to keep the focus on one's own mind, because the love we are trying to develop is something which exists within our own mind. Here our practice is perfecting and further developing our love, and then extending it to others.

What is love? It is the unconditional wish to give happiness to others. Through this meditation practice we are endeavouring to perfect and fully develop our love, so that there is no bias in it, so that there is no element of attachment or hatred, and so that there is no discrimination in the sense of showing love only to those close to us, and not to those distant. The more faults we remove, the more progress we make in developing and perfecting our love and thus the closer we are to having bodhicitta arise in our mind. This means we are closer to achieving our goal of full enlightenment.

In spiritual terms this meditation practice of cultivating love for others is very important. Even if it takes a long time to see any sign of progress in this practice it is still worth the effort. Even a few minutes devoted to this meditation is not wasted. After a whole lifetime of performing this meditation we may not have developed

impartial love for all beings, and our love may still be imperfect and stained with faults and attachment, but still our effort is not wasted. We should feel very positive and fortunate, and see the long term benefits of this meditation, which are greater than sitting in single-pointed concentration for a long period of time. The effort we make leaves an impression or seed in our mind, and sometime in the future, because of this seed, we shall generate bodhicitta quickly and without much effort. Even simply hearing the word 'bodhicitta' will be enough to enable us to experience the bodhi mind immediately. The reason why we cannot do so now is because our love is not developed enough.

To re-emphasise the point, cultivating love is cultivating a quality within our mind. We should not think that practising love necessarily means changing our relationships with others, although that may occur. The primary focus is upon our own mind, trying to see whether we have love for others, and whether we possess this feeling of love in ourself. If we have this love then not only do we behave in a loving manner, but there is unconditional love inside as well, and there is no selfish interest. When we experience this feeling of love we find ourselves to be very peaceful and joyful.

We can see that as this quality of love increases, so too does our value as a human being. So love does indeed have some value. It is a human value. The more other people see that love within us, the more faith, trust and respect they will have for us. Therefore we should not see the value of being human merely in terms of material gain or possessions, but also in terms of the human quality of love. [It is love which defines the value of a human existence.]

Love does not stop with just wishing for others to have happiness. It is fulfilled by actually giving that happiness to them. The reason why we need to undertake this Giving meditation is to become familiarised with the thought of giving happiness to other beings. There is no thought of giving if we see other beings who are deprived of something they want or need, and yet we do not do anything about it. This Giving meditation is to cultivate the thought of giving so that later on we can actually give to others.

There are three objects of giving which are:

- our body
- our wealth
- our virtue

There are no other objects in our possession that we can

give to others.

Of these three objects of giving it is said that it is possible to give only our present and future body and wealth but not our past body or wealth. However we can give our virtue of all of the past, present and future.

The reason why we can give our accumulated virtue is that although the action was created in the past, for example by doing prostrations, the result of that action is the seed of positive energy which is left in our mind. It still has the potential to produce pleasant results, so therefore past virtue is appropriate to give to others. Of course we can also give to others the virtue created at present and in the future. Whereas the body and wealth we possessed in the past are now gone and so have no current value at all. However just as we get our next day's wages one day earlier, we can give our present body and wealth to others.

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 Kathi Melnic 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.