

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

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུངས།



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As your motivation try to reinforce the bodhicitta motivation which you generated just a few moments ago.

The Practice To Be Followed Between Meditation Sessions

The Giving and Taking meditation develops love and compassion, and is the main Thought Transformation practice. To maintain the practice of thought transformation the root text says:

Remember this by repeated recollection.
Practise every activity by these words.

This advises us to memorise the words of this Thought Transformation text, and to recite these verses as often as possible as a reminder of this practice of Thought Transformation.

It is important that the cultivation and strengthening of love and compassion for all beings continues throughout all actions, and not just during the meditation session. The text says “to practise every activity”, which means that the practice should be integrated into every activity of walking, sitting, and so on and at all times of happiness or sorrow. For this reason one is advised to memorise and repeat these thought transformation verses, and throughout all actions to think, “May all the suffering, and causes of suffering of all beings (ie negative acts) ripen upon me, and may all my virtues (ie merits) ripen upon others.”¹

In short, what needs to be remembered and contemplated throughout all actions, whether it be walking or sitting is the understanding that one must achieve the essence of this human life of leisure and endowment. The most excellent purpose that one can achieve is the state of buddhahood, and the supreme means to achieve this state of buddhahood is this Giving and Taking meditation. With this understanding, then in

¹ Editor: At this stage in *The Golden Rays Mind Training*, Nam-kha-pel quotes Kamalashila's “Stages of Meditation”,

The great compassionate one, in all his actions, whether walking or standing, and at all times, must acquaint himself with all sentient beings. Such a thought should be complemented by reciting the following lines,

May their misdeeds ripen on me
And may all my virtues ripen on them.
May all sentient beings' sufferings mature on me
And through my virtues may they all be happy.
Whatever agonies beings may suffer
May they ripen on me alone.
Through all the virtues of bodhisattvas
May wandering beings enjoy bliss.”

whatever actions we do, say or think, we wish that all the happiness and virtue we possess will ripen upon other sentient beings, and that all the suffering of others will ripen upon ourselves. So repeat these verses and contemplate their meaning.

These lines from *The Guru Puja* should also be memorised:

Venerable Guru, please send me your blessings
May all the sufferings of other beings
Ripen upon me right now
May all my virtue and happiness
Ripen upon other beings right now.

Depending upon your time and ability you can recite this verse as often as you wish during the day, and meditate on its meaning.

Combining Two Meditations

Having made good progress with this Giving and Taking meditation the root text says:

Place these two astride the breath.

That is, the Giving and Taking meditation is combined with the breathing meditation. There are many benefits in combining the two in this way, however first of all one needs to become familiar with just the Giving and Taking meditation by itself.

A special significance of combining Giving and Taking with the breathing meditation is that it accords with secret mantra practice. Furthermore if one is familiar with combining this practice with the breathing technique, then as death approaches, when the breathing becomes longer and slower, because of familiarity with the breathing technique one can easily do this practice of giving and taking. The benefit of doing this practice with a mind of love and compassion at the last cycle of breath in this life, is that without any doubt our next life will be a better rebirth, and we shall be able to cultivate bodhicitta mind easily in that life.

The Actual Technique Of Combining Giving And Taking With Breathing Meditation

On the outward breath do the Giving meditation as discussed in the previous teachings, by giving all your body, possessions and virtues to all other beings. Through this you bring joy and happiness to their minds, and establish them in the state of dharmakaya or buddhahood.

As you breathe in do the Taking meditation by taking upon yourself all the suffering and the causes of

suffering of other beings.

It is said that with training in this meditation we can combine breathing meditation with Giving and Taking. If we master this technique over our lifetime then at the time of death there will be no difficulty doing this meditation, at which time there is tremendous benefit.

We have now completed the first two headings of the Thought Transformation text which are:

422.321.21 The Preliminary Teaching on Form of Life

422.321.22 Actual Teaching on Bodhicitta

The actual teaching on bodhicitta had five headings:

422.321.222.1 Meditation on Equality of Self and Others

422.321.222.2 Disadvantages of Self Cherishing

422.321.222.3 Advantages of Cherishing Others

422.321.222.4 Actual Method of Exchanging Self With Others

422.321.222.5 Meditation on Giving and Taking

We now turn to the third main heading of this Thought Transformation text.

422.321.23 Transforming Adverse Conditions into the Path

Under this heading we learn of the importance of transforming adverse conditions into favourable ones. We have to see that this is the only way to ensure the complete success of any spiritual practice from its beginning to its end.

Why is this so important? In this degenerate age there are many more hindrances to the practice of Dharma than there are favourable conditions. It is almost as if unless we learn to apply this Thought Transformation practice to make the unfavourable conditions we face in life favourable, we shall not be able to complete whatever practice we begin, because we cannot avoid obstacles to our practice.

In other words we may encounter certain conditions that can generally be regarded as obstacles to practising Dharma, but through the practice of thought transformation these obstacles can be transformed into favourable conditions for Dharma practice.

The whole point of this section of the teaching is to inspire us so that whatever the situation that we face in life, whether it be good and bad, we do not allow that situation to cause us to forsake our practice of Dharma.

If we are not careful it is so easy to forget our Dharma practice in good situations. For example, it is so easy for those who have achieved a position of power or gained wealth to feel pride. If we are not careful the good name we have gained can be an obstacle to Dharma practice, causing it to deteriorate. Likewise when people acquire a lot of wealth they may wish to increase and protect that wealth, so they devote their time to that end rather than to Dharma practice. So power and wealth can be an obstacle to practising Dharma if we are not careful.

Rather than being obstacles these good conditions can be transformed into favourable conditions for making spiritual progress. For example you can utilise the high position you have gained to overcome pride, and use the

power and privileges you have gained to benefit other beings. Thus your power supports your Dharma practice. Likewise overcoming attachment to wealth through giving can be used to help others, as well as facilitating one's own Dharma practice.

Adverse situations in life, such as losing a partner or losing money, can be a cause of such great suffering and misery, that people become very depressed and frustrated. Then, let alone thinking of practising Dharma, people lose all hope and interest in even worldly activities. In such a situation, it is so obvious that it will become impossible to practise Dharma if you do not do something about yourself.

We have to realise that even the worst situations such as losing money or a partner are only external losses. Because they are outer difficulties, we should not think that we cannot practise. We have to understand that the practice of Dharma comes down to our state of mind. Even if you lose everything, you have still not lost the conditions of Dharma which are inner factors. Thinking in this way we can encourage ourselves to rise above the most adverse circumstances, and be fully motivated to engage in Dharma practice.

The teaching on transforming adverse situations into the path has two subheadings:

422.321.231 Transforming By Thought

422.321.232 Transforming By Action

We shall continue these teachings next week.

We may not have any problems now, but we always have to be prepared for the problems that we see other people face. Many things will happen to us in our lifetime that we never anticipated. Therefore it is very important to be determined to never lose one's courage no matter what the problem. Rather what is most important is to work out solutions to problems, and being easily discouraged makes that very difficult. By keeping one's courage and spirits high, the focus stays upon the possible solutions, and then the problem can be solved. When the solution is found, then there is no longer a problem!

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.