

---

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

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

༄༅ ལམ་རིམ་རྣམ་གྲོལ་ལག་བཅུངས།



13 April 1999

---

Try to cultivate the motivation of bodhicitta, which is the altruistic mind of seeking complete enlightenment to benefit all beings. Then think “I am receiving this teaching to fulfil this ultimate spiritual goal and in order to achieve this goal I shall put this teaching into practice”.

In the root text we are up to the line that says,

*Always practise with pure impartiality on all objects.*

Here, “all objects”, includes all animate and inanimate objects.

The next line says,

*Cherish the in-depth and broad application of all skills.*

Together these two lines state that our Thought Transformation practice has to come from the depths of our heart, and without any discrimination between friends, enemies or strangers. We should also adopt a very broad understanding of this practice.

*Always meditate on those closely related.*

This line means that we should take special precautions in our Thought Transformation practice at those times when we face people who are our competitors, or who are causing harm to us without any reason. We must be cautious at these times because this is when it is so easy to forget our practice. This line of the text emphasises the importance of maintaining our Thought Transformation practice at all times, and under all circumstances.

The lam rim teaching says that we should first train ourselves to cultivate and develop true love and compassion to those sentient beings who are closest to us - our friends, parents and so on. Extending this love, compassion and patience to those who are our competitors is however, very hard. So this Thought Transformation practice says that we need to make a special effort to show patience, love and compassion towards our competitors, and make an even greater effort to show love and compassion towards our enemies.

It is important to understand that it is possible to extend our love, compassion and patience beyond our close circle of friends and family. It is a great honour to know anyone who loves their enemies. We wonder how they can accept harm and loss from their enemies, and yet show such incredible patience with them. To be able to do this is just a matter of perfecting our practice of showing love and compassion to other beings.

If we consider the qualities of the love, compassion and

patience which we [usually] practice, we see that generally its scope is very limited. We only practise these towards those who are close to us. When we examine our feeling of love or compassion or sympathy we find the reason why we have such a feeling is because the objects of our love are special to us, and we have a sense of gratitude toward them. It is love and compassion but it is not perfect in the sense that it is not caused or generated by a true objective understanding of their situation. Because they are special to us, we wish them more happiness, more joy and to be free of any problems because subjectively we feel there is reason to do so. However the line in the text says that if we cultivate our love and compassion completely on the base of our understanding of the objective situation, then it makes no difference whether that person is friend or enemy, or whether they have helped us or harmed us.

As many lam rim teachings instruct, it is important to try as much as possible to cultivate and develop this true quality love and compassion towards those with whom we have close interactions in life, and with whom we have some form of relationship. As said before, it is much easier to make real progress in our practice of love and compassion by directing our practice towards those close to us.

We should also try to understand that unless we see the benefits we shall not have a strong motivation to practise, so it is important to focus on the benefits of the practice by seeing how a lot of the problems we face are all the result of not practising love, compassion and patience especially towards those close to us. We have to make a special effort to practise this with our competitors, and we must not to think of competitors as always being outside of our own circle. When it seems like our friends are being competitive, we feel jealous of them, and so lose our patience and tolerance. We can also remember the times when our friends caused problems for us and how, if we are not aware of the benefits of keeping a calm mind, we show anger instead of patience, and jealousy instead of showing love.

What is the effect of this jealousy and hatred on us. Is there anything beneficial? Irrespective of the effect on other people, is there any benefit to ourselves? There is no benefit, and indeed due to jealousy and hatred our mind becomes very distracted and we lose all our peace and happiness. Of course if we think of our relationships, there are no benefits of hatred and jealousy because they come from the motivation to harm other beings, which in turn causes further problems in our

---

relationships with others.

Rather than losing our temper and causing harm to others, if we try to control our mind and actions, and try to have more understanding of the objective side of the situation then we shall see the benefits of practising patience, love, compassion and sympathy for others. If we do this and maintain our practice then situations do not disturb our mind and our inner peace and happiness. Even in bad circumstances if we can show love, compassion and sympathy to others, then the other being can understand and appreciate that practice since they are human beings too. So we can see how when we practise in this way it benefits others, and creates harmony in our relationships with others.

It is simply a matter of taking our time, and being consistent with our practice. Then it is possible that one day we shall be able to show compassion and patience towards someone to whom we could not show such a mental attitude in the past.

The next line says,

*Depend not upon other circumstances.*

This line indicates that our practice should not be conditional upon our living conditions. It is wrong to procrastinate, thinking that we can practise when we find the right conditions. In fact we cannot wait for a better time: there is no better time to practise than now. For spiritual practice we cannot find better conditions than those which we have right now. This line of the text is saying that for spiritual practice we should not take into account our mental and physical health, or our material position. It is wrong to think that we can only practise when we enjoy good physical and mental health, or good material conditions, and to not practise when conditions are unfavourable.

It is very easy for ordinary people to relax when things are going well and they possess wealth, feeling that all their needs in life are being fulfilled. What is wrong with this attitude? Such people will become very discouraged and unhappy if suddenly their position changes. They do not have enough courage or determination to cope. We have to understand how, if our mental and physical health is not good enough now, then there will never be a time when it will be good enough. There is no time when we can say our physical and mental health is perfect. We can always find some excuse not to practise. It is the same with material wealth: even the incredibly rich will always be able to find something, which they do not yet possess.

We can't postpone practising in the hope that we shall find the right mental and physical conditions, because these probably do not exist, or if they do exist they are very rare. This encourages us to put this teaching into practice regardless of any reason or excuse.

The implication of this line is the importance of transforming the unfavourable conditions or obstacles into favourable ones.

The next line of the root text is,

*Exert yourself especially at this time.*

This implies that the time we have found now is the best time. Why it is the best time or opportunity to practise

Dharma? This precious human rebirth that we have now has all the freedoms and endowments, and all the suitable conditions to practise Dharma. At this time it is important to practise Dharma in the sense of placing more importance on the needs of future lives, rather than the needs of this life. In other words spiritual practice is more important than worldly endeavours. For spiritual practice there are two vehicles, and of these the Greater Vehicle practice of Thought Transformation is more important. Between practice and learning, practising is the more important, and the most important practice is cultivating the bodhicitta mind.

*Do not follow inverted deeds.*

There are six types of "inverted deeds".

#### 1. Wrong Practice of Patience and Tolerance

We have tolerance in protecting the interests of our friends and challenging enemies, but not towards the hardships of practising Dharma. We should have tolerance and patience in our spiritual practice.

#### 2. Wrong Aspiration

We aspire to acquiring material goods, but not towards the practice of achieving spiritual development.

#### 3. Wrong Experience

We have indulged in worldly pleasure, but not in experiencing the joy of engaging in hearing, contemplating and meditating on Dharma.

#### 4. Wrong Compassion

We feel compassion for an ascetic who engages in spiritual practice, but not for someone who engages in negative or evil actions.

#### 5. Wrong Friend

This is holding those who can help us to acquire wealth, and so on, as very reliable friends, but not regarding those who can guide us in the spiritual path as very reliable friends.

#### 6. Wrong Rejoicing

This is rejoicing in the negative actions of ourself and others rather than rejoicing in the positive actions of ourself and others. Wrong rejoicing also includes rejoicing in the suffering of enemies.

These are the six orders of wrong attitudes.

---

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

---

© *Tara Institute*

#### **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.