
The Six Perfections

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Sandup Tsering

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Once again, try to cultivate the correct motivation for listening to this profound teaching by cultivating this thought: I wish to achieve complete enlightenment in order to benefit all sentient beings and for this purpose I will listen to the profound teaching and put it into practice.

It is important that we very clearly recognise the purpose of any activities that we undertake. The motivation here clearly shows us the purpose for listening to the teaching. It is also very important to be clear about our purpose whenever we engage in meditation practice.

As Lama Tsongkhapa said, we should first achieve calmness within our own mind, and only then will we be in a position to benefit other sentient beings. Therefore, if we think of engaging in any act of effectively benefiting others, we have to understand how important it is that we fully subdue our own mind and thus achieve mental peace and stability within ourselves. It is important that our purpose when we engage in spiritual practice is not related to fulfilling the temporary needs of daily life such as food, clothing and other mundane needs. If our concern is only related to mundane affairs, then let alone being able to properly engage in spiritual practice, we won't be able to achieve even these mundane purposes. Sometimes we are so obsessed with all of these mundane needs that we are not able to accomplish even that!

I am trying to emphasise the value of enriching ourselves with true mental peace and happiness. If we lack the richness of these inner qualities then no matter how good our external conditions are, or whatever success we achieve, all these external things will be of no real value to us – although that's not to say that they have no value at all.

Indeed, the reason why we engage in meditation practice is to enhance this mental peace and happiness. Through meditation practice we want to cultivate a very positive, wholesome state of mind, as opposed to the kind of mind that runs our life, which is dominated by mental afflictions or delusions, and where there is no happiness or peace.

(3') The ethical discipline of acting for the welfare of living beings (cont.)

The text states:

The ethical discipline of acting for the welfare of living beings means that you focus on the welfare of eleven sorts of living beings, and then accomplish their aims in this and future lives in a suitable manner and without wrongdoing. Since I have already detailed these in my *Basic Path to Awakening*, you should definitely read that over and over again.

The last few words of Tsongkhapa's advice is to *read it over and over again*, which is saying that engaging in spiritual practice and meditation once is not enough and we have to do it over and over again.

More specifically, we need to read Tsongkhapa's explanation of the eleven modes of benefiting sentient beings again and again. The early translators did a lot of

work to render the texts into various languages. So we should make every effort to study this text carefully and in this way honour the efforts the translator has made in order to make it available to us.

This text is available in English, which Denis has kindly shared with everyone. You will find Asanga's list on page 50, and pages 115 and 121-131 contain Lama Tsongkhapa's commentary on these.

If you have read that text, you will see that Lama Tsongkhapa hasn't just listed these eleven modes but has explained them in some detail under different sub-headings. I suggest you study the details of those eleven modes of benefiting sentient beings, and maybe use that as a theme for your next discussion session.

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