
an effective meditation, our attention should be 100% on breath for the duration of the meditation. Even when normal distracting thoughts arise in the mind, by immediately becoming aware of them, we do not allow the mind to follow them. Rather, we continuously try to maintain our focus on the breath and nothing but the breath.

It is important to keep our mind completely focused on the object we are meditating on. If we start out training in this way, even if only for a short time, it allows the mind to become more familiar with being focused, so that we can eventually focus on any virtuous object of our choosing and for a longer duration. Therefore we will spend a few minutes focusing on the natural inflow and outflow of our breath. (Pause for meditation)

4.2.2.1.2. The actual way to take the essence

4.2.2.1.2.1. Training the mind in the stages of the path of the small capable being

4.2.2.1.2.1.1. The actual way of training in the motivation common to the being of small capacity

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2. Relying on the methods for achieving happiness in future lives

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1. Developing the faith of conviction in karma and its effects

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1.1. Thinking about the Law of Cause and Effect in general

4.2.2.1.2.1.1.2.1.1.2. Reflecting on the individual divisions

In our previous explanation covering the three types of the effects of karma, we have covered the first, which is the ripened results of karma.

Now we come to what is called the causally concordant results. The ripened results explained earlier depend on the degree of the negative karma that has been created. If we are talking about the results of negative karma, depending on the degree, one is reborn in either of the three lower realms.

The causally concordant effects or results are those results or effects that are experienced even when the being is free from the lower realms. So, if they have a higher rebirth such as a human being, there are still some negative consequences to be experienced as a result of previous negative karma. Even if the heavy negative karma to be reborn in hell realms has been exhausted (for the time being) and the being is reborn as human or another higher rebirth, there are still some residual effects of previously created karma to be experienced.

What is being explained here is the effects of particular types of negative karma created in the past and their causally concordant effects. For example, when one is reborn as a human being, the negative consequences of having engaged in the negative karma of killing in the past would be that one would have a short life afflicted by many diseases. Indeed, we are able to see many people who don't have a long lifespan, and situations where a lot of diseases are prevalent.

The negative effects of stealing in the past when one is reborn as a human are that one would lack sufficient

resources. Further, whatever resources one had would have to be shared with others. This is another obvious fact: there are many human beings born with meagre resources, and many others who, even if they have some resources, have to share them with many others. In this way we can see how these consequences are experienced.

The causally concordant effect of sexual misconduct created in the past would be that, when born as human, one would have a contentious spouse and unfaithful partners or friends (but specifically spouses). We can see that there are some people who, no matter how hard they try, have unfaithful partners.

Having heard about the causally concordant effects of the negative physical karmas of killing, stealing and sexual misconduct, it should prompt us to try to avoid such negative deeds if we don't wish to experience such results ourselves. So these teachings are advice to help us prevent negative consequences for ourselves.

The causally concordant effect of lying would be that others would slander you a great deal and would not believe you. The causally concordant effects of divisive speech would be that one would have few friends and would be separated from whatever friends one did have. Divisive speech is the particular type of speech we use to separate others who are already in a good relationship or are in a relationship that is a bit strained; divisive speech is saying things that will separate those two people. When we look at the result explained just now, we can see that the result is similar to the cause. One would have few friends and be separated from whatever friends one had.

The causally concordant effect of harsh speech would be that one would hear unpleasant speech. Again, we can relate this to people who complain of always hearing bad things or unpleasant words from others. Some people say that everyone seems to be complaining to them, which makes them feel uncomfortable. When we look into the cause, it would have been using harsh speech in the past. The causally concordant effects of senseless speech or idle gossip would be that one's words would not be respected or trusted by others.

The causally concordant effect of covetousness would be that whatever activities one engaged in, they would be not fruitful. The causally concordant effect of harmful intent in the past would be that one, even if one were born human, one would be in a perpetual state of fear. We hear about certain people who always seem to live in fear – they are always fearful of engaging in actions, or fearful that others will harm them, or they will mistrust them. These are the causally concordant effects of having engaged in harmful intent towards others in the past.

The causally concordant effects of wrong views, which is the last of the ten non-virtues, is that one would have strong ignorance in relation to understanding the correct view. This is very severe: if we have strong ignorance about the correct view, this would prevent us from engaging in virtue.

The main purpose of these explanations is that they will become a strong impetus for us to develop strong faith in

karma and to engage in virtue. They clearly portray the undesirable results that we and others experience. When we begin to understand that there is a cause of our experiences, and that those cause can be overcome, we can avoid creating those causes, because we don't want to have the bad experiences in future that we and others are experiencing now. Seeing the situation clearly becomes an impetus for us to engage in virtue, avoiding negative karma and trying to purify whatever negative karmas we have already created.

As mentioned earlier, when we develop strong conviction in karma, this will really help our mind to be courageous in dealing with difficult situations. For example, normally when we get sick, we think that it is unfair and that we do not deserve to be sick, which makes the mind uneasy. We may become bitter and worry a lot. It is as though the physical sickness is not enough – we add a mental sickness to it, adding to our suffering.

However, when someone with strong conviction in the law of karma relates their sickness to karma, they will not allow the sickness to become an extra mental suffering but rather will willingly take on that suffering. By seeing their physical suffering as the result of negative karma that they have previously created, it will actually encourage their mind. They will think: "It is right and perfectly fine for me to experience the result now so that I can exhaust the negative karma that I have created in the past. This result is something which I must definitely experience myself. No one else is inflicting that pain on me – I have created the causes myself and now I have to experience the results". A person with a clear conviction in karma would feel it appropriate to experience the results now.

As the Buddha said, the negative consequences of karma will not be experienced by inanimate objects such as the ground, stones and so forth, but rather will be experienced by the very living beings who have created the negative karma in the past. With this understanding in the mind, we can willingly take on physical suffering. Rather than creating extra suffering for the mind, the experience of physical suffering will actually lighten the mind and make it more bearable.

The next effect explained in this sequence of headings is what we call environmental results. Perhaps we can leave that for our next session and conclude for this evening. If anyone has a burning question, maybe we can have one or two questions.

Question: What is the karma of watching others suffer? For instance, most of us know about the child who has had all those car accidents and is about 5 years old. What karma did the parents create to have a child who's suffered like that? And all of us at some time have to watch a relative suffer or die – that is the human experience. What is the karma of that, the karma of watching others suffer but not directly experiencing it oneself?

Answer: If it's a case where we are taking upon the suffering of others, perhaps it's a good thing.

In many instances, if one suffers from seeing others suffering, it is because there is some compassion within one's mind. Because you have the basis of compassion in

your mind, you cannot bear others' suffering. When training the mind in compassion, it is said that we will initially feel uncomfortable or uneasy when we see others' suffering, but this will encourage us to try to benefit them and help them.

For example, a mother cannot bear to see her son suffer, so when the son suffers, the mother will do everything in her capacity to try to help the son. That is because there is compassion there. While not being able to bear her son's suffering, the mother does whatever she can to try to alleviate it.

Of course, this is not always the case for us. Sometimes we are actually happy that others are suffering. For example, when we see our so-called enemies suffering, it might actually bring joy in our mind. We think: "It serves them right". We might even feel glad about it. So it's not always the case that we feel uneasy when seeing others' suffering. It depends on the circumstances. Actually if you can use your feelings to develop further compassion, it could encourage the mind.

Question: You have mentioned that we tend to create a lot of negativities and you mentioned that we should purify it. Can you tell us a few ways of purifying it? I do not know if it's right or not, but I do my purification by doing the 21 Taras or the long mantra of Vajrasattva at night before I sleep. Is that the best way of doing it or can you tell us more ways of purifying, not just depending on the 21 Taras and the long mantra of Vajrasattva?

Answer: For purification practice to be effective – to be what we call a complete practice of purification – there should be four conditions present, which are the four opponent powers. One of the four opponent powers is the power of the remedy, which is the recitation of the Vajrasattva mantra or any practice we do with the intention to purify negative karma.

However, the first power that we need to develop is the power of regret. As mentioned previously, when we regret a negative deed, that already helps to minimise the negative karma we have created. Even though the karma may not be completely purified, having regret definitely helps. Then there is the power of reliance – relying on the objects of refuge and also on sentient beings. We take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and generate compassion and bodhichitta towards sentient beings.

The third opponent power is resolution, which means deciding in one's mind that because the negative deed is not good, "I will not engage in such a negative deed again in the future". The fourth opponent power of remedy that we mentioned earlier would be, for example, reciting the hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasattva or any other practice done with the intention to purify specific negative karmas.

While the Vajrasattva mantra is said to be a powerful means to purify negative karma, the different teachings explain different kinds of practices. Some teachings say that doing any virtuous practice with an intention to purify specific negative karmas would be an opponent power of remedy. Some teachings even say that any practice of virtue by default becomes a means to purify

one's negative karma.

If we do a purification in the morning, by noon or by evening we might have created more negative karma. This means that we purify negative karma in the evening. We might find it awkward that we are doing purification practices while we are creating negative karma almost immediately, but that does not mean that there is no point in purifying. Because we are creating the negative karma, we therefore need to continuously engage in purification practice. The reason why we need to purify all the time is that we find ourselves creating negative karma all the time. Does that relate to your question?

Exchange between translator and student.

Geshe-la is asking, why do you think you have to engage in purification practice on a daily basis, every evening.

Student: If we don't do the purification practice before we go to sleep, it will keep on accumulating negativities, so I think we should do it every day. If we don't do it, you know, it will keep on accumulating.

Geshe la: Actually it is also true that karma increases, which is why we are advised to do purification practice every evening. There are some practitioners, past and present, who, before going to bed, would calculate how much negative karma they had created during the day and how much positive karma. Some even laid out black and white pebbles – a black one for each negative karma they created, and a white pebble for a virtue. Then towards evening they would compare the two lots. If there were more black ones, they engaged in stronger purification practice.

In the same way, if each evening we really look at the deeds we have done during the day and calculate how many were positive or negative, we could engage in appropriate purification practice to purify the negative deeds. This is how we should continually engage in the practice. Initially there will be more black pebbles than white, but as we engage in purification practice and live our days more conscientiously, we will find that the black pebbles will slowly reduce and the white pebbles will increase. When that happens, it will be a clear sign that one's practices have been fruitful.

Question: I was just wondering if there is somewhere in the text that describes which actual sounds of the mantra are purifying or not. And where not just what we are saying is a powerful purifying and healing tool, but also the sound we are actually generating.

Translator: I'm afraid I didn't understand completely. Can you just repeat?

Student: I'm interested in sound as a healing instrument. When we say a mantra or sing a mantra, are there particular frequencies that are also as purifying as the sound itself?

Translator: Are there different sounds...are you talking about like, melody? I'm not sure ... I don't know how to translate 'frequencies' in Tibetan, but I will try to relay your question!

Answer: The main elements for a mantra or any practice to be powerful are mainly the motivation and the attitude for doing the practice. They are the key factors. But there does seem to be a relationship between the effect and how the practice is done. In the case of reciting a mantra, it is mentioned in the teachings that one should recite the mantra clearly. Also there are many melodies we practice. If you have a nice-sounding melody, it could have more effect, be more beneficial. I don't know if you can relate that to frequencies, but basically having a clear and beautiful sound could definitely have more effect.

Question: What is the name of the text, of the area of those texts, where you can find about that sound?

Answer: Even though no particular text immediately comes to mind, there are definitely different texts, commentaries and so

forth on the practices. There are different commentaries that explain in detail the effects of having a good sound when you do the practices – how it has an effect, not only on oneself, but also on others. If you do your chanting or practices with a nice melody, it can have a very good effect on others, which inspires others to practice as well. In that way, there is many benefits of having good melody.

For example, in the text that explains the benefits of the mantra *Om Mani Padme Hum*, it explains that each syllable has so much benefit when you recite it for yourself and for others, and when you recite it nicely again, there is even more benefit in that. So there are detailed explanations about that.

Question: How do you stop someone else from creating negative karma without creating negative karma yourself?

Answer: A similar question came up in another Wednesday session. It was mentioned that if someone were to ask you a question about others who might be harmed, you don't have to tell a lie; you can avoid telling a lie without giving away the full truth of where they are. Remember when that was mentioned? Where, if someone were to ask: "Have you seen so-and-so?" and you knew that someone was going to be harmed by someone else, you could just talk about something else and distract them.

Student: But it's not easy.

Answer: Actually, because you gave the particular example of someone doing something where they might get in trouble with the police, if you could avoid having to deal with it and let the authorities take care of the situation, perhaps that's one way to deal with it.

But Geshe-la wonders if there are cases where if you don't report an incident, it would be going against the law oneself. If, for example, you don't report an offence, this will become an offence on your part. It is similar to the examples given earlier where, if it is going to hurt the other, then better not tell the truth in the sense of not having to mention it.

For example, if someone is blind and you say: "You are blind, you don't have eyes", that might hurt their feelings. Even though it is true that they are blind, there is no need to mention it if it's just going to cause them more suffering. This is a similar case.

We will conclude here for this evening with a short meditation. Like before, we can sit in an upright relaxed position and bring our mind inward, this time focusing on the mantra of Buddha Shakyamuni.

TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA