
Whatever we attempt to do in life, if we have an alert, attentive and intelligent mind, any decisions we make will be naturally more beneficial and constructive. Otherwise, any actions we take or decisions we make with a disturbed state of mind usually bring undesirable results. Therefore it is very important that we spend some time developing ourselves through meditation.

When we see the immediate results we get from our attempts to meditate, it will enable us to gain the conviction that meditation is useful and beneficial. You will not need to go and ask others whether meditation is good for you. If you can convince yourself through your own practice and experience of the positive results that meditation brings to your mind, this will become the most convincing answer for you.

But perhaps the next thing you will say is: "Meditation is definitely good for me, but I can't do it, I can't manage it." We will find any excuse not to put effort into meditation! It is similar to getting an education. Anyone in their right mind would say that education and studying are good, because we see so many people getting good results from studying. Yet even when they realise this, many students still say: "Yes, studying is the way to get good results, but I just can't study. It's too much for me."

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

So far in the text we have covered what are called the ten non-virtuous deeds, identifying them as well as the various effects experienced as a result of the ten non-virtuous deeds.

Now we come to identifying the ten virtuous deeds and their effects. Actions that bring about a favourable result are virtuous actions or deeds, while actions that bring about an unfavourable result are non-virtuous actions. If you have understood the ten non-virtuous actions, you will be able to identify the ten virtuous deeds, which are basically the opposite of the ten non-virtuous deeds.

If we relate this to the first non-virtuous deed of killing, it is obvious to anyone in a right frame of mind that killing causes suffering. It is easy to identify killing as a non-virtue or misdeed because it brings about an immediate unfavourable result for the other being, and eventually for oneself. Thus we can understand that refraining from killing is a virtuous deed.

The second virtuous deed would be the opposite of the second non-virtuous deed, which is refraining from stealing. The virtuous and non-virtuous deeds are consistent with the conventional understanding of good and bad behaviour among ordinary human beings. It is obvious that refraining from stealing, for example, is appreciated in any society. Would someone known as a thief be welcome anywhere? Or would someone known to be honest and trustworthy be appreciated by others?

We can take the analogy here of a householder with two servants or workers in the house, one of whom was known for stealing, while the other was known to be honest. Which one would the householder trust? When we relate this to ourselves, it means that we should make the determination to refrain from stealing at any cost, to completely abandon that action. The actual attitude or determination to refrain from killing and stealing and so on is the virtuous action.

Since each one of us naturally wants to be regarded as a good and nice person, we should make sure that we act appropriately. Refraining from the ten non-virtues and intentionally adopting the ten virtues will naturally make one a good person. The natural effect would be that you would be regarded as a good person by your family or society or wherever you may be.

Now we come to the third virtuous action, which is intentionally refraining from sexual misconduct, making the determination in one's mind to refrain from sexual misconduct. That would be the third of the three virtuous actions that relate to the physical body.

When we have the intention to refrain from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct, the natural and immediate outcome is that we are refraining from harming others. Based on this, the intention of wishing to help others can arise. In other words, when we have the intention to refrain from killing, from taking others' lives, the good attitude of wishing to nurture and protect others' lives can slowly arise in the mind. Likewise, when we have the intention to refrain from stealing, the attitude of wanting to contribute towards others welfare, to give generosity and so forth, will arise in the mind. In this way, on the basis of refraining from the non-virtues, the more positive attitude of helping and benefiting others can arise.

At a very practical level, refraining from engaging in the ten misdeeds in itself is refraining from harming others. So even if one couldn't benefit others for the time being, just the act of not harming others is incredibly beneficial. That in itself is really a great contribution to others, just to refrain from harming them.

How then do we define a virtuous state of mind? It is a mind that recognises the non-virtues such as killing, stealing and sexual misconduct as harmful and, by recognising them as harmful, makes the determination not to engage in these misdeeds. That is a virtuous mind.

We have explained in detail the virtuous actions of the body. Now we come to the virtuous actions of speech, which are the opposite of the four negativities of speech – refraining from lying; refraining from divisive speech or

slander; refraining from harmful or harsh speech; and refraining from idle gossip.

If we apply our earlier definition, the virtue of adopting right speech means developing the intention to refrain from the non-virtues of speech. This is a very important point. The intention of refraining should come from within us. It is easy to think that others are doing the wrong thing, but that's not the point here. The point is to relate it to oneself. When we recognise wrong actions such as killing, stealing and sexual misconduct, we then refrain from engaging in them ourselves. Virtue does not lie in trying to convince others that they shouldn't do these actions, but rather that we adopt the right attitude ourselves.

The last three virtues are the opposite of the three non-virtues of mind – that is, refraining from covetousness, refraining from harmful intent and refraining from adopting wrong views.

To engage in a complete virtuous karma – for example, refraining from killing – it is necessary to have the four conditions present, in the same way that the four conditions must be present for the complete action of killing to occur. These four conditions are the basis, the thought or the intention, the action and the completion. If we relate the virtue of refraining from killing to the four conditions, the basis is another living being. When we see killing as a fault and desire to give it up, that is the attitude. The performance or the action is the activity of having correctly restrained yourself from killing. The completion or culmination is the physical action of completing the act of restraint. When we physically restrain ourselves from killing, this is the completion.

Likewise, we can relate this to the remaining nine virtues.

Now we come into the effects of the ten virtues. This sequence of explanations given in the teachings is very appropriate. Having explained identified the ten virtues and explaining how to adopt them, the text explains the natural results of engaging in these virtues. It is quite intriguing to notice that the way the teachings are presented shows us the way to really analyse things and not just take them for granted. Through reason and logic, one topic follows the next.

This is something we can really contemplate and apply to ourselves. As we relate to the teachings of the Buddha, we begin to notice how incredibly skillful the Buddha is in teaching and presenting the teachings. This is because the Buddha himself – having gone through all these experiences, having had to deal with favourable and unfavourable situations in his own life, and having had to overcome the delusions and negativities – is relating his experience for our benefit. He has not tried to impose his ideas on us, but has presented them in a logical and systematic way. By presenting his own experiences and how he dealt with them, he leaves it up to us to investigate through our own experience whether it is true and right for us.

We will explain the effects of the ten virtues in our next session. Do people have questions?

Question: I read an article today about the Chinese Government expressing hostility towards a country that was hosting the Dalai Lama. My first reaction was anger. How can I counteract my hatred towards the Chinese who hate my spiritual leader?

Answer: In this case, you have anger towards the Chinese government, a minority of Chinese people who criticise the Dalai Lama being invited somewhere. To counteract this anger, you need to further develop your understanding of the object of compassion. This minority of people would be the real objects of compassion – they hold the attitude of hating goodness, because the actual outcome of the Dalai Lama's visit anywhere is to help others through his teachings. Anyone with a negative attitude towards helping others really has a perverted mind, a mind that is unclear and ignorant. So those people should be an object of compassion rather than anger.

It is important to understand on a practical level that not all Chinese have that attitude. In fact there are many Chinese who openly say that we would love to have a leader like the Dalai Lama. For example, at the beginning of this year when the Dalai Lama gave the Kalachakra initiation in India, there were over 300 Chinese from mainland China who attended those teachings. They had come voluntarily, recognising and understanding the value of the Dalai Lama's teachings and compassion.

Therefore it is important for us not to generalise, and when we start to feel anger, to instead develop compassion for those people who have that attitude towards the Dalai Lama. Was that clear enough?

We can quote the Dalai Lama himself on his advice to Tibetans who came from Tibet to attend the Kalachakra teachings at the beginning of the year in India. He said that he had heard of instances where Chinese government officials would force people to criticise the Dalai Lama and told them if they refused to do this, they would be beaten and tortured.

The Dalai Lama's advice to them, which he gave openly in front of everyone, was: "When you go back to Tibet, if you are asked to criticise me, by all means do so. Don't hesitate to criticise me. There is no point in unnecessarily inflicting torture and pain upon yourselves by trying to refrain from criticising me. I can tell you that it will not harm me. The world knows of my activities, the world is more intelligent than one would think. The people of the world know whether what I am doing is good or bad. So if some Chinese were to force you to criticise me, it wouldn't harm me a bit. So please by all means criticise me."

The Dalai Lama further said to the people from Tibet, a few of whom were perhaps acting as spies: "When you go back to Tibet, take back whatever message I give as it is. You don't have to alter anything. Please, I am happy and glad if you take the clear message that I am giving here back to the Chinese, to whomever you have to report to. Don't take back half the information and make the rest up, but rather give all the real information that I am giving."

In fact, what the Dalai Lama is really saying is that the Chinese are old friends and neighbours of Tibet. That is the real message the Dalai Lama is giving everywhere. When he talks about the Chinese, he talks about the Chinese as being long-time neighbours and friends of Tibet. This is something the Dalai Lama really feels in his heart. It's not something he is trying to make up.

In his address at the Kalachakra teachings, the Dalai Lama was particularly referring to an earlier situation where misinformation was handed over to the Chinese authorities that the Dalai Lama's intentions and the intentions of many in the younger generation of Tibetans are the same. The Dalai Lama was saying that is not correct. Many of the younger generation of Tibetans want to take action regarding the Tibetan situation. They have the strong idea that Tibet should have full independence from China, even if it requires the use of force.

The Dalai Lama was making it very clear that his intentions are not for full independence. He has said: "I am not asking for independence. What I'm asking for is real genuine freedom, freedom meaning genuine well-being for Tibetans living in Tibet. That's what I'm asking for. Just as the Chinese and anyone else in this world need well-being, what I'm trying to struggle for, is the well-being and welfare of the Tibetans."

It doesn't necessarily have to be independence. If the people have genuine freedom to practice their religion and if their welfare is taken care of, this is what the Dalai Lama wants, as he wants it for everyone including the Chinese.

Question: Every year in Australia there are 80,000 abortions performed. What are the karmic implications for those who request the abortions and those that actually carry out the abortions? Is the karma complete?

Answer: To determine whether it's a complete karma or not is very difficult for an individual like myself because for each action and individual, you have to know the discrimination or attitude involved. There are a lot of intricacies involved that would make it a complete karma.

Each case is different. However, I have noticed that for those who have had an abortion, it seems to have had a little bit of a negative effect on the mind. Such people don't seem to really have a happy state of mind. Another thing that seems to occur for some people who have had an abortion is that later on when they want to have a child, it may be difficult for them to have a child, which seems to be an immediate karmic consequence.

These are some of the things that I have observed with some people, but on the whole, as mentioned before, at a general level it's very hard to determine.

We will spend a few minutes in meditation before we end the session. As mentioned previously, we will sit in an upright, comfortable, relaxed position and bring our mind inward, focusing this time on the mantra of Buddha Shakyamuni. As we recite the mantra of Buddha Shakyamuni, we will keep our mind focused on it for a few minutes.

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