



---

#### 4.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1. The stages of training the awakening mind

##### 4.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1.1. Training the mind in the pith instructions on the six causes and effect, which comes from the lineage traced to the great master Atisha

##### 4.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1.1.2. Extensive explanation

##### 4.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1.1.2.2. The actual training in the stages

##### 4.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1.1.2.2.1. Training the mind to strive for the welfare of others

##### 4.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1.1.2.2.1.2. The actual development of the mind that strives for others' welfare

##### 4.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1.1.2.2.1.2.3. Meditating on the highest intention

##### 4.2.2.1.2.3.2.2.1.1.2.2.1.2.3.1. Actual cultivation

We can now continue studying the text from where we last left off. We are currently at the section titled "The cultivation of the whole-hearted resolve", which is also commonly referred to as "the superior intention". This is subdivided into two divisions. The first is the "Actual cultivation", also known as the "meditation on the whole-hearted resolve". Here, the text reads:

At the conclusion of meditating on love and compassion one must think , "Alas, these dear living beings for whom I feel affection are deprived of happiness and tormented by suffering. How can I provide them happiness and free them from suffering?" Thinking in this way, train your mind in at least this thought in order to take on the responsibility to liberate living beings.

Earlier, the text explained in extensive detail how to cultivate love and compassion through meditation. Briefly, love is developed by focusing on beings who are deprived of happiness and genuinely wishing them to have happiness, and compassion is developed by focusing on beings who are experiencing great suffering and wishing them to be free from that suffering. At the conclusion of each of these specific focuses, the meditator generates a whole-hearted resolve to bring all other beings happiness and to relieve them of their suffering. This is why "whole-hearted resolve" is also known as "superior intention."

The more we cultivate love for other beings by wishing for their happiness, and the more we cultivate compassion for other beings by wishing them to be free from suffering, the more we familiarise our minds with love and compassion. This familiarisation is the meditation technique. These repeated meditations acquaint our minds with these wishes so that through familiarisation we naturally develop a superior intention to benefit all sentient beings oneself.

In earlier sessions, the text also outlined in detail for us how to meditate on the kindness of all sentient beings. When we have thoroughly thought about and meditated on all the reasons how each and every living being has been extremely kind to us personally, all living beings naturally become very dear to us. The kindness we feel from others naturally makes them very endearing. This acknowledgment of the kindness of all living beings to us is why the text describes living beings as "dear". If we think about how each sentient being has directly been kind to us individually, we naturally develop a great

affection for all of them, so that when we see that they are deprived of happiness and tormented by suffering, we instinctively wish them happiness and that they be relieved from their suffering. Indeed, we see that they wish for happiness, but lack it, and we see that they do not want to experience suffering, but are nevertheless inflicted with many kinds of sufferings. Our meditations on other living beings' great kindness therefore cultivates our desire to help all living beings in their various situations, and to contemplate how it is possible, and what methods are best to provide them with happiness and free them from suffering.

The text concludes that each of us needs to take personal responsibility to liberate all living beings from suffering and lead them all to the ultimate state of happiness. This conclusion is the whole-hearted resolve or superior intention. The intention is superior in the sense that trainees in the lower vehicle have developed compassion and love for beings, but they have not cultivated the whole-hearted resolve to personally liberate all sentient beings from suffering and lead them to the ultimate state of happiness. However, the trainees of the higher scope, the path the text is currently describing, are developing this personal responsibility of leading every living being to the ultimate state of happiness, which is enlightenment. Enlightenment is the state of buddhahood, so the determination that the text is encouraging us to have is to take personal responsibility in ensuring that all sentient beings become buddhas. Why we need to develop the resolve of personal responsibility to liberate all living beings from suffering and lead them to enlightenment has been described previously by the text. The text explained that just as the responsibility of caring for your ailing mother, who has been kind to you in so many ways, falls upon you, so too does the responsibility of caring for all sentient beings who have been very kind to you.

I have found that developing the mindsets of love and compassion, thinking about why all sentient beings have been kind to me personally and contemplating the reasons why I am responsible for freeing them from suffering and leading them to the ultimate happiness, has been of immense benefit to my mind. I regularly share with you that these meditations give me great solace. Even generating the simple thought, "I will take it upon myself to see that all beings are led to the ultimate state of happiness and completely freed from all their sufferings" is incredibly constructive mindset. Let us spend a few moments in generating this thought now. It is a very good meditation to do.

*[Pause for meditation on bodhicitta.]*

Next the text responds to a query about how this superior intention differs to the wish to repay the kindness of living beings that was explained earlier on in the text. The text reads:

Even though this thought was described in the context of the practice of repaying your mother's kindness, here it indicates that it is insufficient to have the compassion and love which merely think, "How nice it would be if they had happiness and were from suffering". For, the thought that assumes

---

responsibility shows that you must develop the compassion and love which have the power to induce the resolve, "I will provide happiness and benefit to all living beings". It is very effective if you practice this continuously, being mindful of it in all of your activities during the period of post-meditation and so on, not just during the meditation session.

So, as explained, the wish for all beings to be endowed with happiness and to be free from suffering is a noble intention. However, although this level of love and compassion is incredibly noble and an extremely benevolent state of mind, the love and compassion generated in this respect is insufficient to induce the resolve to personally provide happiness and benefit to all living beings. The superior intention takes full responsibility to free all beings from suffering and to lead them all to ultimate happiness, which is significantly different to a wish to do so. A mundane analogy sometimes used to show this distinction is a person entering a shop and thinking about buying something versus the person entering the shop, telling the owner of the shop that he or she is definitely buying a particular object with the money he or she has brought. The difference here is between thinking of buying something and actually making the commitment to make the purchase. Similarly, the superior intention goes beyond a wish for all sentient beings to have happiness and to be free from suffering to become a duty-bound commitment. In this way we can clearly see the difference between wishing and taking responsibility whole-heartedly, and how the whole-hearted resolve is a superior intention compared to mere wish for others to be happy and free from suffering. The text explains that this distinction is outlined in detail because understanding the significance of the difference levels of love and compassion is a very useful meditation practice.

The text exhorts us to take to heart this advice by stating that it is very effective if you practise this continuously, being mindful of it in all of your physical activities during the periods of post-meditation and so on, and not just during meditation session.

What is being explained is that having repeatedly contemplated the importance of developing love and compassion, you can meditate on love and compassion, which will gradually lead to your whole-hearted resolve. This superior intention is not immediate, spontaneous and easily obtained, but the resolve is based on the earlier trainings of seeing and thinking about the kindness of other beings, and then generating the wish for them to be happy and to be free from suffering. These are the initial thoughts we need to acquaint our minds with and develop not only when we meditate but also in post-meditation periods like normal, daily life. Constantly reminding ourselves of our wishes for other beings to be happy and to not experience suffering are the building blocks for our whole-hearted resolve.

Further, if we are mindful of these thoughts on a continual basis, they will help to minimise our negative states of mind. We will be unable to get annoyed or angry with others if we are feeling great love and compassion for them; it is not possible to do both at once. Therefore, generating the states of mind of wishing other beings

happiness and not wanting them to suffer protects our own minds from negative states of mind. This means that the practice of cultivating love and compassion directly and immediately benefits you.

Relating the practical benefits to ourselves is very important because then we take the practice to heart. Acquainting our mind with the wish of wanting other beings to be happy and to be free from suffering makes these considerations part of our thought patterns. If we generate and develop these intentions from the depth of our hearts so that they become part of our thinking process, we will then benefit others whenever a practical opportunity arises, and we will benefit ourselves too because our minds are protected by generating these thoughts. Inevitably our minds will progressively become more calm, tranquil and peaceful. After all, since we are nourished through love, it is reasonable that we develop love and compassion for other beings.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama mentions regularly that it is clear our lives are nurtured by love because when we were a baby we were completely dependent on our parents for our survival; we were dependent on the care and love of our parents from a very young age. Similarly, when we reach an old age we are dependent on others' care because we are not capable of looking after ourselves completely. In between these two stages of life we might feel independent and think we do not need to rely on others, however, that would be unjust because we are always reliant and depend on others. Thus, through all stages of our life we need to extend our love and compassion to others because we are dependent on their care, love and compassion at all times. As this is the case, we will find that generating true love and compassion towards others is quite natural.

On a practical note, we can use our personal situation to generate love and compassion in our everyday life. Since we have partners, wives, husbands, families and close friends, and interact with these people on a daily basis, we can think about their happiness and wish them to be free from suffering. Doing this is a good practice. You can remind yourself that the purpose of being with these people is to provide them with true happiness and to free them from suffering. If you can cultivate that wish in relation to those you live with and are close to, your relationships will be sound because they are based on altruistic intentions.

Even though I do not comprehend all the wording in a wedding ceremony, what I understand when a couple takes their wedding vows is that they commit to care for each other in good and bad times, and will not forsake the other's wellbeing. This seems to be the main point of the marriage because when a commitment is made during the ceremony, the marital vows are taken in front of the priest, so it has religious significance, and has witnesses, which serves as a reminder of the promises the couple are making. This is very significant when you think about it because abiding by our pledges and promises is worthwhile because it maintains our integrity.

I use these factual experiences to remind you of the importance of not losing your sense of love and

---

compassion towards others because if your love and compassion does decline, the loss would be great as these mindsets are very valuable. For as long as we maintain our love and compassion towards others we will never be deprived of true friends because others will naturally be drawn to us. We are all able to recognise those who have a genuine sense of love and compassion towards us, and we really cherish these people and do not wish to lose them because they are very important in our lives. However, if we were to lose someone who was merely attached to us, and through their attachment consistently showed their anger towards us, we would recognise that they do not have a true sense of love and compassion for us, so the loss would not be that great. Not cherishing someone who has genuine love and compassion towards us and losing them through a lack of recognition of those qualities would be a great pity.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said that if we send a genuine sense of love and compassion towards sentient beings, which means beings who possess a mind, they will naturally feel our affection and their response will be similar. His Holiness also jokes that sentient beings like mosquitoes may not recognise your good heart because although you may be kind and allow them to suck your blood, they just fly away when they are full and don't show any appreciation! [*Geshe-la laughs and there is general laughter.*] With other animals it is clear that they are grateful. Dogs and cats, for example, definitely show affection when they are well treated. An acquaintance of mine, John, told me a true story that was made into a movie about a dog who was cared for by an owner and ten years after the owner had passed away the dog was still grieving the loss. Apparently the story was very sad – John wept as he told me. In a similar vein, I heard an account of a lion who was cared for and nurtured as a cub by a man, who many years later was reunited with his carer and showed great joy and affection in seeing him. A wild lion recognising the previous kindness of a man after many years is remarkable.

While it is clear that animals are capable of feeling great affection towards those who are kind to them, they do not really have the means to repay the kindness in a practical way. Humans have much greater capacity in repaying kindness to those who have been kind to them, yet we see that their doing so is quite rare. An example of this is how our parents have been extremely kind to us, leaving their personal concerns aside for us, providing us with shelter, and giving us innumerable breakfasts, lunches and dinners, but we completely forget they do this and take their kindness for granted. We might then claim that someone who has given us one meal is extremely kind and rave about how nice they are! [*Geshe-la laughs.*]

The real Dharma practice is cultivating love and compassion within ourselves. When we recognise the potential of love and compassion within ourselves, our generation and development of those states of mind is the real practice.

Let us again engage in a short meditation before we conclude the session for the evening. This time the object of our meditation to focus on can be the sound of the mantra to be recited, which is Buddha Shakyamuni's

mantra. As we hear the sound of the mantra we can keep our full attention on the sound and when the recitation subsides we can maintain our focus on the pleasant feeling we have gained from the practice.

*TAYATHA OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA*

*Transcribed by Su Lan Foo  
Edit 1 by Tanya Simmons  
Edit 2 by Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe  
Edited Version  
© Tara Institute*