

Study Group - "Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand"
A Commentary by The Venerable Geshe Doga
Translated by Samdup Tsering



ལྷན་སྐྱོད་ཀྱི་ལྷན་སྐྱོད་ཀྱི་ལྷན་སྐྱོད་ཀྱི་ལྷན་སྐྱོད་

19 April 1994

Try to establish the right motivation by generating the wish to achieve full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. To fulfil that special wish think "I am receiving these teachings and I shall put them into practice".

The current topic is the four doors to create powerful karma. The 'door of field' has been finished. The next door is:

422.122.123.2: The Door Of Base¹

དྲིལ་གྱི་སྒོ་ནས་སྒྲོབས་ཆེ་བ།

This is the 'door of the person' or the person who creates karma.

Two Explanations Of The Door Of Base

The person who creates karma can also be a cause to determine the intensity of that karma. Any negative karma created by someone who has a vow or commitment, is more powerful than the same karma created by someone who has not taken such a vow or commitment. Conversely the positive karma created by a person with a vow, is more powerful than the same positive karma created by someone without a vow. The text explains that the determining factor for power of the karma is whether or not the person has taken vows.

In other textual explanations it is said "the negative karma created by a wise person is light but the negative karma created by a foolish person is heavy." According to this source whenever a wise person, (one who has knowledge of the law of cause and effect), creates negative karma, they will regret that karma because they know the consequences. Because of this regret they do not accumulate much negativity. Whereas someone without this knowledge will feel delight at the time of creating negative karma. They will not feel regret or moral guilt for that action later. Such lack of regret makes the negative actions more powerful.

Inspiring Ourselves To Take Vows And Commitments

By studying this we should feel more encouraged to take vows or precepts. Through taking precepts or vows, any

positive actions that are created become more powerful. Purification practices will also be more powerful. We should also try to remember the benefits of practising morality. As said in scriptures "For the cause of higher rebirth there is no other cause than morality."²

Even if we can not take vows or precepts for a lifetime, it is worthwhile to take the eight mahayana precepts by vowing not to kill or commit sexual conduct and so on. On the day of taking these eight mahayana precepts whatever positive action we do becomes more powerful. For the duration of those precepts, whether you are sitting, walking or sleeping, your virtue flourishes. On such precept days it is also good to purify negative actions committed in the past. In this way, although we cannot be sure what negative actions we have committed through ignorance, we can apply a purifying practice to purify such negativities.

A person who has a good knowledge of dharma has an opportunity to purify negativities regardless of when they were created. Simply by feeling regret for the negative actions half of the negativity is purified.

For further explanation of door of person who creates the action, you should refer to the main commentary.

422.122.123.3: The Door Of Thing Or Object³

དངོས་པོའི་སྒོ་ནས་སྒྲོབས་ཆེ་བ།

The door of the object or thing means the action or karma becomes powerful because of the type of action which we do, that is the type of object or thing which is offered or given to others. For example in the practice of generosity, of the various objects of giving the giving of dharma is a more powerful positive action than the giving of material objects. Offering spiritual practice is a more powerful spiritual action than offering material objects.⁴

2 *Madhayamika-avatara* by Chandrakirti chapter two

3 p 458 *Liberation...* The title given in this text is "Powerful because of the things being done".

4 Geshe-la is making a subtle distinction here. There is a difference between 'giving' and 'offering'. The Tibetan word for giving is 'jin-pa' which Geshe-la defined on 16/5/89 as "The mental factor of the intention to give". This means to be

1 p 456 *Liberation...* The title used in this text is "Powerful because one has been a candidate for vows".

The Giving Of Different Objects Have Different Powers

When we engage in the practice of giving or charity we give material objects. To those in need of food we give food, to those in need of clothes we give clothes, to those in need of drink we give drink. These are acts of giving and are also acts of pleasing others. Giving material objects is one of the four means of gathering disciples as a bodhisattva practice⁵ Speaking in a delightful manner is also giving since it pleases other beings. Giving dharma is more beneficial. If we make offerings of material objects and of our spiritual practice, the latter accumulates more merit. As we study this topic we should try to develop more knowledge about this best form of spiritual practice. Giving dharma or offering spiritual practice are very powerful spiritual practices.

The most excellent thing we can offer is to put dharma into practice. Because when we practise dharma it naturally becomes an offering since it pleases all the noble and enlightened beings. Always focusing on spiritual practice helps to overcome the negativities within. One may have pride in one's knowledge or wealth. By sharing all the virtue we have created for the benefit of all living beings, we reduce miserliness, and also pride in our own virtue.

Many of us have the responsibility of leading others in meditation, dharma talks or discussions. It is important to always ensure that one's motivation is correct and to do one's best to share one's knowledge with other people. If someone asks a question and you feel confident to give an answer, then do so, not out of pride but with the motivation to help others.

If others address their questions in a negative way, then do not get angry nor lose your temper. Rather remember to maintain practice and give the best answer to the question. If you do not know the answer, then say "I do not know." In this way we should feel confident about giving talks and helping others to feel joy. Of all the

generous or the thought of generosity. The Tibetan word for 'offering' is 'chöd-pa' which Geshe-la defined on 6/11/90 as 'to please' or 'to delight the holy objects'. Therefore offering must please the objects to whom we offer whereas in giving there is not this entailment. The three objects that are normally included as the objects of giving are material offerings, dharma and protection. Of these the supreme is the giving of dharma. The objects that are normally included as objects of offering are surpassable (eg the two waters, flowers, incense, light, etc) and unsurpassable (eg the offering of one's practice). The supreme of these is the offering of one's practice. For a clear description of this distinction refer to Geshe-la's study group notes on *Ganden Lha Gya Ma* 3/5/88, *Madhyamika-avatara* 16/5/89 and *Lam Rim* 6/11/90

5 The four means of gathering disciples are: p 708 *Liberation...*

1. Giving material things
2. Speaking sweetly to the people drawn to you
3. Teaching the disciples the path of the holy dharma according to their intelligence thus bringing them to train in its stages.
4. Practise what you preach

things we can give or share with others, the best is to share knowledge of dharma which brings joy and peace to the mind.

If our motivation for teaching others is to force others to adopt our own view or philosophy, this will not benefit them. For example, if you are a Geshe you may have a fixed idea in your mind "This is the philosophy held by the Geshe" and be tempted to impose this belief when teaching others. Your intention is to force others to believe his view. Such a motivation is wrong and will not help others and is also negative for oneself to have such a view.

Performance Of Spiritual Practice

There is a difference between giving material objects and dharma. Also in the objects of offering there is a difference between offering material objects and offering spiritual practice. When offering one's own practice say "I offer this to my spiritual teacher", and imagine that this offering pleases and causes delight to my spiritual teacher. Then imagine offering material wealth and things to your teacher and other high beings. This causes uncontaminated bliss in their mind.

Even if you don't formally have such a motivation of giving, simply performing the practice itself is an offering, since it pleases the enlightened beings. Just as any good thing done by a child, brings joy to the parents, similarly any spiritual practice one does is a cause of delight and joy to all enlightened beings.

There is no rush to finish these topics since we shall both be living here for some time practising and teaching.

End of discourse

Exam questions:

Question 1: Why is harmony so important?

Student 1: Because it keeps an atmosphere of great benefit to a large number of people. Also our spiritual teachers will be happy and remain.

Geshe-la: You gave the essence of the answer.

Question 2: The different levels of happiness and their causes?

Student 2: There are three:

- Happiness of future lives.
- Happiness of liberation.
- Happiness of enlightenment.

Their causes are the motivation to achieve these states, then to practise the relevant paths.

Geshe-la: Could you refer to the *Lam Rim* to clarify the different levels of motivation to achieve those three levels of happiness?

Student 2: To achieve higher rebirth follow the path of karma and look at perfect human rebirth, death and impermanence, and the suffering of lower realms. Then

one works for the future life not just this one.

To achieve liberation one must follow the path of meditation on the twelve links of interdependent origination and obtain wisdom that overcomes the root cause of cyclic existence.

To achieve enlightenment one must follow the bodhisattva path.

Geshe-la: There is happiness in three levels from bottom to top:

1. level of happiness existing in higher rebirth
2. level of happiness existing in nirvana
3. level of happiness existing in full enlightenment

What is the highest form of happiness existing in the highest rebirths?

Student 1: To be born as a human with freedom and endowments to practice dharma.

Geshe-la: To retranslate: "higher status" refers to higher rebirth or higher existence. Which is the highest in higher status?

Student 3: The peak of cyclic existence.

Geshe-la: This level of existence called peak of cyclic existence is necessarily the highest because of the term "peak". Is it the highest in higher status?

Student 3: Yes, since it is concentration.

Geshe-la: Is the state of buddhahood a "high status"?

Student 3: Yes.

Geshe-la: Is buddha in cyclic existence?

Student 3: No.

Geshe-la: High status. The state of enlightenment as attained by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is the highest of the high status. The supreme of all human beings is Guru Shakyamuni Buddha who is a human being. Therefore Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is of the highest status.

Question 7: The four seals.

- All compounded phenomena are impermanent
- All contaminated phenomena are suffering
- All phenomena are empty and selfless
- Nirvana is peace, i.e., nirvana which is the state beyond sorrow is peace

These four seals or views are accepted by all proponents of buddhist schools of tenets.

There are various ways of knowing the meaning of these four seals in depth. These four seals also indicate the four noble truths, the basic view of Buddhism, the path of Buddhism and the fruit or final result of the paths.

Geshe-la: How to differentiate between someone called as Buddhist and someone who is a proponent of the Buddhist school of tenets? That is, what is the

qualification to be called Buddhist? Is this the same as becoming a proponent of Buddhist tenets?

Buddhists may ask Christians "Do they regard Jesus Christ as a God? How is it feasible for Jesus Christ to be God if there is only one God?" There are similar issues to be discussed in Buddhism.

In short, in the teaching tonight we found the importance of maintaining one's own spiritual practice, which means to prevent negative thoughts and deeds. We always need to be mindful and remind ourselves of what spiritual practice is all about, which is to decrease negative thoughts and deeds, and to increase positive thoughts and deeds.

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

The original typescript is prepared 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.

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ཨོཾ་འཇམ་དེ་མཛུ་རྣམ་གྲོལ་ལག་བཅུངས།

26 April 1994

The Special Opportunity Of This Human Life

Shantideva said "There is no more ignorance and deception than not utilising this human life of leisure after having found it."

This verse indicates the unique qualities of this life of leisure. Having obtained such a human life of leisure, we must see it as a unique opportunity and then generate the thought of achieving something special from this very special life. We must utilise this human life of leisure to become familiar with virtue. Not using this life for virtuous practice shows that we are deceiving ourselves and are very ignorant.

Reasons Why We Must Practise Dharma And Why We Must Practise It In This Life

We need to practise dharma. In order to have strong motivation and to be inspired to practise dharma we should contemplate the question, "Why should I practise dharma?" The reason is because we want to experience happiness and avoid suffering. As we examine the sources of suffering and happiness we realise that both of them depend upon our state of mind. It is obvious that positive states of mind bring more happiness in this life. That positive state of mind is also the cause of happiness in future lives as well. The purpose of practising dharma is to facilitate happiness and overcome suffering.

We might recognise this reason for practising dharma but feel discouraged due to a lack of courage. Therefore we should think "I am fully capable of practising dharma." To realise this we must understand that we have all the necessary conditions to practise dharma. By focusing on the conditions necessary to practise dharma we can see that we do have all the necessary capabilities and conditions.

One might still postpone the practice of dharma. This procrastination can be eradicated by contemplating that the very rare opportunity which we have now, will not last forever. Once you lose this opportunity it is extremely difficult and rare to obtain another human rebirth in future. This contemplation encourages me to practise dharma before the end of this life.

This is not enough, because in reality this life is becoming shorter, and may end at any moment. Therefore you must think "I must practise dharma right now". This encourages one to practise dharma now. In

this manner we should see every reason to encourage ourselves to practise dharma as soon as possible and in every moment of our life.

Another reason why we might not practise dharma is by saying "If I do not practise dharma this does not matter, since sooner or later my life will finish." This is not a good reason since after death the cycle of life continues. Given this we ask "Do I have choice over my next life?" If we do not have this control then who does have this control? As you contemplate, you realise that the type of future life is determined by the positive and negative energies within our mindstream. If the negative energy is stronger, the following life will be unfortunate.

Therefore we become convinced that we must practise dharma and that we must practice it now.

The Benefits Of Practising Virtuous Actions

The true practice of dharma is the practice of the law of karma. From our study of the law of karma we understand the main practice to be adopting the ten virtuous actions and refraining from the ten non-virtuous actions.

Of the ten virtuous actions the first is refraining from killing. The direct reason for refraining from such an action (which ends the life of others), is because inflicting harm on others is negative. On that basis (i.e. causing harm to others is negative and unskillful) we begin the practice of the law of karma. In all Buddha's teachings the teaching on non-harmfulness is the most essential one. Whatever progress we make in the rest of our practice, the very foundation of it is not harming any other being - either human or any other sentient being. As part of our daily practice we must remind ourselves "I shall never cause any harm to any person or any other living being." Refraining from killing is the practice of morality. It is the substantial cause to obtain happy rebirth in the future.

There are also many benefits to this life as a result of not harming other beings. Respecting the life of other beings means that we help them. As a result we shall naturally find more happiness and peace because there will be less harm to our own life as well.

There are results or benefits for future lives from practising the ten virtuous actions. Not killing ensures a good rebirth in the future life.

Practising the second virtuous act of not stealing results in having abundant wealth, resources and other necessary conditions in a future rebirth. It is not simply the case that just by being born in a higher rebirth we shall be happy, since happiness depends upon other conditions as well. Through the practice of not stealing, these conditions will be good. Other conditions such as having good friends are the result of the third virtuous act of refraining from sexual misconduct. Contemplating the results of the ten virtuous actions shows us how they are the source of happiness both in this life and future lives.

It is also important to know the essence, or actual meaning of the practice of refraining from killing, stealing, and so on. Although these practices refer to a physical restraint the emphasis is on gaining progress in the mind through becoming more familiar with positive thoughts and attitudes. All these positive benefits of practising virtue should be seen in the context of controlling one's own mind. Understanding and experiencing these benefits is when we begin to taste the real benefit of dharma. This experience might take time, but it is important that we always make an effort with our practice to control and calm the mind.

Adopting A Relaxed And Balanced Practice

It is wrong to think that engaging in dharma practice means sacrificing our day-to-day enjoyments, and facing hardships in learning and practise, in the belief that the fruit of your practice will only come in the future. In fact, when one knows how to practise properly and makes some progress, there is immediate joy and progress in this current life. So it is important to not force our practice since, just like anything we do, progress depends to a great deal on our state of mind. If our mind is relaxed when we meditate, our practice becomes more effective. It is not so much the duration, as the quality of the practice. This quality depends on skill. With good quality and skill, we can achieve great goals quickly.

If it is still too difficult, then it is better to break from practice and spend time with friends, talking, walking and eating out. We must know what will give rest and satisfaction to the mind. If we can maintain some relaxation in the mind, then we can gradually make progress which is the adoption of the ten virtues in thought and action.

We must realise that the true source of satisfaction is within our own mind. Satisfaction is not something that necessarily depends upon external factors such as material wealth and friends, because we cannot rely on such things. Rather, satisfaction is when we are content with that which we do have. We are happy with those and so feel satisfaction in them. Peace and happiness have to come from within our own mind. Therefore if one feels deprived of those external objects, the source of this dissatisfaction is also within our own mind. By calming the mind and being content with whatever one has, satisfaction is achieved.

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3 May 1994

Try to generate motivation by thinking "I must achieve the state of Buddhahood and it is for this reason that I shall practice the Lam Rim teachings".

Of the four doors of powerful actions the fourth is the Door of Intention.

422.122.123.4: The Door Of Intention¹

བསམ་པའི་སྣོན་ནས་སྣོན་པས་ཆེ་བ།

The intention which decides the action is a very important factor which determines the intensity of that action. Here the emphasis is on having the altruistic mind of enlightenment or bodhicitta as the intention.

It is said that if we say Tara prayers out of the motivation of bodhicitta, the benefit of saying that Tara prayer once, is equal to the benefit of saying Tara prayers thousands of times without the motivation of bodhicitta.

Benefits Of Bodhicitta Intention

In relation to the benefits of using bodhicitta as a motivation for our practice Shantideva says in the Bodhisattvacharyavata: ²

All other virtues are like the plain tree, which after yielding its fruit once it ceases to produce more. From the tree of bodhicitta the yield is everlasting.

When it says here that "all other virtues are like a plain tree", a banana tree is such an example. The "other virtues" are those virtuous actions, that are not motivated by bodhicitta. As a benefit of these actions one may obtain a happy life as a human being. However after that, the virtuous action can no longer produce any good results in the form of happiness. Therefore, they are like a plain tree the fruit of which is only enjoyed once. Thereafter there is no fruit to be enjoyed.

Bodhicitta, however, is likened to a tree which can produce fruit constantly. As a result of virtuous actions

motivated by bodhicitta we obtain any of the high rebirths, and having produced that rebirth that same virtue continues to produce more results and keeps increasing.

Whenever we create any virtuous action, for example the meditation practice we did at the beginning of this session, we generate should bodhicitta as our motivation. Then while engaging in the practice we should remind ourselves "I am doing this practice for the sake of all sentient beings". At the end we should dedicate the practice to the benefit of all sentient beings.

Including the bodhicitta motivation from the beginning to the end of the practice will cause the merit from the practice to continue to increase, and ensure a good result.

Joy And Repetition - The Way To Accumulate Great Virtue

Using bodhicitta as a motivation for our practice helps us to reduce the selfish mind. It is said that there are also two other factors to remember besides bodhicitta to make our practice very positive:

1. Always feel delight in one's practice. When you start feel joy and delight, and maintain those feelings throughout the practice until the conclusion.
2. Repeat the practice as often as possible. It is very difficult to make progress if you are always stopping and starting

If we fulfil both of these factors we will accumulate much virtue. To neglect one of these factors reduces the virtue.

Fulfilling One's Own Aims By Caring For Others' Welfare:

It is very clear that performing the same actions with thought of the need of other beings is much broader in scope than performing them solely for our own benefit. If we think of all living beings when we perform some action, the virtue from that action is very extensive since it is being shared with all living beings. Immediately this gives us a sense of joy. Whereas if we always do things with a very selfish mind, somehow we end up unhappy and disappointed. If we act from a selfish mind, there is no consideration for other beings' needs, because we have no respect for them. Even to those close to us such as our parents or friends we cannot admit we were

¹Liberation...p458 The title used in the text is "Powerful because of the intention."

²Verse 12 chapter one. In the LTWA translation of this the verse reads:
"All other virtues are like the plaintain tree;
for after bearing fruit they simply perish.
But the perennial tree of the Awakening Mind
Unceasingly bears fruit and thereby flourishes
without end."

wrong and suffer any loss at all. Generally there is no way we can completely disregard the well-being of others and still fulfil even our own selfish purpose.

To start with, we should try to share our happiness with those who are closest. It is worthwhile to think "At least I shall not hurt the person closest to me". Then any actions will be influenced by that thought rather than any selfish motivation.

When a couple both think of each other then naturally there will be harmony in that relationship. They can enjoy their life regardless of other factors such as financial circumstances. Because of their love for each other there is no harm, so then there is harmony, and then they can find meaning in their relationship.

After seeing the benefit of showing love to others - either to one or a few friends - surely it is easy to extend this love to more beings. Then we can think of the welfare of all other beings be they friend, enemy or stranger. If we lead our life like this, then every virtuous action we create is shared with every living being, and so it becomes a very powerful action indeed. That one action can be a cause to find countless happy rebirths is the future.

Developing Trust In Relationships

Suppose two people try to help each other as much as they can. After a while they relax and completely trust each other. With this complete trust there is no room between them for conflict and unnecessary disputes. Without this trust, it is very easy to be suspicious, even though they may like or love each other. If one of them makes a slight mistake in conversation or says something at the wrong time, this can be a source of great conflict and dispute. Trust in each other comes as a result of proving that you love and care for one another. Without this trust there is room for conflict. The main thing is to reduce the self-interest, especially within relationships. If we have a very strong self interest then any friendships or relationships will not work and life will be difficult, miserable and confused. With a strong selfish mind it is difficult to find peace and happiness. Everything you possess seems to create more unease in the mind. With a selfish mind, you feel pride in any success or wealth, but there is not much meaning in that success. Whereas someone who thinks of the needs of others uses whatever skills or knowledge they acquire for the benefit of others. Similarly any wealth gained is used in the most beneficial way.

The motivation of caring for other beings not only helps them, but also becomes a true source of happiness and fulfilment in one's own life as well.

End of discourse

Mantras For Purifying Meat And When Accidentally Stepping On Animals

Here are two mantras for the Picnic day which Geshe-la says should be recited three or seven times.

"OM KHE-CA-RA GHANA HUM HRIH SOHA"

We should do this first mantra in the morning. Its purpose is for when we kill any living creatures by stepping on them during that day.¶

"OM A-BHI-RA KHE-CA-RA HUNG"

The second mantra is for those of you who eat meat. This mantra must be recited seven times prior to eating, then blow on the meat. This is effective in getting rid of any negativities from eating meat.

In the Scriptures it says:

By reciting this mantra, the sentient beings whose meat it is, will be caused to be reborn in a higher rebirth.

It is best that we try to practise saying the mantra. It is more important to have faith rather than worrying about the correct pronunciation. To do so that would have to go back to the Sanskrit which would be very difficult. If two people one who is blind and one who is mute, go begging in front of a house they will both get food from the householder who will understand their intention for being at the door begging. The mantra is transliterated into English from Tibetan. The original mantra was in Sanskrit. It is hard to get the sound right in Tibetan let alone then turning into English. Therefore do not worry about getting the sound right. If we listen to others they say it differently anyhow.

The main purpose of this is to clarify any doubt that by saying the mantra unclearly one gets less blessings. Receiving the benefit from a mantra depends not on how we say it but on how much faith we have in it.

Even English has different pronunciations for the same word. For example 'apple', which is the correct word for apple. In Australia we say "tea is hot", in the USA they say "tea is hut". Canadians and New Zealanders have different pronunciations again and yet they all say that they speak English.

In China when they recite Chenrezig mantra, their original is derived from Sanskrit just like the Tibetan. However the Chinese version sounds very different from the Tibetan. It may sound different but that does not mean it is wrong.

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It is also stated that one should recite this mantra three times then blow some spittle onto the soles of your feet. Then any living beings that die beneath your feet that day will be reborn in the land of the Thirty three gods.

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10 May 1994

We generate the motivation of bodhicitta wishing for the state of Buddhahood for the sake of all beings. With this motivation we listen to the teachings and put them into practice.

We have now finished the four doors of powerful karma which are:

- Door of field
- Door of life basis
- Door of things
- Door of intention

Other Divisions Of Karma

The next topic in the study of karma is to know the difference between propelling and completing karma.

The Difference Between Propelling And Completing Karma¹

The propelling karma for a happy rebirth (such as a human), must be virtuous whereas the propelling karma for any unhappy rebirth (such as an animal) is non-virtuous. Any of the happy rebirths, such as the human life, is the result of propelling karma. Propelling karma is that karma which is the main cause for the life form. For the human form of life, the karma which propels that life has to be virtuous.

Completing karma is the cause which determines the conditions in which that life is completed. If a human life is full of happiness and virtue, both the propelling and the completing karma for that life are virtuous. In the case of a hell being, both the propelling and completing karma are non virtuous.

The Results Of Propelling And Completing Karma

There is also the example of a human form of life which is a result of being propelled by a virtuous karma, but being completed by non virtuous karma. For example there are human beings who experience suffering throughout their lifetimes. Some animals' lives are the result propelled by non virtuous karma but completed by virtuous karma. This explains why all human beings

do not experience the same things in life. Simply being human, does not necessarily mean we shall have a happy life. It all depends upon the various karmas we created in the past. Because of past observance of morality we are born as human beings. There are many human beings who starve and live in poverty. This is the result of not practising generosity in the past. On the other hand there are many animals, who enjoy a very easy, comfortable life in the present. Their animal rebirth is the result of non virtuous, immoral actions in past. Because they practised generosity in the past they may now experience a very easy, comfortable life.

In this way the topic of karma can be very complex. Although it is not asserted by the Abhidharma according to Asanga, it is said, according to Vasubhandu that:

"A single propelling karma can result in many number of bodies or forms of life."

In the meditation Alan gave the example of the result of harsh speech by calling someone else a monkey. That harsh speech can result in five hundred lifetimes of lower rebirth. It is hard to imagine how a single karma can produce that number of results.

Developing Faith In Law Of Cause And Effect

If everything is cause and effect, then this shows that the fact that we are now human beings, proves that in previous lives we have practised morality. This current human life which we now enjoy is the result of that cause. As humans we have suitable and sufficient material conditions. This obviously shows that in our previous life we not only practised morality but also generosity. We must try to identify the causes of our human rebirth and the causes of suitable life conditions from the point of view of the law of cause and effect, or karma. In this way we develop faith in the law of karma.

We develop faith in karma by first knowing at a broad level, that the things which we experience in life happen because of cause and effect. We first become convinced at this gross level that everything is created by cause and effect. Later our knowledge becomes deeper through understanding the abstract happenings, which also occur because of karma, (or cause and effect).

Having recognised that because of past virtuous actions,

¹Liberation.. p459 The translation used on this page is "throwing and completing karma." Path to Enlightenment in Tibetan Tradition by Geshe Loden p367 is another reference.

we enjoy this happy rebirth and good conditions, we should then think "My future lives depend on my actions now".

Therefore we must consider what we need to do to ensure a better rebirth and good conditions in those future lives

Further Divisions Of Karma

There are further divisions in the study of the law of karma.

Definite And Indefinite Karma²

Karma can also be divided into two:

1. Definite karma, which will definitely be experienced.
2. Indefinite karma, where it is not definite whether the karma will be experienced.

Accumulated And Done Karma³

Karma can be divided in terms of:

1. Karma which is done and accumulated
2. Karma which is done but not accumulated
3. Karma which is not done but is accumulated
4. Karma which is neither done nor accumulated.

Whether the karma will be definite or indefinite depends on this further classification. Definite karmas are those which are done and accumulated. Indefinite karmas refer to those which are done or accumulated but not both.

To distinguish definite and indefinite in simple language we take the example of any type of definite karma. Provided that this definite karma is virtuous, and it is not subsequently destroyed by the force of anger, it will definitely produce its results. That is, it will definitely meet all the conditions for it to ripen. For example if you have created the definite karma to eat a tasty meal, then it is guaranteed you will enjoy that tasty meal. A non virtuous definite karma, if not purified by some purification method, will definitely ripen by meeting the immediate conditions for that karma to ripen.

In short, definite karma is that karma which is done as well as accumulated. Indefinite karma is that karma which is either accumulated or done, but not both.

The difference between karma which is done and accumulated is to do with motivation and actual performance of that action. Consider for example the action of killing another human. If, in that action,

someone has the motivation to kill a person, and actually performs that action, the type of karma which is created is both done and accumulated.

However if the person commits the action, as a result of orders from another person, and not through their own will or intention, the type of karma created is done by not accumulated.

But if the person had the motivation to murder that person but the actual performance of that action did not happen, the type of karma created is accumulated but not done.

End of discourse

Next week is the teaching break, and there is a discussion group night. The week after is the written exam. The only aim of that written test is to develop our understanding of this teaching and to provide an opportunity to review all our study. Even those who do not write the exam must also make an effort to review their study and do preparation for the test.

The compulsory question is naming the six perfections and the six opposites to the six perfections. These opposites are:

generosity miserliness

Therefore when we practise generosity we overcome miserliness which is the opposite of generosity.

morality immorality

patience anger

effort laziness

concentration distraction

wisdom ignorance

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

The original typescript is prepared 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.

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²Liberation.. p459 Here the text mentions karma one is obliged to undergo and karma one is not obliged to undergo. These are probably the same as definite and indefinite karma. *Path to Enlightenment in Tibetan Tradition* by Geshe Loden p368 is another reference.

³Liberation.. p459 Here the text only briefly mentions this topic as; karma one has accumulated through some actions, actions done that accumulate no karma, karma that one accumulated without doing anything.