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



ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅུངས།

8 March 1994

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Geshe Doga said that he was happy to begin another year of study group. He was also happy because we had not met together as friends for two months.

Since this Study Group was started, the Centre and its Members have derived great benefit from the program. Many of the senior students have contributed to its success. For example this year while there were no teachings from Geshe-la, a few students taught and led meditations.

**Harmony: The Basis Of Success In The Study Group**

From past experience, the main element which makes this study program successful and enjoyable is the maintenance of harmony in the group.

We learn not only the importance of establishing good relationships with others, but also how to establish those relationships. We learn this through the teachings and by cultivation of faith. Through this, Geshe-la said, you learn to meditate with others or meditate alone.

The most important benefit of the teachings, is in seeing the value of showing love and respect to other beings. For this reason Geshe Doga says he gives teachings to the best of his knowledge. Although he appears to sit on a higher seat, this is not necessarily because of his higher realisations, but because of respect for the teachings which he is providing for others.

By studying and meditating with others we learn how to open our mind and heart to other beings. This is important as we live in a society where we are all dependent upon each other, whether bound by faith in dharma or not. To survive in happiness, we must depend upon others and have good relationships with them.

**Comparing Internal And External Factors Which Cause Happiness And Problems**

Obviously in our day-to-day life happiness depends upon two factors - external and internal.

*External factors* are those apparent to our sense faculties - those beautiful things that we see with our eyes and so on. Externally there are many things that are seemingly a source of happiness. Of course if we become lazy and make no effort, we cannot attain them. But does having those external things definitely secure peace and happiness in the mind? The answer is no. Happiness

depends upon *internal factors*. This internal factor is our way of thinking. So it is necessary that just as we turn our minds to external things, we should also turn inward to see what is in us which is beneficial or very destructive to our life. We can study a lot of dharma but the most practical thing is to observe our own thoughts and actions, knowing that we continuously produce different types of thought.

Take the thoughts produced when one is in a bad mood with friends or when one is very unhappy, and compare them with the thoughts we have when we are very happy or peaceful. In this way we can see within ourselves that there are positive and negative states of mind, just as in daily life there are positive and negative states [of conduct]. In this way we develop an understanding of cause and effect in our daily experiences.

Whenever there is some good experience, then the main cause is within oneself. If one believes in that, then one believes in the cause of happiness, and that is belief in dharma in the true sense.

From this perspective, we are always our own witnesses of the occurrences in our lives. So there is more understanding of the cause and effect of our own happiness and suffering. In this way we can also understand how it is the same for other people. We become more conscious of how we talk to others and the attitude that we adopt towards them. That is what is learnt in this Study Group.

Normally people are very absent minded in their conversations with other people, and so they cause a lot of unhappiness in the minds of others. Your own experience of calmness and happiness can very quickly switch to unhappiness, simply by hearing some slander or idle gossip from another. This can completely destroy your peace of mind. Through understanding your own state of mind, you develop the practice of patience towards other beings. It is possible to create a very stable way of thinking that is not easily influenced by external factors. Rather, inwardly you maintain your own way of thinking. Through this one can feel an inner peace, relaxation and calmness regardless of where one lives or what one does.

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## Benefit Of Dharma Practice

Next week we shall return to the current Study Group topic. Tonight we are focussing on the importance of having harmony at home, with friends and within the Study Group. Spiritual knowledge does not necessarily depend upon how much you study or how many teachings you receive. Rather it depends on the way you share your knowledge and practice with your friends. Even if it is a very small group, if there is a good atmosphere, if everyone is relaxed and prepared to share their knowledge, then automatically you learn and make progress in the study of dharma.

The point of learning dharma is to transform our way of thinking into positive states of mind, and to help others to cultivate a similar state of mind.

No matter what situation we meet, we have to remember to view it from the perspective of dharma knowledge. It is common to think that there is no control over the mind, and as a result people are very absent minded about their thoughts and deeds.

Suppose that at present, you enjoy a very harmonious relationship with a special friend. Then imagine somebody tells you how, in the past, your friend was involved in a relationship with some other person . By just being told about that past event, you become very cross or upset with yourself and with your friend. This shows how the mind is overpowered by delusion. If it were not, then there would be no reason to become very disturbed or upset. After all, right now, you have a good relationship with your friend. As far as the past goes, you too, might have had relationships with others or done many wrongs.

If you sit and think carefully, then even though what you have heard causes some disturbance in the mind, you can conclude "Why should I worry about what my friend has done in the past?" You become completely calm. There is nothing to worry about. We cannot completely prevent changes which might happen, but we can still find the best way to handle them.

Sometimes some suffering must be tolerated, since in the long run there is more advantage In daily life how often do we consider tolerating some loss now, because there is some long term benefit? It is best to learn how to be self-guided.

We can further develop our habits of thought by seeing how our own mind brings a lot of unnecessary problems through worrying about something that has not yet happened. We must give some thought to our own future, but worrying about our future all the time will not bring peace and happiness in the present. If the main cause of worry is not here and now but somewhere in the future, then it is easily prevented. It is only a matter of getting rid of that thought, like turning on a light in a dark room. All it takes is to remove that thought. This is the very apparent benefit of dharma - developing the wisdom of one's own mind.

Through using one's own mind as an example, we can see how it is so easy to lose control and become upset. How much more do we appreciate it, when out of compassion someone tries to help us without any selfish motivation.

In the same way we should try to do the same for others - to understand that if someone is showing negative thoughts or is angry, then that person has some unhappiness in their mind. You can understand their dissatisfaction because you feel the same, whenever you lack a sense of happiness or satisfaction in your own mind.

Especially if the other person is a close friend, you should take the time to ask what is worrying them and to think how to be of help. Saying "What is wrong with you?" with an angry face or "Because of that behaviour I cannot put up with you!" is like putting wood on a fire. The best, the most effective way, to help others is to show sincere love. Then out of love you truly extend your help to others.

We shall say the prayers now, then shake hands with the person beside us showing a full gesture of delight, saying "Nice to meet you!" While doing this, your mind should be completely open to that friend so you will not feel any embarrassment.

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15 March 1994

**Achieving Life's Goal**

All living beings, capable of experiencing pain and pleasure, want to have happiness and avoid suffering. In order to achieve that happiness and eliminate suffering we must depend upon a form of life. The human form of life is the most suitable, especially that form qualified by the eight freedoms and the ten endowments. Those of us here have all obtained this excellent form of human life.

**The Different Levels Of Happiness**

There are different levels of happiness:

- The gross physical enjoyment we experience in this life
- Happiness within cyclic existence or samsara. This is all the happiness that we will experience in the future, whether it be as a human or godly being. It still occurs within samsara.
- Happiness beyond samsara - the happiness of nirvana or liberation from cyclic existence.
- Far beyond the happiness of liberation from samsara is the happiness of the full state of enlightenment. Here one is completely free of all faults, and possesses all good qualities. This is the state of Buddhahood.

**The Great Potential Of This Current Life - To Achieve Happiness In Future Lives**

There are many things in this present life that are seen as pleasurable, and therefore a source of happiness. Each of us has different ideas as to what will bring happiness. Day and night we search for those things in our different ways. The common element which underlies our search is happiness. However those things which we seek may not necessarily be good. Rather they are very personal, so if we achieve them, they bring some personal happiness.

Happiness in the future is not perceived as clearly as happiness now. Therefore future happiness has a lower priority than the present. This way of pursuing happiness is very mundane, very worldly.

As spiritual practitioners however, we must hold happiness of future lives to be more important than happiness in this life. This present life passing away day by day is a very short moment, compared to our future

lives. Therefore it is very misguided to become attached to material things or friends and relatives. Spending the entire time being concerned over these things is a great loss.

Spiritual practitioners see that there is great potential, even in this short life, to achieve far reaching goals. So we should try to develop the aspiration for future happiness as clearly as possible.

**Seeking Happiness In Future Lives**

Future happiness is obtained by achieving the higher rebirth of a human or godly being or even the state of liberation from samsara. Every day this life becomes shorter and future lives draw closer. This means that each time we secure some good cause for our future life, then our future happiness draws closer. For the spiritual practitioner there is no need to feel unhappy or frightened, since at the end of each day they are closer to a better future. It is very easy to forsake some temporary gain or pleasure. So whatever good or bad happens in our life is made easier, because we know that it is only for short time.

We ordinary beings are attracted to this life and can keep busy without ever feeling tired. Similarly pure dharma practitioners (those who completely renounce this world), tirelessly use all their human potential to engage in virtuous actions. Although outwardly they may appear to be very poor or physically weak, within them is complete peace and happiness.

Material wealth and good health are dependent upon previous karma. Material wealth and good health are also dependent on one's own skills in accumulating wealth and some immediate circumstances however the immediate circumstances which affect the accumulation of wealth are very momentary. This shows that if we wholeheartedly pursue happiness in future lives, just as pure dharma practitioners do, we will not be deprived of happiness in this life.

Whether it is this life or future lives, to lose a moment of happiness is a loss.

As we say,  
Reverse happiness of this life  
Seek happiness of future lives

Consistently seeking future happiness does not exclude

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enjoying happiness in this life. We should not deliberately deprive ourselves of happiness in this life. All happinesses are valuable, since they are a very rare experience.

### **Proving The Existence Of Past And Future Lives**

In order to practise the dharma seriously some knowledge about the truth or knowledge of the law of karma, or cause and effect is required. To see happiness beyond this life, there must be some understanding of cause and effect. Initially, without this understanding of cause and effect, there can be no faith in the future or past lives. Without the law of karma it is difficult to find other scientific proofs.

The most simple way of knowing of the existence of past and future lives, is to analyse our own experiences. Through this we observe this deep sense of "I" which exists, and which is the focal point of any action. This "I" can be identified in connection with our name. When we hear our name we think "Someone is calling me". So "I" is attached to the name by which one is called.

There is also an "I" which is not attached to a name. This "I" has little to do with this life i.e., with our name or other factors of this life. We can get the idea, through this sense of "I", that there is a past existence.

When we leave behind everything we possess, even our body, this "I" continues. So there is not only life before, but also life after this present one.

### **Applying The Law Of Karma To Successful Relationships In Daily Life**

What then, is the true cause for happiness in future lives? The main cause is extending love and compassion to other beings. With a selfish attitude or strong sense of ego there is no consideration for the needs of other beings. So we create actions that cause suffering not only to others, but also for ourselves.

Even if we have not fully rid ourselves of self-interest, we can still practice patience with those close to us. Even though one has not fully removed the selfish mind, if not to all beings, who may be far distant, but at least to our friends we practise patience and share the good things in life. There are some who give food to others even though are very hungry themselves. They do this because of a different frame of mind. With a selfish attitude the only concern is to enjoy that food, and ignore others. Giving food to others, instead of satisfying one's own hunger, shows a compassionate mind. To have such a kind and generous attitude is *true* dharma practice. Such behaviour is admired by all, even non-dharma followers.

The result of giving is wealth, and the result of morality is a happy life. Therefore giving is the cause of happiness in the future. By practising dharma in this way, we also start to create more causes for a better future. Because one's dharma practice affects everyday behaviour, this life is happier and more harmonious. If people share a house together, and they all truly follow the practice of

dharma, then they will also enjoy a better friendship with each other.

Happiness is something that comes from the mind. Having more friends or wealth does not ensure happiness. Without contentment these same things become a source of unhappiness! We may have a good, stable relationship but start to worry that it may end. This harms the relationship. We might worry that we may lose that friend to another. This harms the relationship and unnecessary problems arise. Then one starts to think "If I lose my friend how shall I cope?" So before anything has actually happened, fear and confusion have been created. The root cause of such suspicion is the self centred mind and strong attachment to this life.

In spiritual training the faults of negative states of mind are learnt. Rather than attachment to this life one gives thought to future lives. This loosens attachment to this life with the result of peace and happiness in this life.

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22 March 1994

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Please make sure that your motivation for studying the Lam Rim is to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Such a mind is bodhicitta. To cultivate this mind is not something that happens naturally. So we must make an effort to cultivate at least some kind of artificial bodhicitta.

## The Meaning Of The Generation Of Bodhicitta Motivation

The meaning of the motivation of bodhicitta, which we generate before starting any practice, is quite complex because it shows the purpose and goal of your practice. The motivation of bodhicitta contains the thought "I shall achieve the full state of enlightenment for the sake of all living beings. For this reason I am engaging in the study and practice of Lam Rim". This motivation shows that our aim or goal is to achieve the highest or complete state of enlightenment. Before actually developing a wish to pursue this ultimate spiritual goal, there should be some belief that such a goal is possible to attain. One should also understand the meaning of the complete state of enlightenment, which is that it is the highest state, where one is free of all faults, and possesses all excellent qualities.

So of course, we must at least have some vague knowledge of what faults we need to remove and what qualities to we need to develop in ourselves. In general faults are all negative qualities such as desire, hatred, jealousy and so on. They are faults because they are obstacles to our own enlightenment as well as being obstacles to benefiting others.

Uprooting all these faults depends upon whether we can separate our mind from the stain of those negativities. In daily life we always utilise these minds of desire, anger, hatred and so on. These negativities are the cause of all our problems and they also cause others to experience the same problem. If we investigate we see that although these thoughts are often in the mind, they are not always there. Therefore they are not an inherent or intrinsic part of the mind. That is, they are alien to the fundamental nature of the mind. They can therefore be removed from the mind.

So even without much knowledge it is possible to generate faith that these negativities can be uprooted from the mind. We can then develop positive qualities

and in this way achieve the highest state, which is buddhahood - free of all faults and possessing all qualities.

We say "For the sake of all sentient beings I shall attain enlightenment." Without reaching this state for ourselves, we are not in a position to lead all sentient beings nor to fully benefit all sentient beings. That is why this motivation is at the beginning of all practice. It is to give purpose to the practice and to remind ourselves of all living beings' unique potential, which is to achieve the full state of enlightenment.

There is no need to feel disappointed at your rate of progress. Whatever knowledge is gained, no matter how small, leaves some imprint on the mind, and is not wasted. In some way the cause to achieve enlightenment is still being created.

## All Learning (Spiritual And Ordinary) Depends Upon Motivation

Starting our practice with the correct motivation is very important, if our meditations are to be an effective means of developing ourselves. If we think about other types of learning, that we have achieved, we usually think that the more qualifications which we have obtained, the more we have valuable skills or qualities. This does not necessarily mean that we are a better person with less faults. There are many cases where it seems that the more you learn, the more you become full of pride, and so look down on some and compete with others. So you become more restless and negative in the eyes of others. What is wrong with these qualifications you have achieved? It goes back to the motivation or intention with which you began your studies.

The intention to make progress within oneself and to gain qualities to help others is the spiritual goal or motivation. In the mundane life this motivation is not important. There it may be more important to appear to have a lot of skills. So if we really want to make progress within ourselves, we must rely upon spiritual practice. This involves knowing more about the faults in ourselves, and the methods to overcome those faults. We must at least be aware that having such negative attitudes as anger, hatred and jealousy, is not only an unpleasant experience, but is also very self destructive.

If we investigate our mind we see that all these faults can

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be removed. Sometimes we see strong anger, and at others we see intense attachment. By investigating this continuum of the mind as a whole, we see that there are fluctuations in the arising of emotions such as anger and desire. If we are angry with some object or person, then whatever attachment previously existed for that object or person, is now gone. Logically, if attachment were a natural part of an object, then we would always experience same intensity of attachment. It is like a cloud, which is not the real nature or colour of the sky. Clouds come and go, so they are not the real colour of the sky. Similarly all the negative states of mind are temporary and adventitious, so they can be separated from the real nature of the mind. Every sentient being has the seed of Buddhahood inside themselves.

Therefore, before engaging in practice, it is good to have a general knowledge of why you practise.

### **Advice On Presentation Of Meditations Prior To The Classes**

In the past Geshe-la has suggested that the topics, for the meditation held at the beginning of the classes, be handed out prior to the classes. This helps people to study before the class and to familiarise themselves with the object of the meditation. Then, when doing the meditation they will not have to learn the idea as well as meditate on it. Tonight we meditated on the karma of killing. Of course we follow the leader, but one advantage of handing out the paper beforehand is that the leader can say fewer words and people can think for themselves.

What is the karma of killing? It is just one action but it can be broken into:

- the object
- the thought one has when killing
- the deed
- completion

In this way we see the detail of the action of killing. Then we can focus on the result. In this way, although during the meditation not all the points are covered, there is still enough presented to enable the students to gain knowledge

### **The Practice Of Karma In Daily Life:**

With regard to the topic of the teachings, we still have not finished the topic of karma. But before going into this topic we should consider practical things about studying the law of karma. In our daily life, if we try our best to be a very honest and tolerant person, then naturally we are following the practice of the law of karma. We can also see the benefit of engaging in this spiritual training for ourselves. We can see how we have become a happier and calmer person than we were before meeting with the dharma. All learning or practice outside of the dharma has its focus on external things, seeing them as the source of happiness or problems. We then make our effort accordingly. To determine if one is making

progress with spiritual practice one looks inside. We try to see what good qualities we are developing and what shortcomings we are reducing. The real advantage of dharma is something we see developing within ourselves e.g. more patience but less pride and jealousy.

If we live our life outside dharma, whatever progress we achieve can become the source of more conflict, confusion and problems within ourselves. Through pride we see people below us as very inferior. At the same time there is jealousy towards those above and strong competition with equals. All these feelings are unpleasant and bring discomfort. It is important that the same thing does not happen with spiritual progress. No matter how one's learning increases there should be no jealousy towards those who have more learning. Nor should there be pride about one's progress, or competition with equals. Spiritual practice should enable one to think "Why should I feel jealous towards someone more learned than myself? They are just like me in seeking knowledge". Therefore, instead of jealousy one rejoices in that person's knowledge.

The essential practice of karma is to be very honest and truthful. Then we can show patience and tolerance to others. With both spiritual and mundane projects there are always two sides - obstacles and favourable factors. In order to be successful you need to practise patience toward the obstacles, and make an effort to meet the favourable factors.

The reason for spending time on this is because everyone here shows some interest in the dharma. We do this because we have learnt that the material world does not hold the solution to our problems, and that material possessions are not the only purpose to life. With this kind of background in our mind it is important that we put the dharma into practice effectively.

End of discourse:

Geshe-la: In the subdivisions of "General Explanation of karma," karma has two main subdivisions, general and specific. What are the four subdivisions of the general explanation?

Student 1: I can not remember.

Geshe-la: There are four. Geshe-la says that there is no difference between him and you since neither of you have a big family to look after.

Student 2:

- Karma is increasing
- Karma is definite
- You can not experience karma which you have not created
- Karma does not expire

Geshe-la: Why is karma definite?

Student 2: Karma is definite because once it makes an imprint it will definitely ripen. *(Editor: this is not the*

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correct answer. Karma is definite because virtuous actions leads to positive results and non virtuous actions lead to negative results.)

Geshe-la: There are ten virtuous actions and opposite to them ten non-virtuous actions. Now list the ten non-virtuous actions and then list the three results of karma.

Students: Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, idle gossip, covetousness, harmful thought, wrong view.

The three results of karma:

1. ripened result
2. result similar to the cause
3. environmental result

### **Etymology Of "Path Of No More Learning"**

Geshe-la: List the five paths?

1. Accumulation, Preparation, Seeing, Meditation, No more learning

Geshe-la: Is the hinayana path of no more learning a path of no more learning?

Student 3: No. The hinayanist must still remove obstacles to all knowledge.

Geshe-la: In the texts, the path of no more learning is defined as the path of no more learning to abandon obstructions to liberation, i.e. abandoning afflicted obscurations. When this is reached then one is free from all afflictive obscurations.

The reason why the hinayana path of no more learning is called the path of no more learning is because when they reach this path there is no more to learn about their path.

### **Definition Of Generosity**

Geshe-la: Name the six perfections.

Students: Generosity, morality, patience, enthusiastic perseverance, concentration and wisdom.

Geshe-la: What is generosity? When giving a cup of tea to someone, is the cup of tea generosity?

Student 3: No, generosity is the mind of giving.

Geshe-la: But do not people benefit from generosity? Does generosity benefit others?

Student 3: Yes.

Geshe-la: There is no doubt that someone who is thirsty will be benefited by the cup of tea. Therefore is not the cup of tea generosity?

Student 3: It is generosity because it is not harming them.

Geshe-la: Your original reason was that the cup of tea was not generosity. Then you stated that by generosity you benefit others. Then you stated that you benefit others by not harming them. This is a faulty reason.

According to you, the sky would be benefiting others because it does not harm them.

Student 3: In actuality you benefit others by that person receiving something which benefits them.

Geshe-la: In a tea shop they serve you. Are they benefiting you?

Student 3: Yes.

Geshe-la: Is it generosity?

Student 3: It depends on their mind.

Geshe-la: They are giving something but they do expect you to pay. They are selling tea not giving tea. Obviously tea benefits you. However every time you are paid for something that you give, this is not the act of giving.

Student 4: I thought generosity would have to be the whole action of giving - thought, basis, deed and completion.

Geshe-la: One has to use the thought or intention of giving. Depending upon the strength of that thought the action of giving is performed. Some people may have so much wealth but are not generous because they lack the thought of giving or they are unfamiliar with that thought.

### **Direct And Indirect Benefits Of Giving**

Giving tea to someone else is direct giving. There is direct benefit to another as a result of giving. In meditation we think of giving happiness and good things to all sentient beings, and imagine that they receive happiness from this. Such a meditation indirectly benefits other sentient beings, and is also very effective in developing the practice of giving. By having this strong intention of giving, then when the time comes, we shall utilise our whole ability to do so. If we cultivate compassion in meditation and extend that feeling of love to all beings, then the benefit of that reaches all beings. In this way the practice of giving has both a direct and indirect benefit.

### **Geshe-La's Life Story: The Mendicant Who Practised Giving Unusually**

A Story concerning the lack of attachment:

In India one of Geshela's friends lived life as a mendicant. However he would also do some selling and business and at other times do some cleaning. All the money he made he gave to the poor. He had no attachment to the money. At night he left it in an old tin which showed he did not worry. Perhaps it was also the safest as well! Sometimes he slept in the crowded streets. He would keep the money box at some distance from him rather than beside him. This behaviour and attitude to money is hard for a normal person to understand.

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## ལྷན་སྐྱེས་རྒྱུ་ལ་འག་བཅངས།

29 March 1994

It is important that you reinforce your motivation for listening to the teachings. First generate the genuine wish to achieve full state of enlightenment in order to benefit all sentient beings. Secondly, think "To fulfil this wish to achieve enlightenment for sake of all sentient beings, I am listening to these teachings and I will put them into practice".

**422.122.123: The Four Doors That Lead To Powerful Karma<sup>1</sup>**

ལྷན་སྐྱེས་རྒྱུ་ལ་འག་བཅངས་ཀྱི་སློབ་བསྟུན་ཏེ་བསྟུན་ལྷན་པ།

**422.122.123.1: Powerful Owing To The Field**

ཞིང་གི་སློབ་ལྷན་སློབས་ཆེ་བ།

**422.122.123.2: Powerful Owing To The Base**

དེ་ལྷན་གི་སློབ་ལྷན་སློབས་ཆེ་བ།

**422.122.123.3: Powerful Owing To The Thing**

དངོས་པོའི་སློབ་ལྷན་སློབས་ཆེ་བ།

**422.122.123.4: Powerful Owing To The Intention**

བསམ་པའི་སློབ་ལྷན་སློབས་ཆེ་བ།

We have now learnt a great deal about this subject of the law of karma. It is a very complex and deep subject. To put this profound subject into practice, is to refrain from the ten non-virtuous actions and to practise the ten virtuous actions. We have previously studied the ten actions and their respective results.

The next topic shows the factors that determine whether or not karma is powerful. There are four doors to powerful karma.

Literally these are:

- the door of field
- the door of basis

- the door of things
- the door of intentions

**422.122.123.1: First Door: Powerful Owing To The Door Of Field<sup>2</sup>**

ཞིང་གི་སློབ་ལྷན་སློབས་ཆེ་བ།

The first door is the field, or the object, towards whom the action or karma is created. This depends on the person to whom you create the karma. For example compare giving charity to an ordinary person and giving the same to one's parents. The charity to one's parents is more powerful giving. Giving the same to a celibate or ordained practitioner is an even more powerful action. If the recipient is a lay bodhisattva, an ordained bodhisattva, a Buddha or one's guru, the karma is, respectively, even more powerful.

The karma we create becomes more powerful because of the object to whom the action is directed.

**Not Creating Negative Actions To Any Living Being And Respecting All Beings**

Conversely negative karma also becomes more powerful depending on the field or object on which it is created. Of course creating any negativity towards any living being is bad, but to create negativities towards one's parents, to spiritual practitioners or high bodhisattva's is even more serious negative karma. Relating this to our daily practice, we must be especially careful to not create negativities towards anyone close to oneself. This means not only parents, but also friends and those to whom we are grateful.

Furthermore, we need to remember that we do not know whether our parents or friends are ordinary beings. It is possible that they are bodhisattvas or the manifestation of Buddhas who are present in our lives as our parents or friends.

Great beings are like a fire buried under ashes. From the outside we can not see the fire, but if we dig into the ashes we can feel the heat. The implication here is to not

<sup>1</sup>Liberation... p455 In this text the title is "Teaching about the doors that unintentionally lead to powerful karma"

<sup>2</sup>Liberation ...p455 In this text the title is "Powerful owing to the field"



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create any negative action towards any living being, and to be particularly careful with our parents, teachers and well known spiritual practitioners.

Sometimes, because of our own lack of merit, virtue or our own ignorance, the person in front of us may appear as an ordinary person, when they are in fact a highly realised practitioner, bodhisattva, or Buddha. Those who study secret mantra will recall the manifestation of Vajra Yogini as an ordinary woman. To despise women is breaking one of the root tantric vows. This should inspire us to always show respect to others since we do not know the level another person may have reached.

To engage in spiritual practice such as the law of karma we do not need to live in some quiet isolated place and engage in meditation. Rather the practice of karma must be integrated into daily life.

At work we must practise karma. Since the practice of karma means to be very honest we contribute to our workplace and also we benefit ourselves. If you are employed for ten dollars for one hours work, then you are obliged to work for that hour. Even to misuse a few minutes of our paid time for something else (apart from work) is stealing. Our spiritual learning must be integrated into our lives at all times. Then we will see the benefit of dharma through our improved relationships with others.

As a causal nature, if we are kind and friendly to others they will respond in the same way. Humans are very kind to pets and other animals. When they respond to our kindness in the same way we experience much joy and pleasure.

### **The Practice Of Karma Leads To Stable, Peaceful Relationships**

The essence of practising karma is transforming our actions and deeds into a positive form. If we examine our speech we see that it can be either pleasant or hurtful to others. If we are aware of that and try to correct it, then naturally we can safeguard ourselves from bringing disharmony into relationships. The people with whom we live and work are part of our daily life. If you always show friendliness and help to those people, then generally you get the same in return.

Whereas if we do something wrong, it usually affects those closest to us. They receive harm from us and automatically we receive harm back. So unless we improve our attitudes and deeds in daily life there is no solution to our continuous problems. If we make an effort we can make gradual progress. Think for example of HH the Dalai Lama. To his followers, he is a fully enlightened being who has achieved the perfections of giving, patience and so on. Even non Buddhists see his tremendous qualities of patience and tolerance. They are amazed that he doesn't show bitterness or hatred to the Chinese, who have brought so much suffering to Tibet and its people.

As a human beings there is this potential for us to fully develop our practice of giving and patience. The practice of patience is an especially good cause to minimise the suffering in our lives. Often a weakness in showing patience or tolerance to a situation results in even more problems and suffering.

Therefore we must develop tolerance in relationships so that there is harmony in those relationships. This will also ensure that the relationships will last longer. It is always said that most of us have desire or attachment in our mind. An element of this is always involved in our relationships. So when something goes wrong in a relationship, or if it dissolves, there is tremendous pain and suffering into the mind. If there were no desire or attachment, then there would be no pain. But because there is desire, there is great suffering and pain when the relationship ends.

Realising this consequence, we know that we must show great tolerance to small conflicts. If our friend shows anger we must try to tolerate that, otherwise the conflict may destroy the relationship. To prevent serious problems in the future, we have to tolerate minor difficulties now.

The practice of karma must be combined into our daily activities. From the time we rise in the morning, and day by day until the last moment of this life, it is something which we need to practice. We live in a very crowded society, so we must be very responsible for our speech, actions and thoughts. We must constantly practice bringing some discipline to our thoughts and actions.

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

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*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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