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



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16 May 1995

Let us cultivate the bodhicitta motivation for listening to the teachings, which is the true aspiration to achieve state of complete enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings.

Of the various types of suffering existing in human realms, we discussed last week the suffering of being separated from desirable objects.

**422.212.216: Suffering Of Meeting The Undesirable**

མི་སྲུག་པ་དང་ཕྱད་པའི་སྲུག་བསྐྱེད།

The next type of suffering is the suffering of meeting the undesirable. This suffering may include: meeting with an enemy intent on harm; catching a painful disease; being engaged in some dispute or argument; having some penalty or punishment imposed by the law or by people in authority e.g. a king; or being the victim of theft or a burglary. Whenever we meet some adverse situation we naturally experience some suffering.

As we reflect upon this suffering, we should try to realise this is something we cannot avoid as long as we are born in cyclic existence, and the purpose of this reflection is to realise that samsara (or cyclic existence) is not a beautiful, pleasant place. Rather, once born in cyclic existence, suffering is inevitable. So to seek true happiness attachment to cyclic existence must be diminished. Such reflections on suffering help us to find its source, as well as overcoming the root of that suffering.

**Benefits Of Reflecting On Suffering**

As a result of this reflection on the suffering nature of cyclic existence, thoughts of leaving this cyclic existence are cultivated. So there is a good side to these reflections.

The experience of suffering in life can cause the loss of appetite for cyclic existence. The problems of daily life can be utilised to cultivate the aspiration to achieve liberation from cyclic existence, for instance by seeing how everything is unreliable, or subject to change. For example our relationship with a friend can change from being close in the morning, to one of hatred by the afternoon. It is difficult to endure such changes in a relationship, but experiences like this clearly confirm the uncertainty of cyclic existence.

These events also show that our life is controlled by karma or our own actions. Our current suffering is the result of our own negative actions in the past. Thus we are motivated to avoid negative actions, create positive actions and feel regret about negative actions created in the past, since the outcome of past undesirable actions will be something similar to the present undesirable events.

So when you experience suffering, try to think of the source of suffering, which is the noble truth of the source of suffering. Life is also subject to painful diseases. Confronted with such painful diseases try to realise the cause - not only the immediate cause but also the karmic cause - and try to develop more patience.

Shantideva said<sup>1</sup>;

When facing some difficulties or hardships you should stop worrying about it.  
If something can be done, then do it and then there is no point in worrying.  
If nothing can be done then there is no point in worrying, and losing strength better put to enduring that hardship.  
So there is something to learn from our experience of hardship.

**Actual Suffering Encountered In Daily Life**

The best thing which studying Dharma offers is the different way of viewing things. Because we are pursuing the study of Dharma, we must try to see our life situation through the perspective it provides, as much as possible. In this way Dharma can be very beneficial to our life, although not in the sense that it prevents misery and unwanted things in life. But when unwanted things do occur, we can try to understand them through the perspective of Dharma. As mentioned earlier it can help to see such events as a ripening of one's own karma. Whatever happens in our life is all a result of our own past actions. It is something which had to happen. Since it has ripened now, the good thing is that it cannot ripen again; we should generate a strong mind to accept that. This is a good time to apply the meditation on giving and taking, by imagining than no

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1 Shantideva, *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, chapter 6, verse 10.

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other being will have to undergo this suffering. It is important to apply our understanding of Dharma to real life situations.

### **Changing Our Way Of Thinking Can Reduce Suffering**

We learn from the spiritual teachings that certain ways of thinking can be a cause of our suffering. However, other ways of thinking can eliminate our suffering. Of course the suffering of being separated from desirable objects does not occur without causes and conditions. Apart from the external factors, our own way of thinking is also responsible for bringing about that suffering.

The most obvious is that the mind is preoccupied with the desired object from which one is separated. It ponders endlessly on that object. As a result of that, the suffering of being separated is continuously sustained. So the cause of suffering is that the mind has not been shifted to another object.

If there is no effort to move the mind to another object, the suffering just continues, growing stronger and stronger, and it becomes harder to separate the mind from that object. Realising that the reason for still suffering from losing that friend is because the mind still is still thinking about them, the solution is obvious. The mind must be disciplined not to think of that friend; it should be directed elsewhere; and over a period of time the mind distances itself from the desired object thus overcoming the immediate problem. Then later, with increased stability one can resolve to overcome that problem completely.

So changing our way of thinking can be a very good way of eliminating problems.

### **Next Week Is Discussion**

The compulsory subject for discussion is the Three Principal Paths - renunciation, bodhicitta and wisdom realising emptiness. Since these three are the essence of both the lam rim teachings and the entire teachings of Buddhism, it is important to have a broad knowledge. The best is to have gained some experience in each of these three, but if not, at least have some broad knowledge.

Each one of these three can be discussed in very great detail. Since this is not possible in the exam, choose one of the three to elaborate on in your answer, i.e. do more thorough study in one of these three.

Most of you have done the last study group test. Geshe-la admires this and would like to thank each of you not only for attending teachings and discussions, but also doing the test.

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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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ལྷོ་ལམ་རིམ་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལག་བཅངས།

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6 June 1995

Try to generate the right motivation of wishing to gain full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, and also to realise that we are studying and practising these teachings on lam rim for that purpose.

**422.212.217: The Suffering Of Not Being Able To Find The Objects One Desires<sup>1</sup>**

འདོད་པའི་དངོས་བོ་བཅུལ་ཀྱང་མི་རྟེན་པའི་

སྐྱུག་བསྐྱུལ་བསམ་པ།

We are discussing the types of suffering which are associated with any life that is thrown (or produced) by the karma (or actions) of past lives and mental delusions. Even in this human world there are various and continuous types of suffering. Following on from the previous teachings on the types of suffering of the human world, we are up to the suffering of not being able, despite all efforts, to find desirable objects.

We are never fully satisfied with what we are doing, and achieving in our lives, regardless of whether we are rich or poor, of high or low status. As soon as one's desire is fulfilled, we see another that is yet to be fulfilled, and so our mind is never content.

In the hope of eliminating physical suffering, resulting from starvation, heat and cold, and to secure pleasure or happiness we try to find a suitable livelihood. Despite trying our best to find satisfaction and happiness, we are unable to be content with our achievements. Even where seemingly everything is in our favour, we find no satisfaction or inner peace. The cause of this unending misery and suffering is that our mind is deceived by the seeming beauty of this world, and its various objects. In reality those objects have the nature of suffering - they are not something that can fully satisfy the mind.

Therefore in the lam rim teachings we are taught to turn away from those objects, through knowing their faults

and shortcomings. The best way to content our own minds is to not become too attached to this life and its objects, and be content with our possessions and liberty. If we possess abundant food and so on, just enjoy them, and think of making offerings to holy objects, with deep faith, or give charity to those without. By doing this, there is no grasping at these objects, and then when we face death, there is nothing to be concerned about, and so we can die peacefully.

**The Source Of Misery**

Our mental approach to life is a very important factor in determining our daily experience. With a good spiritual understanding of your life, you will be happier, more contented and able to take full advantage of whatever you have. You will be able to use your possessions to bring happiness to your own life, and to others. Whereas without such an understanding of reality, even though you may have abundant possessions you cannot even make your own life stable and happy, let alone help others.

Basically when we talk of happiness we are referring to our own experiences, and so our happiness depends on our own mind, rather than on external factors. Therefore when we talk of the human suffering of not being able to find desirable objects, we are talking about a suffering which our own mind creates. This suffering is all brought about by the lack of contentment, and because of strong attachment to one thing after another.

From our own experience we can learn to recognise that when there is strong desire for something else, then you feel unhappy. Even if you have the best facilities life can provide, you fail to acknowledge the happiness all around you. So there is no end to our suffering until we calm our mind.

In the lam rim text there is a clear elaboration of how our human life can be wasted by this suffering of not finding desirable objects. Instead of calming our own mind, we have the attitude that we are the only one experiencing suffering, and no-one else is. For example, from a farmer's point of view, all business people are very rich with a comfortable and easy life. The business person, however, views the farmer's life as being more comfortable and pleasant. But in reality they are both

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<sup>1</sup> Page 494 *Liberation In The Palm Of Your Hand*. The title used in this text is Thinking About The Suffering Of Seeking The Things We Desire But Not Finding Them.

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subject to their own particular suffering. The business person is ignorant of the difficulties of the farmer, and in the same way farmers have no understanding of the suffering, in particular the mental suffering, of the business person.

The learned master Aryadeva said in his text called *400 Verses*

Whether you are high or low, you are  
the same in being subject to life's  
miserias.

People in high status positions mainly undergo mental suffering, and people in low status positions mainly experience physical suffering. If we observe the suffering of the very rich people who have no shortage of the material necessities such as food and clothing, it is obvious that material necessities are not the main problem for them. Their problem is related to their confused and discontented mind. Whereas poor people's lives are overwhelmed, mainly by the physical suffering of not being able to find even the daily needs of life.

### **Generating Renunciation Towards Cyclic Existence**

Leaders with responsibilities may feel that without these responsibilities, life as an ordinary citizen would be happier and more peaceful. The ordinary citizen looks up to see the power, prestige and privileges of the leaders and believes they are happy and content. But in fact both are subject to daily sufferings. Similarly some Sangha may think that being a Sangha is very difficult, compared to the freedom and happiness of the lay person. Even as a Sangha, if your mind is not calmed with less desire and more contentment, then you will not find extra peace and happiness in being Sangha. If you look at the lives of lay people they of course undergo continuous problems.

In regards to this His Holiness Kalsang Gyatso said:

All people, although different on  
the surface (whether it be Sangha  
or lay, male or female, types of  
clothes worn, long or short hair)  
are all the same in being equally  
subject to suffering.

As we reflect upon the various types of suffering, we can clearly see that suffering pervades the existence of all people. This means that the very nature of our existence is suffering, which means that if we seek true happiness, we must look beyond this existence, because we cannot find lasting happiness within cyclic existence. Recognising the continuous suffering throughout our life, is realising the fault of cyclic existence. If, for instance, we cannot find a perfect friend, it is not the fault of the friend – it is the fault of cyclic existence.

With the development of this understanding of the faults of cyclic existence comes the aspiration to obtain liberation from samsara. Such a wish to escape cyclic existence is the mind of renunciation. With this true wish

to leave cyclic existence established in our mind, we should look for the source, or cause, of cyclic existence; and the root cause is ignorance of ultimate reality; and wisdom realising emptiness is the remedy for this ignorance. So we must make an effort to cultivate the wisdom of selflessness.

As we study how to cultivate this wisdom realising emptiness, we understand that we need to cultivate concentration, and this needs training. To be successful in training our mind in concentration, we need to practise the training in morality. Therefore we can see how reflecting on suffering arouses the sense of renunciation, and through this we are led to follow spiritual practice.

From this teaching on the types of suffering and their causes, we learn that we cannot blame outer factors for our suffering. Rather the blame lies in this samsaric existence. When we say samsara, or samsaric existence, it is important that we do not see it as a remote place or thing – rather it is the reality of our own life (including our mind) to which we are bound. It refers to the samsaric aggregates into which we are thrown by our own karma and delusions. Reflecting on suffering results in reflection on the causes of suffering, and this leads to how to overcome those causes.

The cause of this suffering, even in the human world, is being chained to this samsaric existence. As long as we are bound to cyclic existence there is suffering, and no escape. Meditating on suffering and its causes, is a positive, optimistic view of life, since we see there is hope of breaking free from the chains which bind us to this cyclic existence.

Next Tuesday is the anniversary of Buddha's birth, death and paranirvana so we shall hold a special puja.

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20 June 1995

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Produce the right motivation for listening to the teachings.

## Generating A Sense Of Renunciation

The purpose behind discussing the various types of suffering in this human world is to generate a sense of renunciation to cyclic existence. We begin to understand that the true cause of the unending chain of suffering we have experienced, and experience even in this human form of life, is having a life which is the result of our own karma and mental delusions.

Actually the true cause of our suffering is the contaminated aggregates to which we are subject. These aggregates are the true cyclic existence. So when we say the cause of suffering is birth in cyclic existence, this cyclic existence is not a distant land or place - it is our own contaminated aggregates. These contaminated aggregates are the load of cyclic existence which we must carry for as long as we are born in cyclic existence.

So it is wrong to blame the cause of our daily suffering on our surroundings, or those with whom we interact. Since the place where we live and those other beings are not the true cause of our suffering, then any attempt to change where we live, or the person with whom we live, is not a real remedy to overcome suffering. Thus by developing true understanding of the cause of cyclic existence in the context of our own process of rebirth, you can cultivate some feeling of renunciation or disgust towards cyclic existence. Then, as a result of this feeling of renunciation, you can generate the thought of attaining liberation.

## Samsara Is Our Own Contaminated Aggregates

It is very important to identify cyclic existence or samsara, and understand what it means personally. Then when we meditate on the suffering nature of cyclic existence, it can induce this true renunciation, and then a very definite thought of leaving cyclic existence. With this thought, following the spiritual path, or the practice of Dharma, makes good sense. So we can see how meditation on suffering will direct our minds towards following the spiritual path.

As discussed earlier, the term cyclic existence or samsara indicates that beings are born over and over again. This indicates that we have been born uncontrollably, and so we have no true freedom because we are bound to an

existence which is suffering in nature. So cyclic existence cannot be something outside of us. It is not a place or environment. Australia is the country in which we live, but it is not the cyclic existence to which we have been chained by karma and delusions since beginningless time. Cyclic existence, then, refers to one's own contaminated aggregates, which are contaminated in the sense of being the product of one's own karma and delusions. Therefore to renounce cyclic existence means to emerge permanently from the bondage of ones own contaminated aggregates, and when we meditate on the suffering nature of cyclic existence, we are meditating on our own aggregates, whose nature is suffering.

Such mediation leads us to overcome our attachments—to wealth, possessions and worst of all, our own body. Generating true renunciation overcomes attachment to our own body. Therefore true renunciation begins with renouncing one's own cyclic existence—in other words, renouncing the aggregates or factors which make up our own cyclic existence. With the destruction of attachment to ones own body, for instance, attachment to the bodies of other beings is also eliminated—even very attractive bodies. It is like a person with jaundice who cannot tolerate certain foods: even if they see another person strongly attracted to, and eating such food, they will have no appetite for it, because of their negative experiences with that food in the past.

## 422.212.22: Suffering Of Demi-Gods

Having heard about the suffering of human beings and contemplated those sufferings, the desire to be born as a human is lost. There is, however a likelihood the meditator might think that birth in the godly or demi-god realms would be fine. To show how the nature of suffering pervades even the godly realms, we next study and contemplate the suffering of the demi-gods.

The demi-gods are said to have been banished from the godly realms because of their jealousy of the godly beings, and their tendency to negative deeds. Because they were banished from the level of godly beings they are called demi-gods, just as we do not consider someone banished from human society as part of that society. (Some of the drawings of The Wheel of Life, however, classify sentient beings into five realms rather than six. In such drawings the demi-gods are included with the godly beings.)

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## The Torment Of Jealousy

According to Nagajuna's *Letter to a Friend* the demi-gods have the natural tendency to envy the enormous wealth of the godly beings, and so they experience a lot of mental suffering. Even if they possess some sense of discernment or intelligent power, their mind is so obscured that they cannot see the ultimate reality.

Think of the sort of jealousy generated when even the small belongings of our enemies disturb our mental peace. Then you can understand how much demigods suffer, because of their jealousy of the enormous wealth of the godly beings. The demi-gods, by their nature, feel jealous, but can never successfully compete with the godly beings who enjoy the nectar of immortality. The wealth and material comfort of the godly beings is beyond that enjoyed by the demi-gods, so the demi-gods have to endure jealousy throughout their lives.

The main cause of the suffering of demi-gods arises from their instinctive competitiveness over the good fortune of the godly beings. Due to the influence of this jealousy, the demi-gods engage in war with the godly beings. In the human world when war happens, there is great mental fear and insecurity; there is destruction of the environment; the cost of lives and the loss of wealth. In a war in the higher realms between gods and demigods the amount of destruction, and kind of weapons used, are beyond imagination. The loser, of course, is always the demi-gods who die from merely being struck by the weapons of the godly beings. The demi-gods on the other hand can only kill a godly being by cutting off its head, so the demi-gods experience great fear and suffering. In addition to their mental and physical suffering the demi-gods have a lake (like we have television) where they can see their friends being defeated in battle and suffering. It all adds to the suffering of the demi-gods.

The godly existence described here is that which depends on being supported by Mount Meru, or the ground of the earth, so these godly beings belong to the desire realms.

It is important to know that the focus of our contemplation is to produce the thought of leaving this cyclic existence. The outcome of such meditation on suffering is to produce the wish to engage in virtuous practice. The best motivation for engaging in this virtuous practice is, of course, Bodhicitta, which transforms our virtuous action to become the cause to achieve full enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Otherwise we should generate a genuine (or even a fabricated) renunciation, so that the virtuous practice we do does not become the truth of the cause of suffering.

Realising that being born as a human being entails suffering, and so does birth as a demi-god, we must be sure that suffering pervades all levels of cyclic existence, then we must ensure that the virtuous practice we do is a cause to free us from cyclic existence. Try to realise that if

you engage in virtuous practice to attain level of human being, it is not sufficient because of the various levels of suffering which that entails. Doing this virtuous practice to be born as godly realms is also not enough. So try to generate the motivation to attain state of liberation, or better still full enlightenment.

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27 June 1995

Try to reinforce the right motivation.

### 422.212.23: The Sufferings Of The Gods

#### ལྷའི་སྲུག་བསྐྱལ་བསམ་པ།

In the preceding teachings we discussed the human and demigod forms of life, and the results of obtaining both of them. We have learnt that the lives of both humans and demigods are subject to continual suffering.

We might think that being born in the godly realms would be fine, believing that in the godly realms there is only pleasure and happiness. But on examination, the gods also experience suffering. Therefore there is suffering, no matter which of the three realms of cyclic existence (desire, form and formless) you are born into, or whatever form of samsaric life you take.

Our subject at present is the suffering of the godly beings. This mainly concerns the gods of the desire realms, since it is said that there are higher gods living in both the form and formless realms. There are seventeen levels of form realm gods. With respect to the gods of the formless realms, they have no form as such so there is no specific area or place where we can find them. For instance there may be many formless gods in this very hall since they do not depend on any form.

As mentioned before, as long as one is not free from a life basis within cyclic existence, then no matter where one is born, the same life of suffering will continue. Leaving one life's body is no more than exchanging it for another body which also has the nature of suffering. And so we go on round and round in this cyclic existence of suffering.

As to the sufferings being experienced by the godly beings, there is the suffering of death, feeling discouraged, the suffering of fear and even some physical pain.

#### The Lack Of Essence In Samsaric Life

Through realising the suffering nature of the samsaric form of life, whether it be a human or godly form, the lack of essence in the samsaric form of life will be obvious. So because we are attached to this samsaric form of life, and because of our lack of understanding that samsaric life has no true essence, we create throwing karma. This in turn maintains our continuation in cyclic existence.

If, on the other hand, we thoroughly reflect on the suffering nature of all forms of samsaric life, then we shall generate some degree of renunciation to this life and so stop creating

throwing karma. That is, we would stop creating the causes to return to this form of existence again. As long as we create the karma, we are bound to this samsaric form of life. Under the control of our own karma we take a samsaric form of life: where only suffering exists, there being no true happiness or freedom. Realising this, any spiritual practice should reinforce the understanding that there is no true happiness anywhere in this cyclic existence.

Thus a sense renunciation of all realms of cyclic existence generates the motivation to free oneself from that existence. Since the cause of taking continuous rebirth in cyclic existence is karma and mental delusions, we should always generate the motivation to counteract them with a clear knowledge of why they must be counteracted: they are clearly the source of all past suffering, and if they are not counteracted will be the source of all future suffering. With this motivation any practise is completed with a true wish to attain liberation. In this way, with continuous effort there is progress in terms of enhanced inner peace and happiness, while at the same time breaking out of the cycle of birth in samsara.

#### The Source Of Suffering

It is important to know the various types of suffering that exist within cyclic existence. For example, knowing that the realm of the gods also has many sufferings will naturally change any desire to go there. We have to go deeper to fully know that samsaric existence is pervaded with suffering, because we usually make our judgements on the surface or face value. At first glance, the place where the gods live is far more beautiful and enjoyable, with superior resources to our realm. Think of how we judge from a distance the lives of rich humans. We see their homes as luxurious with much comfort, their facilities are abundant, there is great wealth. On the surface it seems they have no suffering. However when we look deeper we see that they are just like us in not being free from suffering.

Why are they not free from suffering? Why are they not free from unpredictable events? Why is there no complete choice over our destiny? Why does it seem that our life is beyond our control? In our own life there are many occurrences that happen without us having any vague idea as to the reasons for those events. This not only happens in our own life but also to other beings, such as in the god realms, where the gods undergo suffering for the same reason as we do - having a samsaric form of life.

If we contemplate deeper on the value of this life, it has no

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value at all. It is only the source of all our unwanted experiences, both now and in the future. Therefore when we think deeply, we realise that rather than being very attracted to this body and this life, we must become detached from them. This is the only way to be free.

Whereas if we are attracted to this body, not only do we experience unnecessary suffering in this life, but also, as a result of this attachment, we create causes for future suffering. It is because of attachment to this samsaric body that we collect a large number of these causes, and so continue this cycle of rebirth.

In a true sense this body is just a source of suffering, but in real life we, as ordinary beings, are attracted to it. Most of the things we do – eating and drinking, leading a very busy life, running here and there and so on – are because of attachment to our body. So we can see how in the context of this life we are enslaved by our body because of our attachment to it. Through this attachment we generate desire, which then serves as a motivation to create karma, resulting in suffering for ourselves and others. In fact, the main cause for us to take rebirth (or samsaric life) is karma and mental delusions, and the body we take in this life is the outcome of past karma and mental delusions.

How is this present life the outcome of karma accumulated in the past? This may be difficult to comprehend. It is very clear though, if we look at how the endless sufferings we experience in this life arise from our mental delusions and karma. This helps to support our understanding of why we have this life which has a suffering nature. It is very clear that this is all a result of the karma of our past lives.

### **Making Progress**

The basis of making real progress in spiritual practice is realising the faults of attachment and then countering that desire. This is essential because all our negative actions and thoughts are caused by having some form of desire or attachment. It is due to the influence of desire or attachment that we generate other delusions, such as anger, jealousy, and pride. Recall the reasons for not becoming attracted to one's own body, and the importance of reducing attachment to it. On this same basis, one can reduce attachment to the attractive bodies of other people, and thereby reduce feelings of jealousy, anger, pride, which relate to other people's bodies. It is very natural to feel pride when seeing someone weaker, inferior or more ugly, or to feel competitive when seeing someone with more attractive qualities than we possess. Due to all these mental delusions that we generate in our minds, we create karmas which result in future suffering.

Therefore when we talk of performing a pure Dharma practice in terms of developing good heart to others, this cannot be generated unless we overcome negative feelings such as pride, anger, and jealousy. We have been studying this text on the lam rim not for days but for years! We must remind ourselves that the goal of this study is to bring some real progress to our lives. The aim of our study is not just to learn, which even a child does, but to integrate our studies into our life by softening our thoughts and deeds. We try our best to integrate what learn into our practice.

We must ask ourselves every night "Am I making progress?", and assess our own progress in our thoughts and daily actions. Are they habitually more positive than negative? By seeing these teachings in terms of our own practice, we see how far we have to go. In our practice we talk about cultivating compassion. But how strong is that degree of compassion? For most of us it is very weak when compared to the intensity of our attachment. When we see someone very sick and suffering greatly, we do not immediately feel genuine and strong compassion. We do not feel compassion for all the suffering we see around us. But look how quickly we develop attachment to attractive objects and bodies! It is almost a natural response, which shows how important it is to overcome attachment, and make even small progress in our spiritual path. If it is not overcome, or challenged, we can never achieve liberation.

Therefore we must understand that the reason we are pursuing these studies is to remind ourselves to practise Dharma, which is to overcome negative states of mind. It is also to maintain our motivation to practise Dharma; to try to realise that the best time for practising Dharma is now, while we have a sound mind and body with all the other favourable conditions we enjoy. By thinking like this, we realise how fortunate we are to have all these favourable conditions. We are not deprived of any of the necessary things to make progress. With this in mind, think that engaging in spiritual studies is like engaging in a battle with our own negative states of mind. If we lose one day, we must not give up. Do not become discouraged, try again the next day. With a consistent effort our positive tendencies will increase while our negative tendencies will decrease.

There is not much point in being concerned about for how long, or when, you practise. What is more important is to ensure that any practice – even for one minute – is a complete practice. A complete practice starts with the right motivation which is being focussed on the goal, or aim, of the practice. That is, you clearly recognise the aim of the practice. It is not enough merely to want something in order to achieve it, you must do something. This is the actual deed or actual practice. At the end, before closing the practice you must dedicate merit accumulated from that practice, to the goal for which you did the practice. It is said that even if the practice is very short, if it is done effectively, you can achieve a lot, because it is a complete practice.

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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 Bunnnett then checks the typescript against a tape recording, and edits the text, which is finally checked by Alan Molloy.*

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