



others as you. Therefore it is unjustified to feel proud.

As the commentary relates, it is very true that there is no reason for the king to feel proud. If anyone had the ability to do something, but only did it when they are told to do so, then they are quite foolish. Why do they have to wait for others to instruct them in what they know? It is similar for a king or any leader. The very position of the king is that they are waiting for public work to be assigned so they can take the initiative. Leaders constantly depend on feedback to know what is to be done, therefore they are completely dependent on others. When a king sees that reality there is no room for him to feel proud.

The analogy is:

For instance, it is not appropriate for someone who catches and frees dogs and monkeys for others to feel proud.

To explain the analogy more specifically, when dogs or monkeys are captured and taught to do tricks, and perform for others, they have no pride in those tricks, because someone else has trained them. Their tricks are not seen as an inborn quality of the performing animals themselves. It is the same with the king's position.

### 1.2.1.3. CONSIDERING WHAT IS RELIGIOUS AND IRRELIGIOUS

This has five subheadings:

1.2.1.3.1. Establishing that violent action towards others by a king is irreligious

1.2.1.3.2. Refuting that it is a religious activity

1.2.1.3.3. Not everything stated by sages should be taken as valid

1.2.1.3.4. Violence toward enemies is irreligious

1.2.1.3.5. Dying in battle is not a cause for a happy transmigration

Dying in battle is also something that was brought up in questions on Wednesday nights. It is not a cause for a happy transmigration, and we should understand that.

#### 1.2.1.3.1. Establishing that violent action towards others by a king is irreligious

This has three subheadings

1.2.1.3.1.1. Inappropriateness of pride because the protection of the people depends on the king

1.2.1.3.1.2. Punishment of wrongdoers by the king is unsuitable as a religious activity

1.2.1.3.1.3. Refuting that punishment of the unruly by the king is not an ill deed

##### 1.2.1.3.1.1. Inappropriateness of pride because the protection of the people depends on the king.

Assertion: Pride is appropriate because the protection of his people against harm from others depends on the king.

*Claiming that "protection depends on me", 83  
You take payment from the people,  
But if you perform ill deeds,  
Who is equally merciless?*

As the commentary further explains

Who is as merciless as a king who performs ill deeds? None. Claiming that protection of his people depends on him, when his people do not make large payment,

he takes by force and himself performs many ill deeds such as killing.

That is the situation of the king. To counteract the misconception that pride is appropriate because the king protects his people, it clearly mentions here that the so-called protection is entirely dependent on the dues that the king receives. As long as he is paid there seems to be protection, but as soon as the people do not pay the king he engages in force to punish them, even to the extent of killing. Therefore, the king is engaging in grave misdeeds.

The analogy mentioned here in the commentary is that

He is like a bad physician who, greedy for money, does not relieve pain at once but only gradually.

This analogy refers to a story where a butcher was grinding bones when one of the splinters from the bones lodged in his eye. When he went to see a physician, rather than relieving the cause right away by taking out the splinter, the doctor actually treated it with some medication and kept asking him to come back. In that way the treatment was prolonged so that the physician could get more money from the butcher.

How this story is analogous to the meaning in the verse is that just as physician who prolongs treatment so as to get more money would be seen as cruel and commits a great misdeed, similarly it is the king's duty to provide protection for his subjects, because of the payment that he receives from them. As mentioned previously the subjects give a sixth part of their earnings to the king in order to receive protection and guidance and so forth. If, rather than taking on his duty willingly, and honestly providing that protection and work for his subjects, the king abuses that trust, and feels proud about it, and actually does wrong deeds in relation to his subjects, then that is actually a great misdeed.

Therefore as mentioned here the analogy is that the king is like a bad physician who, greedy for money, does not relieve pain at once but ekes out the treatment. So you can see how the analogy fits with the king's situation.

#### 1.2.1.3.1.2. Punishment of wrong doers by the king is unsuitable as a religious activity

Assertion: If wrongdoers are not punished, it is detrimental to others. Therefore, to protect other people it is proper to exact punishment.

Answer: That is not so.

*If people who do ill deeds 84  
Should not be treated with mercy,  
All ordinary childish people  
Would also not need to be protected.*

If it inappropriate to be merciful toward people who have done great wrong such as killing, ordinary childish people would also not need to be protected with compassion.

What is being related here is that if one asserts that the king has the right to punish the wrongdoers, because they have to be dealt with severely for their wrongdoings, then as all would have equally engaged in wrongdoings, is there any other ordinary being who would not fall into the scope of compassion?

As the commentary goes onto say

A king should be especially merciful to wrongdoers.

This is in relation to the description in the teachings where one focuses on beings who are doing great ill deeds and engaging in negative karma. Because of their activities they are creating the cause for their own suffering so they definitely become an object of compassion. In Tibetan there is a common saying for people who are doing great misdeeds: there is a natural tendency to call them an object of compassion. Whereas those who are suffering in a particular situation, are more an object of pity or love. Therefore there is this general spoken reference of how people who commit wrongdoing are actually an object of compassion.

The commentary further states in relation to this particular instance:

A king should be especially merciful to wrongdoers, otherwise although not called a brigand he will be one.

Even though a king would never be publicly considered as a thief, in reality he would be a thief if, having received payment from his subjects, he harms, punishes and mistreats them, rather than protecting them. After having received payment to protect them and help them, if he does not give what is deemed necessary for that payment, then in reality he is like a thief.

A king must protect them just as he must protect his own body and wealth.

Even though wrongdoing is a source of problems and so forth, nevertheless the king has the obligation and duty to protect even wrongdoers, in the sense of dealing with them in an appropriate way, and not inflicting harm and severe punishment on them. Rather he should protect them in an appropriate way. Therefore having love or care for his subjects has the connotation of protecting them even from misdeeds or misguidance. He has to develop measures for preventing them from doing wrong things in the first place.

#### **1.2.1.3.1.3. Refuting that punishment of the unruly by the king is not an ill deed**

Assertion: A king who punishes wrongdoers to protect everyone is not a wrongdoer himself because he is engaged in helping the good.

*There is nothing that will not serve  
As a reason for happiness. 85  
Reasons such as scriptural statements  
Will not destroy merit.*

The assertion is that the king who punishes wrongdoers to protect everyone is not a wrongdoer himself because he is working for the good of the people and helping others. So the punishment inflicted by the king is not considered to be a wrongdoing. That is the doubt being expressed in this assertion.

As the commentary states:

There is nothing that through attachment to wrong ideas will not serve as a reason for happiness. Those who enjoy killing fish and pigs think, "This is the traditional work of my caste", and feel happy.

That is a misconception that people can hold in terms of being proud or even happy about their wrongdoing.

Some deleterious Brahmin treatises say that animals were created by the lord of the nine transmigrations to provide sustenance, and killing them is therefore not an ill deed. Reasons such as scriptural statements, false arguments and the like will not dissipate or destroy the limitless ill deeds of those who exert themselves to kill and who hold such views.

As explained in the commentary there are those who rely on false treatises. With wrong reasonings they hold the view that there is no ill deed in killing animals and so forth. They state that because animals are given by god for the purpose of sustaining humans, there is no ill deed in killing them. However that argument does not take away the demerit or the negative karma of that deed: the negative karma of killing is still created. In fact, because these acts are not seen as a wrongdoing or ill deed, the negative karma created will be limitless.

The analogy is that

It is like thinking ones undigested meal has been digested and eating more food.

This corresponds to a story about a greedy man consuming food, who enjoyed it so much that he wanted more. He had already eaten quite a lot and it was still undigested so he asked a Brahmin whether it would be okay to have more food and drink. When the Brahmin responded, 'Yes that's fine. You can have more food', that gave the greedy person the leeway to even eat more, because he thought, 'Now I have got good reason to eat more. The Brahmin said it is okay'. But because he had taken yet more food while the earlier meal had not been digested properly he actually got quite ill as a result.

How this analogy relates to the meaning of earlier explanation in relation to the negative karma created, is like this: Ordinary beings have already accumulated negative karmic deeds in the past, in addition to that which is already prevalent in the mindstream. If one relies on faulty treatises then that will then be an influence to create even more negative karma on top of the negative karma already created.

#### **1.2.1.3.2. Refuting that it is a religious activity**

This is further divided into three.

1.2.1.3.2.1. Refuting that protecting the people by punishing the unruly is a religious activity

1.2.1.3.2.2. Analogy showing that when an intelligent king protects his people out of attachment it is not a religious activity

1.2.1.3.2.3. The reasons why it is not a religious activity is because it is a basis for pride and carelessness.

#### **1.2.1.3.2.1. Refuting that protecting the people by punishing the unruly is a religious activity**

We should understand that this refers to a particular type of irreligious king, and that these examples do not relate to a religious or Dharma king.

Assertion: Since protecting his people is a cause for high rebirth and therefore religious practice a king needs no other religious practice.

Answer: that that is not so.

*If giving proper protection is  
A ruler's religious practice,  
Why would the toil of artisans too  
Not be religious practice?*

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If it is a ruler's religious practice when, as a king paid with a sixth, he gives proper protection to his people and is acknowledged to do so, why would the work of artisans who toil to make weapons and moats for others' protection not also be religious practice?

The assertion is that as protecting people is a cause for higher rebirth and therefore a religious practice, a king needs no other practices. This is referring to how the king, because he engages in practices of protecting others, is doing a virtuous deed. To refute that misconception the text mentions here that a king is basically doing something for which he is paid.

The protection and so forth that he is doing for others is not so much out of a great concern, love and compassion for his people, but rather because he is paid to do his job. He is merely fulfilling his requirements for the payment that he receives, which is a sixth of the earnings of his subjects. So if the king's activities, such as protecting his subjects and ruling them, are to be considered as a virtuous deed even when he receives the payment for them, so why couldn't we also consider people who make, for example, weapons, moats and so forth for money, which also protects people, as doing virtuous deeds? They are also doing deeds which seem to protect the subjects.

The analogy given here is:

The king is like a man hired to protect the town.

The main point in relation to the analogy is that when some are paid to carry out the punishment of others, such as executioners and so forth, what they are in fact doing is actually harming others. If the king can be considered as doing virtuous deeds for something that he receives payment for anyway, then we could also assert that others who do their job or fulfil their obligations for payment, even if they are harming others, would actually be doing good deeds. But that would definitely be against the logical reason of what we call the workings of karma. Therefore the king in reality is no different from someone who makes weapons and so forth, or who imposes punishments on others and so forth.

### The Textbook

It seems that the translation in the text book that you have is actually very accurate and good. Apparently the main source for this book is a teaching that was given by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, from which the commentary was written, and some extra explanations added.

The way this book came about was related to me by a translator who used to translate for Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, and who now lives in New Zealand. When he recently came to visit me he told me about this particular translation of the text.

Apparently Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey only gave a complete teaching on *The Four Hundred Verses* on one occasion. He was requested a few times to teach it again

but he said, I won't be able to go through the whole teaching again', and after quite a few requests were made he said, 'I can give the main points'.

Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey said, 'I can give you the essence of *The Four Hundred Verses*, so that you can keep that as a main point of reference. Apparently this was related to Dr Barry, who was one of Geshe Dhargyey's students. The main essence of the *Four Hundred Verses* is that it indicates that 95% of the humans in the world, because of their deeds and so forth, will go to the lower realms. Not following that 95% is the essence of *The Four Hundred Verses*. Dr Barry was quite shocked when he first heard that, but when he thought about it more in detail he felt that it was actually very sound advice. We can see this when we go through each verse, and realise that that basically the essence is that the text is explaining how so many ordinary beings are engaged in so-called normal activities, which are based on wrong deeds and negative karma.

### The Five Degenerations

In verse 81, which was covered earlier, there was mention of degenerate times. Actually, five types of degenerations are explained in the teachings. These are:

1. Degeneration of delusion: The sign of the degeneration of delusions is that even with very gross delusions, not to mention the subtle ones, it manifests immediately when there is the slightest condition for the gross delusion to arise, thus causing the mind to be afflicted. That is the sign of the degeneration of delusion.

2. Degeneration of karma: Because delusions arise so easily they influence one to engage in acts that cause negative karma or non-virtue to be created very rapidly. That would be the sign of the degeneration of karma.

There is also another interpretation which says that the second degeneration is the degeneration of sentient beings. The sign of degeneration of sentient beings is found in the verse in the *Guru Puja*, where it says that even when countless Buddhas have come, there are those beings who have not been liberated. They can be considered as degenerate beings for not being tamed or liberated.

So there are two ways of presenting the second degeneration.

3. Degeneration of views: The sign of degeneration of view is not seeing what is to be abandoned and what is to be taken up. The presence of ill deeds with a worldly distracted view would be the sign of degeneration of view.

4. Degeneration of life span: The earlier prevalent delusions and negative karma and so forth contribute to the very short life span of beings. That is a sign of the degeneration of life span.

5. Degeneration of time: When all the earlier degenerations are present then that is called the degeneration of time.

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## Study Group – Aryadeva’s 400 Verses

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*Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga*

*Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe*

10 October 2006

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As usual we will sit in a comfortable and upright position, and generate a positive motivation, such as, ‘In order to benefit all sentient beings, I need to achieve enlightenment, so for that purpose I will listen to the teachings, and put them into practice as best as I can’.

### 1.2.1. Refuting arrogance based on power and wealth

#### 1.2.1.3. CONSIDERING WHAT IS RELIGIOUS AND IRRELIGIOUS

##### 1.2.1.3.2. REFUTING THAT IT IS A RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY

###### 1.2.1.3.2.2. Analogy showing that when an intelligent king protects his people out of attachment, it is not a religious activity

Assertion: Since an intelligent king protects his people out of attachment, he is irreproachable.

Answer:

*This example shows the ruler on whom  
The people rely as reprehensible. 87  
The excellent see attachment to existence  
As mother of all those in the world.*

As the commentary explains:

Being a ruler on whom the people rely for protection is a source of arrogance and all kinds of recklessness and is therefore reprehensible. The wise Exalted ones who see things without error regard attachment to existence as the mother of those in the world because it produces them.

The assertion or the doubt is in relation to the status of a king. Because of his status, in a worldly sense he appears to be ‘the protector’ or the main leader of all (ministers, as well as subjects). Even those following religion seem to be under the rule of the king. In that sense it seems that the king is the most superior, and the protector of all. Therefore the doubt may arise, as the king is a protector of all he must be irreproachable.

However, that would not be the case for the Exalted ones who see all reality, including the faults that can be seen in a king. As explained here, the king is involved in a lot of negative activities, which cause the creation of a lot of negative karmas. The king’s status is therefore reprehensible.

The analogy used in the root text to explain the reprehensible status of the king is, attachment to existence is like the mother of those in the world, because it has produced them. What this is referring to is that attachment itself is analogous to a mother: just as a mother produces children, so attachment to worldly existence is the cause for rebirth in cyclic existence. Recognising that attachment to worldly existence serves as a mother producing those to be re-born in cyclic

existence, the wise or Exalted ones, who are noble beings understanding reality, purposely see attachment as a fault. Therefore the wise eradicate it, meaning that they abandon attachment to worldly existence.

### 1.2.1.3.2.3. The reason why it is not a religious activity is because it is a basis for pride and carelessness [or lack of conscientiousness]

This is again dealing with the doubt that the king’s activity could be a religious activity. Here the text is refuting that doubt on the basis that the king’s status serves as a basis for pride and carelessness to arise, so therefore it could not be a religious activity.

Assertion: Because of his compassion, a king’s protection of his people is his religious practice.

Answer: That is not so.

*The sensible do not acquire kingship. 88  
Since fools have no compassion,  
These merciless rulers of men,  
Although protectors, are irreligious.*

The sensible, who have not foolishly turned away from good paths like ethical conduct and are not attached just to power and wealth, do not acquire kingship.

The doubt is that a king may seemingly appear to have compassion and to protect his people. From a worldly point of view the king’s compassion and protection may be seen as a very noble deed and thus a religious deed. But the explanation in the text is that this is not so.

Fools, who are ignorant about actions and their effects, have no compassion. Kings, these merciless rulers of men, although they are protectors, are irreligious and a source of conceit and recklessness.

The main point being made in the commentary is that although from a worldly point of view kings may appear to be religious, because of their seeming compassion and protection of their subjects, in reality their activities, which are filled with conceit and pride, are actually quite foolish ones. The king’s activities are the activities of fools, because they are counter to developing the paths and the realisations on the paths.

Because of the recklessness and conceit, the king’s actions, rather than being religious, are contrary to the Dharma, because they strengthen delusions in the mind and therefore go against the paths and the grounds leading to enlightenment. Therefore the king’s activities are definitely an irreligious activity rather than a religious or Dharma activity.

As the commentary further explicitly mentions, these kings are actually merciless rulers of men, because of their deluded state of mind. Their main activities are merely trying to strengthen their power and wealth, or conquer other countries, or, as mentioned earlier, punishing subjects who don’t listen to them. Therefore all of their activities are focussed on either strengthening their own power or accumulating wealth, which is only focused on benefit for this lifetime. Therefore the activities of a king are completely irreligious and their seemingly compassion is in fact, completely contrived. In

fact they are actually merciless beings.

Therefore those who are really wise will completely shun and avoid the state of kingship. It is only fools who would want to go after such status and power, which only becomes a means to create more negative karma and thus strengthen their position in samsara. Therefore it is only foolish beings who would want to have the power of kingship. A king who is foolish in that way does not have compassion.

To clarify the main point being made here: a king is referred to as a fool because of not having the wisdom to know the consequences of cause and effect i.e. creating positive karma generates a positive effect and creating negative karma results in experiencing a negative effect. If one does not have the wisdom to understand that, then one is engulfed in the ignorance of that reality. Therefore in that regard, not having the wisdom to know the consequences of one's actions, and their results is completely foolish.

Furthermore the king has arrogance. Anyone who is ignorant of the real consequences of actions and their results, as well as having an arrogant mind, has no room for real compassion in their mind. Therefore the verse and the commentary on the verse explain how, rather than having compassion the reality is contrary to that - the king does not have compassion.

Then, as the commentary reads:

...although they are protectors [in a worldly sense, they] are irreligious and a source of conceit and recklessness

Here, the actual explanation is that kings have what is translated here as recklessness. Actually in the Tibetan the meaning is more like violence inflicted on others. So the reason why they are irreligious is because of their source of conceit and violence towards others. Therefore it is not proper to claim that the king has compassion and is thus following a religious practice.

### **1.2.1.3.3. Not everything stated by sages should be taken as valid**

This is sub-divided into two.

1.2.1.3.3.1. Why not everything stated by sages is valid

1.2.1.3.3.2. Showing that the happiness of the people is not assured by taking social treatises to be valid

#### **1.2.1.3.3.1. Why not everything stated by sages is valid**

The English word 'sages', as used here, is a translation from the Tibetan word *trang song*. The syllable *trang* has a connotation of being honest, while *song* has the connotation of reaching a certain level in their practice. So the practice of those called *trang song* is supposed to be based on honesty and morality; they are meant to have good moral ethics and a honest mind. Also the very word *trang song* has the connotation of those who live in isolated places and who practice austerities. Therefore the Indian sadhus are also referred to as *trang songs* or sages.

Assertion: Treatises by sages state that even if, owing to the code of the royal caste, a king acts violently, he has not performed an ill deed.

Answer:

*Sages' activities are not all  
[Actions] that the wise perform,  
For there are inferior,  
Mediocre and superior ones.*

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There are statements that are found in certain treatises composed by sages of the past. As the commentary explains:

Not all the activities described in treatises by sages are performed by wise sages, for there are different kinds: inferior, mediocre and superior sages.

This refers to a treatise of a sage, which says that even if a king acts violently, he has not performed an ill-deed. That sort of statement doesn't necessarily have to be taken at face value, because it wouldn't necessarily have been composed by a great learned and experienced sage. There are different levels of accomplishments within the sages: there are some who are quite inferior. Even though it is in a treatise composed by a sage, it cannot be taken at face value and quoted, because it is clearly not a statement made by a great and learned sage. If it is found in one of the treatises, this would be clearly a statement made by an inferior sage. Based on those reasons, the quote that a king's violent activity is valid, even if he performs an ill deed, is definitely from an inferior sage's treatise.

In general, treatises stating doubts about whether a king's activities are virtuous or not and leave it as a doubt, would be considered as a statement from a treatise composed by a mediocre sage.

A clear statement that a king's activities that involved violence are definitely an ill deed would be a statement that is found in treatises by superior sages. The most superior sage is the Buddha.

Therefore because there are different treatises which have different statements in relation to the same topic, ranging from the very inferior to the superior, your quotation is definitely from an inferior sage's treatises and cannot be taken as valid.

#### **1.2.1.3.3.2. Showing that the happiness of the people is not assured by taking social treatises to be valid**

Assertion: Because past kings who took these social treatises to be valid looked after their people well, these treatises must be valid.

Answer: It is not certain that people will be happy by following these social treatises.

*Virtuous rulers of the past  
Protected the people like their children.  
Through the practices of this time of strife  
It is now like a waste without wildlife.*

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Former virtuous and kind rulers, such as universal monarchs who protected the people like their own children, increased happiness and prosperity. But those who rely on the practices of this time of strife nowadays devastate the world, making it like a waste without wildlife. Therefore treatises incompatible with religious practice are not valid.

The assertion refers to past kings who took social

treatises to be valid, and looked after the people, because they relied on those social treatises. It is seen that they have taken care of their subjects, so it therefore follows that the treatise on which they relied must be valid as well. That is the assertion or doubt being raised.

The response to this doubt is that earlier kings, such as the universal monarchs, did definitely protect the people like their own children and increased their happiness and prosperity, because of the fact that they relied upon valid treatises. They were, in fact, religious kings in the real sense, because they relied upon valid, authentic treatises, which explained the ways and means of genuinely taking care of subjects out of real compassion and love. Therefore, because the treatises that were relied upon by kings of the past were sound, valid treatises, the actions and activities followed by the kings who relied upon these treatises are authentic.

We can say the kings themselves acted out of real compassion. The kings of the past, for example, King Srongtsen Gampo in Tibet is said to have based his monarchy upon the moral values that are known as the ten virtues of the gods and humans. Therefore the values that guided him were based on the ten virtues as we know them from the teachings nowadays. If a king's rule of the country was based on the ten virtues, they definitely ruled out of real concern and compassion for their subjects. Therefore their activities were consistent with the valid treatises that they were relying upon.

The great kings of the past ruled upon the basis of the ten virtues. Based on the understanding of the wisdom of knowing karma - the consequences of cause and effect - they promoted the ten virtues amongst their subjects. Because that was the basis of the government, the people created virtuous merit and karma naturally. With people naturally living in a happy state, prosperity, wealth and so forth naturally increased, and happiness naturally increased. Therefore under that kind of monarchical rule, people were genuinely happy.

In relation to the rulers of these days the commentary reads:

But those who rely on the practices of this time of strife nowadays devastate the world, making it like a waste without wildlife.

This refers to the fact that the moral values of those who rule based on the ten virtues, or abiding of the law of karma, have been shunned. Therefore slowly, slowly we can see how throughout time, the effect of the rulers becoming more selfishly based. They have ruled more out of self-interest for power, gain and wealth, rather than out of a real sense of genuine care and concern for the subjects. As a result we can see that there have been more wars, and more calamities and mishaps. Therefore delusions have become much more prevalent within the subjects as well. In this way we can see that there has definitely been a degeneration in times, as we see the rulers of these days basing their rule on mostly unethical codes, rather than moral and ethical codes.

Some kings rule without relying on authentic religious sources and they rule for their own benefit. They may

quote some treatise, but they are not really authentic treatises. In that way we can see how degeneration has taken place. Therefore the very activities of the kings are reason enough to show how that the very treatises on which they rely, if in fact they are relying on any treatises, are not sound, valid treatises. In this way the doubt expressed above can be removed.

The definition of a valid treatise is a treatise that proclaims a means of benefiting the mind, and benefiting oneself. In other words, a valid treatise is unfailing and infallible. Treatises that are infallible through reasoning, or through the experience that one gains from them are valid treatises. Whereas treatises that may indicate something when one refers to it, or which have no real logical basis, or which, when practised, result in experiences that do not accord to what is being explained, are not valid treatises.

#### 1.2.1.3.4. VIOLENCE TOWARD ENEMIES IS IRRELIGIOUS

Assertion: Treatises state it is not irreligious even if a king harms his enemies when occasions to do so arise.

Answer:

*If a king who seizes the occasion  
To harm is not doing wrong,  
Then others, too, such as thieves  
Have not done so in the first place.* 91

This doubt arises in relation to certain treatises that seem to encourage subduing enemies. They contain passages saying that in an event that an enemy arises, and if you have the power, then you must overcome the enemy. Basically these treatises justify an irreligious activity as moral and justified.

If a king who seizes the occasion to harm an enemy or anyone else that has acted improperly by beating him with sticks and the like is not doing wrong, others too, like thieves, have not done wrong in the first place - a thief finds an occasion to strike at someone rich first, and the king later finds an occasion to strike back.

The doubt refers to the case where if a so-called enemy arises, and it is not seen as immoral if the king were to harm that enemy, because an opportunity arises to strike. In that case a thief, who finds an opportunity to rob a rich person, could also be stated as not being immoral.

The main point here is in relation to a statement made in a treatise that one should strike when the occasion arises. What is being refuted is the justification to strike back when an occasion arises. This is the same as saying that a thief should take something when the occasion arises. Can that also be considered as being proper or moral? Of course it would not be accepted even in a worldly sense. If the thief's act of taking something when the occasion arises is not immoral, then why would we punish a thief? Such reasoning can not be followed.

#### 1.2.1.3.5. DYING IN BATTLE IS NOT A CAUSE FOR A HAPPY TRANSMIGRATION

Assertion: By defeating the enemy in battle one acquires wealth and pleases the king, and if one dies for him in battle one will go to a high rebirth. Therefore a king

should take pleasure in warfare.

Answer:

*If giving all one has for liquor  
And so on is not an offering,  
Why consider it an offering  
To give oneself in battle?*

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If giving all one has for liquor, gambling and women is not an offering that pleases the excellent and if it is also unmeritorious, why consider giving one's life in battle out of anger and greed, an offering to please the excellent? For what reason would one take a high rebirth through this? Is it not feasible.

Apparently there are treatises and certain worldly beings who claim that it is definitely desirable to go to war and even die in war. If one goes to war and is able to vanquish enemies and fight bravely, then one will receive medals and prizes when one returns. Even if one were to die in war, that too would be fine. One would have had a worthwhile death, because through dying in the service of the king one will have a good rebirth. Those are the sort of treatises that seem to encourage people to go to war and fight. Not only are people encouraged to go to war with the promise of getting medals, or a gift, or wealth and so forth as a token of appreciation later on (if one is able to survive), but if one were to die in battle good things are promised after death. Saying that they would have good rebirths after death overcomes their fear.

The actual analogy given in the root text itself is that it is similar to those who give everything they have - wealth and so forth - for addictions such as intoxicants, gambling or women (such as going to prostitutes and so forth). In instances like this where people completely give in to these addictions, they may spend all their wealth and become impoverished from that. Let alone the noble or wise beings praising such behaviour, even ordinary worldly beings would see that as being unmeritorious, or an ill deed. Even worldly beings shun such people. Would such activities such as spending all of one's money on liquor or gambling or going to prostitutes, for example, be considered as meritorious or a good deed in a worldly sense? No-one would agree, would they?

So the main reason why this would not be considered as a good deed is because there is an indulgence, a very excessive desire or attachment, that is involved. Those who indulge themselves in liquor, gambling or women are considered as being immoral and as committing an ill deed. Why? Because their actions are based on excessive attachment and greed. It is exactly the same for those who go into battle. They go out of anger and greed. Therefore how could that be seen as noble when the very basis of the reasoning is exactly the same as in the earlier case. Therefore going into battle has to be considered as being immoral. How can the deed of going into battle become a cause to be reborn in high rebirths? It cannot be so.

#### **1.2.1.4. IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR A KING TO FEEL DISTRESSED**

Assertion: It is reasonable to like being a king, because a king is the guardian of all his people.

Answer: That is not so.

*You, the king, guardian of the people,  
Have no guardian yourself.  
Since your guardianship does not  
Release you, who would be happy?*

93

As the commentary explains:

Since a king is the guardian of his people, they follow his instructions, giving up unsuitable activities and engaging in suitable ones. However you, the king, have no guardian and, living in a morass of corruption without any guardian, your actions are arbitrary. Because you have guardianship yet have no mentor, the causes of suffering in bad rebirths hold you fast and have not released you. Therefore who would be happy about gaining kingship? It is unreasonable to be happy.

This doubt arises in relation to a worldly thought that many will have: the king's position of protector is a desirable situation, because he is the protector of all. To overcome this doubt the text goes into an explanation of how in reality, the king's position is not a desirable one, because he is himself without a real protector. The fact that the king is a protector for his subjects is not denied. Of course, in reality, the king has the responsibility and to a certain extent the guardianship of his people, and the people likewise follow his instructions. To a certain extent, people following his instructions may avoid unsuitable activities and engage in suitable ones. That is a fact which is undenied in general.

However there is no real pride in being a protector of others, when there is no real protector for the king himself. 'Because of the fact that you have no guardian yourself' also means that the king, being superior out of his pride or status, may not accept any other superior being or person over him. Therefore the king will not have a mentor. Without having a mentor and no one to look up to himself, there is nothing to prevent the king from engaging in misdeeds and corruption and so forth, and thus misbehaviours. Therefore, being mentorless and protectorless becomes a fault for a king, because he may act in a corrupt way, without conscientiousness.

The main point here is showing the absurdity of the situation where a protector of others, having no protector himself, is led or influenced into engaging in deeds that will result in being reborn in lower realms. That being the case, who with a wise mind would desire a state of being like a king. No one with real wisdom would actually want to be a king.

#### **1.2.1.5. IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR A KING TO HAVE EXCESSIVE ATTACHMENT TO HIS KINGDOM**

Note that there is a misprint in the translation of the text book. We will go over this outline in the next session.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett  
Edit 2 by Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe  
Edited Version*

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## Study Group – Aryadeva’s 400 Verses

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*Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga*

*Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe*

17 October 2006

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As usual we will sit in a comfortable position while we generate a positive motivation in our mind, such as, ‘I will receive the teachings in order to benefit all sentient beings. By listening to the Dharma and putting it into practice as best as possible, may I achieve enlightenment’.

### 1.2.1. Refuting arrogance based on power and wealth (cont.)

#### 1.2.1.5. IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR A KING TO HAVE EXCESSIVE ATTACHMENT TO HIS KINGDOM

Assertion: Since a king whose punishments are mild does not become famous, while one who punishes harshly is famous even after his death, it is appropriate to give harsh punishment.

Answer:

*Though a king is famous after his death* 94  
*It will bring no benefit.*  
*Do you, being worthless, and those who*  
*Cook dogs not have notoriety?*

The doubt refers to generally accepting that since the king maintains his fame even after death, it therefore seems that anything contributing to that fame, such as giving harsh punishments, is appropriate. As the common people seem to remember harsh punishments and severe rulings, that adds to the fame of a king, even after his death. That being the case, then the doubt arises that if one can become famous and maintain one’s fame, and since harsh punishments can contribute to that fame, then it may seem appropriate to punish harshly.

If posthumous fame brought some benefit, that would be all right, but even though a king is famous after his death, it brings no benefits, such as the elimination of ill deeds.

As the commentary explains, fame cannot remove ill deeds or negative karma. If it could help to do that, then maybe it is worthwhile considering punishing harshly. But that is not the case. There are different types of fame such as genuine ‘good fame’ and ‘notorious fame’. The deeds contributing to good fame will be those that lead one to a higher rebirth, which can be considered as being a fame that is of a good quality. Notorious fame, robbing others through taxes and so forth, is of no benefit or use. The causes that you have engaged in to accumulate that kind of bad fame are definitely a cause to be reborn in the lower realms. There is no question about that.

If fame could wash away the stains of wrongdoing, why would you, because of your worthless actions like seizing others’ wealth, and those who cook dogs, because of their awesomeness to dogs, not enjoy great fame?

What is being referred to here is that if your notorious deeds, which have accumulated the fame of creating wrong deeds or negative karmas, were a means to wash away the negative deeds of others, such as those who cook dogs and so forth, then the fame that you have accumulated through your good deeds will not be a means to wash away your negative karma or deeds. Therefore the wise will not see the deeds that contribute to your fame as being a fame that is worthwhile obtaining. The wise will definitely see that as something to be shunned.

### 1.2.2. Refuting arrogance because of caste

This refers the son of the king being naturally born into the caste of the king. Merely being in that caste is regarded as a reason for arrogance. This is subdivided into three:

- 1.2.2.1. Refuting arrogance because of being a king’s son
- 1.2.2.2. Refuting arrogance merely because of being royal caste
- 1.2.2.3. Refuting that one becomes royal caste through the work of protecting everyone

#### 1.2.2.1. REFUTING ARROGANCE BECAUSE OF BEING A KING’S SON

Assertion: A prince of royal caste is fit to rule while others are not, therefore pride is appropriate.

Answer: It is not.

*When all power and wealth* 95  
*Are produced by merit,*  
*It cannot be said that this one*  
*Will not be a basis for power and wealth.*

The assertion refers to the fact that the monarchy can only be inherited by the king’s son, namely the prince, because he is in the same caste. It is not like a lineage that can be passed onto anyone. Therefore from a worldly point of view, it can be seen as appropriate to feel proud about being born into the king’s caste. However the text refutes that reason.

The main assertion here is that it is only a prince who is fit to have the authority of a king, with the ability to punish or give status to others and so forth. The assertion here is that such activities are only fit for a prince. However the root text refutes this, saying that such activities are not only an activity of a prince.

It is not merely due to being born as a son of a king that one receives that authority, but rather because of the merit that one has accumulated from previous lifetimes. Without having created the merit, one would not have that sort of status and ability. Therefore the real contributing factor to having power and authority is merit rather than caste.

Therefore it is not appropriate to claim that it is only fit for a prince born into that particular caste to have that authority over others. Rather, it is because of his merit, and as anyone could accumulate that merit, they too would have that authority and power and so forth. That is the main contributing factor. These are qualities that any being who has accumulated the merit can share equally with the prince. Thus it is not appropriate for the

prince, or anyone born in the king's caste, to feel proud of that status. Of course, this also refers to the obvious fact that all of us have equally been kings many times in the past, although we do not carry anything from that [laughter]. Also, someone may be a king one day, but it could all end by the next morning, and a king and ruler in the morning could be imprisoned by evening.

#### 1.2.2.2. REFUTING ARROGANCE MERELY BECAUSE OF BEING ROYAL CASTE

This is subdivided into two.

1.2.2.2.1. There have not always been distinct castes, meaning that there has not always been a distinct caste system.

1.2.2.2.2. Since there are four castes, a royal caste existent by way of its own entity is not ascertained.

##### 1.2.2.2.1. THERE HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN DISTINCT CASTES

Assertion: Since the practice of kingship is only explained to those of the royal caste but not the other three and thus the royal caste alone should rule, pride because of caste is appropriate.

Answer:

*In the world caste is determined* 96  
*With regard to the main means of livelihood.*  
*Thus there is no division among*  
*All sentient beings by way of caste.*

The assertion states that of the original four castes not even one of them, including the royal caste, can be ascertained as being existent from its own side, from its own nature.

The assertion or the doubt again refers to the royal caste as being the superior caste, which alone has the authority of ruling. Here the authority of ruling refers to the particular activities that only a king is fit to do, such as being the ruler of all the subjects in that nation. The ultimate decision about the kind of punishments to be inflicted is said to be in the king's hands. Another authority that only a king has is rewarding those for whatever virtue or good deeds they have done, and presenting prizes. These are some of the main activities of a ruler. The assertion here is that it is only a king who has the authority to engage in those kinds of activities of rulership. Thus, pride in caste is appropriate.

However, as the root text and the commentary explain, there is no certainty in the caste system itself. The reason as explained here is that the caste system is not something which is of its own entity. Rather it was created in India by the people of the first eras in relation to different types of livelihoods of the people of that era.

As the commentary explains:

Humans of the first era were born miraculously from mind and were endowed with luminosity. They had miraculous powers and could travel in space. They lived on the food of joy and did not have male or female sexual organs. Later, as they began to eat coarse food, they gradually developed different shapes determined by their male and female organs, and birth from the womb occurred.

It is from that time onwards that birth from the womb started to occur. As explained earlier, the godly beings of the earlier era did not need to have to labour or worry about their food because they had a miraculous, spontaneous food, and they didn't have to depend on coarse food.

When they first began to depend on coarse food it was spontaneously produced right after it was consumed, because the merit was still high. However, that natural ability slowly started to diminish, and the beings began to hoard their food so that they would have something for the next day. While some hoarded or collected food, others, out of greediness, wanted to take it away from them, which is when stealing started to occur. This implies that if you have nothing to keep, then there would be nothing that others could steal.

Then, because of hoarding, stealing and so forth began. To protect against stealing, a man in his prime was appointed by the majority of the community to guard the fields. Those who agreed to do this work were known as the royal caste.

What is being explained here is the fact that initially there was no royal caste system at all. There was no necessity because everyone was equal. Whereas when the times began to degenerate, there was a need for someone to be in charge, so the people of that era appointed someone as their king. From then onwards the royal caste system developed. The main point being made here is that before that era there was no royal caste, or any other caste for that matter.

Then the commentary goes on to explain the other caste systems, the next of which is the Brahmin caste.

Those who wished to subdue their senses left the towns to do ascetic practices and were called Brahmins.

When things started to disintegrate, there were some who decided to abandon worldly life and lead an ascetic life. The Tibetan word *dram se* has the connotation of those who leave a life of worldliness for a more subdued life. Thus they leave normal worldly activities, and go off to lead a more ascetic kind of life. They were then known as *dram se*. In India these people were called Brahmins, and that is how the Brahmin caste system developed.

Then there is the 'official caste'.

Those who carried out the king's orders were called the official caste,...

The last caste system was the 'common caste':

... those put to menial work like ploughing the fields were known as the common caste. Thus, in the world, caste was determined with regard to the main means of gaining a livelihood.

As the commentary further explains:

There is no innate division among sentient beings based on castes distinct by way of their own entity.

And the analogy is:

It is like pots distinguished by their different contents.

As with the analogy, the caste system was only developed gradually as the social structures of the time degenerated. It is not really something that is distinct from its own side; it is like different pots which have different contents, while still maintaining the same entity of being pots.

Thus the caste system came about gradually, which in itself indicates that from the very beginning there is no intrinsic caste system which came about independently from its own side.

Thus it is very wrong to accept statements in treatises by sages that say even if a king uses violence it is not irreligious.

Some treatises explain that using violence is acceptable, but to then assume that it is therefore religious is wrong. That is not so; it is still an irreligious activity.

Although this explanation of how they developed the caste system came from an earlier time in India, we find that even though they may not claim to have castes, there naturally seems to be a caste system, which naturally developed in other nations, except perhaps for the Brahmin caste. For example, in those countries which had kings as rulers, there was naturally a hierarchy. It was only those who were born to a king and queen who became rulers. Likewise there was an aristocratic class of the ministers or other noble families who worked directly under the king. Then we had what we call to this day the working class. So we can see that the distinction between the people came about naturally.

#### 1.2.2.2.2. SINCE THERE ARE FOUR CASTES, A ROYAL CASTE EXISTENT BY WAY OF ITS OWN ENTITY IS NOT ASCERTAINED

Assertion: Since there are four different ancestral lineages among humans, there are castes which differ by way of their own entity.

Answer:

*Since it was very long ago  
And women's minds are fickle,  
There is no one from the from the caste  
Known as the royal caste.*

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As the commentary explains:

It is very difficult to find anyone whose caste is certain because of being born from parents of pure caste.

The reason why it is very difficult to find a pure caste is because:

Since the division into four castes occurred very long ago in the world, and women's fickle minds have turned toward other men, there is no one who definitely belongs to the caste known as the royal caste.

What is being explained here is that because the original caste system developed so many thousands of years ago, it is unlikely that anyone today could claim that they are from a very pure caste. As time goes on, there are inter-caste marriages and so forth, so therefore the caste system has been mixed and therefore it is hard to find someone of pure royal caste. Also a king might have many queens. Actually to be of really pure caste, a prince would have to

be the son of a king and a queen, which means that the queen would have to have been a daughter of another king and queen. Throughout history, as we have noticed, a king might have a son by queens who did not have the authentic lineage of a princess. Also, children may have different fathers, or not be sure who their real father is. In this way we can see how it is hard to determine a pure caste from a pure lineage going back to earlier times. So there is already a flaw in the caste system. Therefore in this way we can see how, as time goes on, it is very difficult to find a really pure caste.

Therefore pride on account of one's ancestry is unjustified.

Therefore being proud just because of caste is inappropriate, because the caste system itself is not certain to be pure. I remember someone mentioning to me about how her daughter was pregnant, and it had not been determined who the father really was. She told me how, in earlier times, having a child without identifying the father was not considered very proper. However times have changed and she said, 'Actually I don't particularly mind who the father is. Whether he has one or two or three fathers, I don't care. The fact is that my child has a child and that is okay'. So it seems that in earlier times if a woman were to bear a child, the father had to be identified and would have to be their legitimate husband. If that was not so, then it seems that it was considered as being immoral or not in accord with the norms of the society. I think that may be one reason why some abortions took place - out of embarrassment or shame or an inability to deal with the pressure and so forth. That is actually quite a pitiful state of affairs.

#### 1.2.2.3. REFUTING THAT ONE BECOMES ROYAL CASTE THROUGH THE WORK OF PROTECTING EVERYONE<sup>1</sup>

Assertion: If one does not become royal through caste, one becomes a member of the royal caste through one's work of protecting everyone

Answer:

*If even one of common caste  
Through his work could become royal caste,  
One might wonder why even a commoner  
Should not become Brahmin through his work.*

98

The doubt being raised here is in relation to the earlier doubt, which is that there is a flaw in the caste system. If someone were to work hard, then through their ability to protect others they could achieve royalty. Thus they might become proud of that. The doubt basically is that even if one were not to become a king because of one's caste, one could join the royal caste system, thus becoming royalty, because of having the ability to protect all the subjects. That is the assertion that is being raised.

If, by doing the work of the royal caste such as protection of the people, even people of common caste could become royal caste, one might wonder why even those of common caste should not become Brahmin by doing Brahmin work such as reciting the

<sup>1</sup> In the text book there is a misprint. This heading is categorised as c, when it is actually 3.

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Vedas. Thus it is wrong to think that one belongs to the royal caste because of one's work.

What is being explained here is the absurdity of assuming that someone could be of a royal caste just because they have the ability to do the same things that a king does, such as protecting others. The main point is that if merely by doing the work of those of a particular caste system was to determine that one belonged to that caste, then, as mentioned here, even someone from a common caste could also do the main work of the Brahmins, such as reciting the Vedas and doing pujas. Would they then also become a Brahmin? Of course that cannot be so.

The analogy used here is:

For instance, though one speaks of a boat going to "that bank" and coming to "this bank," neither this bank nor that bank exist by way of their own entity.

This analogy is also used to show how things are merely labelled, and that they do not exist from their own side. The caste system, as mentioned earlier, was initially established by way of the social norms of the society. But it is not as though caste was something that existed from its own side from the very beginning. As the analogy explains, when we refer to 'this bank' or 'that bank', it is all in relation to which point of view you are looking from. When you are on this side of the river, then the bank over there becomes 'that bank'. However if you go to the other side, then the side of the river that you earlier called this bank, becomes 'that bank'. So there is no inherently existent 'this' or 'that' bank that always remains that way. So this is also the analogy showing that all existence, and in particular the caste system, is like that.

This analogy can be understood on a subtle level in relation to the explanation of a lack of inherent existence, and it can also be related to a normal general sense where things began. In relation to the caste systems, as mentioned earlier, there was a time when there were no castes, but then the caste system began at a certain period in time. Therefore it operates in relation to the norms of the people who established it.

The river bank analogy is actually a very vivid analogy of how 'this' and 'that' are terms that are nominally used for defining certain purposes. But when we look into it, there is no real 'this' or 'that' that can be determined as being always 'this' and always 'that'. This analogy is used to explain the subtleties of how things do not exist from their own side. If we refer to inherent existence we can refer to the subtleties of the emptiness or lack of inherent existence of things, or we can relate it to even the general sense of how things do not exist from the very beginning.

The main point of the whole chapter is using the king as a particular example of how, using all the various different reasons, it is inappropriate for the king to be proud. The chapter goes through all the various doubts or reasons why one would normally think that the king himself, or others, might think that it is appropriate for the king to be proud. The chapter gives various reasons why that is inappropriate. The very last reasons that were given

referred to the actual caste of royalty itself, questioning whether they are real royalty or not. So having pride based on a notion that one is of a royal caste is questionable. Therefore one can see that there is no real basis or sound reasoning for a king to be proud.

The chapter talked about the caste system. If we relate that to our normal world at this time, we do find that there are many who were once rulers but who later have to do all kinds of ordinary work when they fall from power. They have to engage in normal activities that the working class engage in. Likewise, those from the working class may gain power later on and become rulers. So we can see that status rises and falls. When we think about it in that way and relate it to our own life, and our own personal practice, we can see that since there is no stability in status or power or any kind of social standing, then there is no real reason for oneself or others to feel proud in that way. For example, imagine that soon after a king is enthroned, someone claims, 'Oh, the king was not his legitimate father, he actually had another father'. If someone could prove that and they could actually depose that king, saying that he was not fit to be a king, then the whole pride of being enthroned as a king would be completely wasted.

We don't have that many more sessions left this year - I think there are nine left. So basically for October and November will we have the teaching sessions and then the first two weeks in December will be a discussion and then an exam week. After that we will not have any teachings until next year.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett  
Edit 2 by Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe  
Edited Version*

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## Study Group – Aryadeva’s 400 Verses

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*Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga*

*Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe*

24 October 2006

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As usual we sit in a comfortable position and generate a positive motivation such as, ‘In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. For that purpose I will listen to the teachings and try to put them into practice as best as I can’.

### 1.2.3. Showing other means to give up ill deeds

This is subdivided into two.

1.2.3.1. Refuting the appropriateness of arrogance because kings have great possessions and, when the time is right, can distribute great power and wealth such as riches to many people.

1.2.3.2. Refuting that it is therefore appropriate for kings to be conceited.

#### 1.2.3.1. REFUTING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF ARROGANCE BECAUSE KINGS HAVE GREAT POSSESSIONS AND, WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT, CAN DISTRIBUTE GREAT POWER AND WEALTH SUCH AS RICHES TO MANY PEOPLE

This sub-division is in relation to further doubts about the appropriateness of the king being arrogant.

Assertion: Through the power and wealth of kingship it is possible to distribute possessions and so forth to a great many people when the time is right. Therefore pride is appropriate.

Here the doubt is whether the king can be arrogant, based on the fact that by having riches and many possessions he would be able to do good, such as giving to the poor and others. Also, because of riches the king may have a sense of pride thinking, ‘Because of my riches I am able to subdue others’. Basically this means that by being generous and so forth one will be able to influence others, and by thinking in that way a king may feel that he has reason to be proud. Even if that were the case, the verse says that this is not a reason for the king to feel arrogant.

*A king’s ill deeds cannot be  
Distributed like his wealth. 99  
What wise person ever destroys  
Their future for another’s sake?*

While it is true that the king can distribute possessions that accumulate over a long period...

It is an accepted fact that the riches and so forth of the king have been accumulated over a long time, even from before he inherited them. It is also true that due to that wealth one can influence others.

...a king cannot distribute the ill deeds created in connection with them as he can power and wealth.

While it may be true that the king can distribute the wealth that he has accumulated over a long time, he has

also accumulated a lot of negative karma in relation to that wealth, to his greed and to the way the wealth was collected. While the king may be able to distribute his wealth amongst others, he cannot distribute the negative karma that he accrued in relation to his wealth, because karma is not something that he can distribute and share with others.

Because of the fact that the negative karmas the king has accumulated cannot be distributed, or shared with others, the negative consequences of the negative karma he has created have to be experienced by the king himself.

...what wise person would destroy the future lives on account of something trivial for someone else’s sake?

Anyone with a wise mind would not give up a long-term goal, such as the results for future lifetimes, for trivial things such as wealth and fame in this present short lifetime. The really wise ones would not engage in pursuing that path.

The main point being made here is the fact that it is not wise to accumulate a great amount of negative deeds for the sake of a small benefit. The king may claim that his riches and wealth and so forth are accumulated for the benefit of others, but the negative karma that the king has to accumulate when acquiring that wealth far exceeds the small benefit that he can do for himself or others. Even if he does share with others, the benefit to them is minimal in relation to the negative karma that he has created for himself. This is personal advice that we have to relate to our own life. Sometimes we might get some small benefit but we end up creating so much negative karma, which is not very good for us in the long term.

In relation to the main assertion or doubt raised earlier, that it is appropriate for the king to feel proud because of his wealth and so forth, the commentary explains here that it is in fact a state of shame rather than pride when a king accumulates so many negative karmas.

The analogy in the commentary is that it is like sacrificing a buffalo to the gods and then sharing the meat with others. Through ignorance this is seen as a good deed, but rather than accumulating merit, the negative karma that is created in sacrificing that buffalo cannot be shared. The main point being made here is that the negative karma that one accumulates has to be experienced by oneself alone, even if one accumulates it with an intention to benefit others.

#### 1.2.3.2. REFUTING THAT IT IS THEREFORE APPROPRIATE FOR KINGS TO BE VERY CONCEITED

Assertion: Since one lives with great power and wealth pride is appropriate.

Answer:

*Pride caused by power and wealth 100  
Does not remain in the hearts of the wise,  
Once one has looked at others  
With equal or superior power.*

After all the earlier reasons indicating that under no circumstances is pride in the status and wealth appropriate, the king might still feel that it is appropriate to maintain a sense of pride.

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Regarding pride caused by the power of wealth and kingship and so forth, which thinks, 'I am better than others', one must look at those with equal power and wealth as well as others much more mighty than oneself who have superlative powers and wealth.

Pride will initially arise when a king has the notion that he is the greatest, has many subjects, and is ruling over others and so forth. However in reality there are other kings who are equal to him, or who are even superior to him. When one has that conceited mind of pride then one should look upon those who are either equal, or superior, to oneself in order to overcome that pride.

Having done so pride will not so remain in the hearts of the wise, who know how to analyse in detail the way things are.

As is explained here, when one looks into one's situation with wisdom, then pride can be reduced when one sees oneself in comparison to others.

The concluding lines of this chapter are that in order to benefit others one must overcome pride. Therefore one must respect all others, like teachers, with a sense of humility, and have a general sense of respect towards all in that way. If one practises in this way then it becomes a cause for all good qualities to arise in one's mind. One can make others happy and joyful by practising humility and paying respect to others. In general, respecting others is the ultimate way to give joy to others.

The analogy given here is of the Brahmin Vasudhara's wife, who was proud of her beauty. In order to overcome that pride the Brahmin put her into the retinue of the king's queens. Her initially strong sense of pride in being the most beautiful was immediately reduced when she was amongst other beautiful women.

As a summarising stanza Gyaltsab Je, the author of the commentary, added this verse

Thinking about impermanence and uncleanliness of the body,  
Understand the faults of attachment to it.  
Make effort to achieve unsurpassable enlightenment  
And give up pride in both 'I' and 'mine'.

This verse summarises the earlier chapters as well as this fourth chapter. Thinking about impermanence and the uncleanliness of the body refers to the points made in earlier chapters on the extensive ways of thinking about how the contaminated body's nature is impermanent as well as unclean. Having understood the faults of that the body, attachment towards it needs to be overcome. Furthermore we need to give up the sense of pride in 'I' and 'mine' and in that way make an effort towards achieving the unsurpassable enlightenment, the ultimate state of buddhahood.

## 2. Presenting the name of the chapter

*This is the fourth chapter of the Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds showing the means to abandon conceptions of the self.*

The outline that we are in began with was:

### 3.2.1.<sup>1</sup> *Explaining the stages of the paths depending on conventional truths*

This was subdivided into two:

3.2.1.1. Showing how the aspiring altruistic intention is generated after trainings in the attitude of a person of intermediate capacity by elimination of the four errors.<sup>2</sup>

This was then subdivided into the first four chapters, which we have now completed.

3.2.1.2. Explaining how to generate the deeds having generated the practical altruistic intention.<sup>3</sup>

As the outline structure indicates, the first four chapters relate to the faults of the body: first of all overcoming the erroneous view of permanence with the explanation of impermanence; secondly overcoming the erroneous view that the body is clean by explaining the uncleanliness of the body; thirdly explaining that the body is selfless by overcoming the erroneous view that there is a self.

These explanations are explicitly in relation to the practices of the medium scope. However implicitly they also explain how to develop an altruistic or a bodhicitta intention. Overcoming the erroneous views in relation to the body are explicitly explained as a means to develop a renunciation of cyclic existence, the immediate result of which is develop renunciation, then abandoning cyclic existence and obtaining liberation for oneself. Implicitly what should also be understood here is that while one relates an understanding of the nature of suffering to one's own situation, when one focuses upon others one sees how they, too, are in the nature of suffering just like oneself. Then, based on that, one develops love and compassion, and based on that, an altruistic intention develops to free them from all suffering and lead them to enlightenment. This is how the teachings implicitly teach how to develop the altruistic intention. As explained here in this teaching, and in the commentary, one should use that understanding in all other circumstances when it comes to the teachings of the medium scope or the small scope, but particularly the medium scope.

We can relate all three scopes of understanding to the twelve interdependent links<sup>4</sup>. In relation to the **small scope**, the twelve interdependent links show how through ignorance and karma and so forth, one is lead into the lower realms, and when one contemplates on the twelve interdependent links in reverse order in relation to the small scope then that becomes a means to free oneself from the lower realms, and in particular from the

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<sup>1</sup> To make things easier the numbering of each chapter begins with 1. Thus 'Presenting the name of the chapter' is actually 3.2.1.1.4.2. The numbering of this heading and the two following sub-headings refers back to the overall structure of the text.

<sup>2</sup> This was given on 14 March 2006 as 'Showing how to generate wishing bodhicitta by training in the meditations common to the medium capable being, which is abandoning the four misconceptions'.

<sup>3</sup> This was given on 14 March 2006 as 'After having generated the wishing bodhicitta how to train in the path'.

<sup>4</sup> These were listed on 28 March 2006.

sufferings of the lower realms. In the **medium scope** the twelve interdependent links are explained not only in relation to how one is led into the lower realms, but also into the higher rebirth of cyclic existence. With that understanding of how the twelve interdependent links lead an individual into cyclic existence, one then contemplates the reverse order of the twelve interdependent links, which then becomes a means for an individual to develop renunciation, and to be free from cyclic existence. In the **great scope** one uses the understanding of the twelve interdependent links to understand how all suffering beings are led into samsara through the means of the twelve interdependent links. Contemplating the twelve links in reverse order in relation to all sentient beings then becomes the means to release oneself and all other sentient beings from not only cyclic existence, but from the very imprints of cyclic existence, thus leading to enlightenment.

Of course I have mentioned this many times previously, but just in case people need to be reminded of these main points, we can see that how contemplation on the twelve interdependent links becomes a really profound way of developing what we call love and compassion, and thus serving as a basis to develop bodhicitta. Even though the twelve interdependent links are specifically explained in the medium scope, when we contemplate that explanation it becomes a very profound way bringing about a true sense of the suffering of cyclic existence, even at a very subtle level. Whereas if we contemplate only immediate suffering at a more superficial level, of people suffering from hunger or thirst or an immediate danger or physical or mental hardships, then when we see others who are not suffering in that way, we may become complacent and think, 'Oh, they are not really suffering'. Whereas if we contemplate in relation to the twelve interdependent links then our understanding of the suffering of oneself and other sentient beings becomes much more profound.

The importance of really contemplating the twelve interdependent links cannot be underestimated; otherwise our compassion may become very superficial. If we may think that suffering refers to hunger, thirst, poverty and so forth we have some sense of pity towards those suffering in this way, but at the same time we might envy people who have a lot of wealth, who are beautiful, who seem to have things going well, thinking, 'Oh that's a desirable state'. So on one hand while we are trying to develop love and compassion for some we may actually envy the status and the wealth and beauty of others. Then our love and compassion becomes really superficial, rather than deep and profound.

### **3.2.1.2. Explaining how to train in the deeds having generated a practical altruistic intention**

'Practical altruistic intention' can also be translated as aspirational bodhicitta. As mentioned earlier, the first four chapters implicitly explain aspirational bodhicitta, which is the very strong motivation or intention to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of sentient beings. The bodhicitta is still on an aspirational level, as one has not yet actually promised to engage in the deeds. That

aspirational bodhicitta is therefore just a noble intention.

Having generated aspirational bodhicitta the text now explains how to implicitly engage in the deeds of the bodhisattva. On the actual path to enlightenment it is explained how aspirational bodhicitta is developed during the meditative equipoise of a bodhisattva, whereas the engaging bodhisattva attitude is manifested in what is called the post-meditative state.

An understanding of aspirational bodhicitta and engaging bodhicitta can actually be implied in whatever practices we do. For example, in the Tara practice, the opening lines are, 'To benefit all sentient beings I need to attain the state of mother Tara', which is when one can develop aspirational bodhicitta, for the sake of all sentient beings, and for that purpose wishing to attain the state of mother Tara. The next lines say, 'For that purpose I will engage in the practice of making offerings and so forth for the practice of mother Tara'. This indicates the engaging bodhisattva attitude.

This major heading is subdivided into four categories, each of which is a main chapter heading.

3.2.1.2.1 The actual meaning, which is the main topic of the fifth chapter.

3.2.1.2.2. Explaining the means to abandoning the disturbing attitudes and emotions which prevent the deeds, which is the main topic of the sixth chapter.

3.2.1.2.3. Abandoning attachment to sense objects on which disturbing emotions focus, which is the main topic of the seventh chapter.

3.2.1.2.4. Showing the methods of fully training the students mind stream making it receptive to the development of spiritual paths, this is the main topic of the eighth chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5: THE ACTUAL MEANING**

The outline in the translated text book does not indicate the two main sub categories of this chapter, however according to Gyalsab Je's commentary, they are:

- 1.<sup>5</sup> The explanation of the material of the chapter
2. Presenting the name of the chapter

### **1. The explanation of the material of the chapter**

This is subdivided into four.

- 1.1. Showing the greatness of buddhahood, the resultant attainment
- 1.2. Explaining how to practice the bodhisattva deeds, the cause of buddhahood
- 1.3. Proof of resultant omniscience
- 1.4. Showing why those with poor intelligence fear the great vehicle

#### **1.1. Showing the greatness of buddhahood, the**

<sup>5</sup> For convenience the numbering of each chapter begins with 1. This heading is actually 3.2.1.2.1.1.

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## *resultant attainment*

This has three subdivisions.

1.1.1. Distinctive features of a buddha's activities

1.1.2. Their effect

1.1.3. Not answering fourteen questions is no suitable proof for lack of omniscience

### *1.1.1. Distinctive features of a buddha's activities*

As explained in the commentary, what one derives from the earlier explanations is that having a Hinayana disposition, meaning being inclined to a mental disposition where one wants to free oneself from cyclic existence, and thus seek self-liberation, helps to generate an aversion to cyclic existence. From the same earlier explanations, having a Mahayana disposition, meaning having a wish to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, helps to develop great compassion and bodhicitta and the desire to seek buddhahood. That being so, the question arises as to what are the causes to achieve aversion to cyclic existence, and then developing bodhicitta.

Question: Where are these causes found?

Answer: In the Buddha.

Question: What is a buddha like? What are the characteristics of a buddha?

Answer:

*Not a single movement of buddhas* 101  
*Is without reason; even their breathing*  
*Is exclusively for*  
*The benefit of sentient beings*

The explanation here is the same as with that of identifying the object of refuge, and then aspiring to go for refuge. Where does the attitude of sentient beings with different dispositions, particularly relating to the Mahayana disposition come from? The answer to that question is that it comes from seeing the qualities of the Buddha. When one sees the qualities of the Buddha, and fully understands and appreciates them, then the spontaneous wish to be exactly like the Buddha will arise in the mind. Therefore by seeing the qualities of the Buddha one generates the wish to develop what we call bodhicitta, which is the cause to achieve enlightenment, and then proceeds on to achieving enlightenment.

One thinks of the qualities of the Buddha with the spontaneous wish, 'How wonderful it would be if I could become like that myself'. If we contemplate that wish further, it becomes stronger and stronger. As the wish to become a buddha becomes stronger, then the wish to practise, such as generating bodhicitta and so forth, occurs naturally. Those who have developed a strong wish to become a buddha waste no time; every moment is spent on practising the means and methods of becoming a buddha.

The next question is, if these qualities come from the Buddha, then what is the buddha like? Who or what is a buddha?

As the commentary explains:

Such a supremely compassionate person performs inconceivable activities for the welfare of all sentient beings without exception.

This explains how a buddha is a being whose sole wish is to benefit all sentient beings indiscriminately.

The commentary goes on to elaborate:

Buddhas make no movement of the three doors that is not for the benefit of sentient beings.

This indicates that whatever a buddha does through their three doors, meaning body, speech and mind i.e. every single movement, is for the benefit of all sentient beings. There is no purpose of self left.

The commentary quotes from the *King of Meditative Stabilisation*:

Countless hundreds and thousands of rays come from  
The soles of the King of the Teaching's [or King of the  
Dharma, which refers to the Buddha] feet,  
Cooling sentient beings in all of the hells.  
Free from suffering they enjoy bliss.

And

When a conqueror places his foot on the threshold  
Those blind from birth, those whose ears do not hear,  
The protectorless and those with small merit -  
All of these gain eyes and ears

These lines explain the great miraculous abilities that a buddha has: just by placing his foot on a threshold a buddha benefits so many beings on a practical way, giving sight to those who are blind, sound to those who are deaf, giving merit to those who have less merit and so forth.

Even his breath, which flows naturally without depending on any intention...

We breathe without having to think about it; it is very natural and not as though we have to think, 'I am going to breathe in, and I am going to breathe out' every time we breathe. Breathing is natural and spontaneous. A buddha's activities of benefiting other sentient beings are just like that.

...forms a huge rain cloud above the hell realms like a mound of eye ointment, fascinating the hell beings. From it falls a delicious cooling rain making the mass of fire in the hells die down. Freed from their suffering, the hell beings wonder whose power pacified it, whereupon they see the Buddha's body adorned with the major and minor marks.

The force of that admiration of the Buddha stills the suffering of the hells and produces in the minds of the hell beings a virtuous concordance with the attainments of liberation. The main point is that the virtuous activities of the Buddha are such that, even in the hell realms the beings who are suffering there are cooled through the merit of the Buddha. As it explains in the commentary, a rain of nectar falls, which cools the beings in the hell realms. They are astonished to be suddenly released from their suffering, and look up to see where this is coming from, and they see the Buddha. Thus great faith is generated in their minds.

If his breathing is given for the temporary and



ultimate welfare of all sentient beings, what need is there to mention the benefit of activities such as his teachings?

As explained in the commentary, the force of that admiration stills the suffering of the hells and produces virtue in their minds in accordance with the attainment of liberation. It seems quite amazing and unimaginable that this could take place even in the hell realms, but what we should understand here, is that even beings born in the hell realms may have strong connections with an enlightened being. Those born in the lower realms, such as a hell realm, may have virtuous imprints from past lifetimes in which they have made strong prayers or connections with enlightened beings or bodhisattvas. Then, even though they are born into the hell realms due to past karma, and have to experience the negative consequences of that past karma, they still have the imprints on their mind to make a connection and thus benefit from enlightened beings. It should be understood that when we do our practice and prayers, they can be limitless if we include all beings in our scope. It is hard for us to know now which beings we have a connection with, but when we make prayers to benefit all sentient beings then it is possible even to benefit beings who are born in the hell realms in the future.

As explained in the commentary, if the mere appearance of the Buddha in remote areas such as the hell realms can bring so much benefit for the beings, then there is no question of the great benefit that the Buddha extends to those beings of intelligent mind through the teachings and so forth. The Buddha's activities are explained in more detail in other sources: there are the Buddha's deeds through speech, through physical activities and through the Buddha's mind. The manner of how the Buddha benefits other beings through his body, speech and mind is inconceivable and unimaginable. Just the physical appearance of the Buddha can bring so much benefit, not to mention how much we can benefit from receiving and hearing the Buddha's teachings. Therefore thinking about the qualities of the Buddha in that way should instil great faith in our mind, and turn our mind to receiving the benefits from the buddhas.

### 1.1.2. Their effect

*Just as ordinary people are* 102  
*Terrified by the words 'Lord of Death',*  
*So the words 'Omniscient One'*  
*Terrify the Lord of Death.*

The effect here is the effect of having generated faith in the Buddha. As it explains in the commentary those who trust the Buddha will gain freedom from all fears, even the fear of death. As I normally explain, in accordance with other advice, the mere memory of the Buddha at the time of death can free oneself from the lower realms.

The words 'Lord of Death' terrify ordinary people.

This passage of the root text indicates that ordinary people are really terrified when they hear the word 'death'.

Simply hearing the words 'Omniscient One' endows whoever hears them with the good fortune to attain

nirvana, thereby terrifying and subjugating Death as well.

What is being explained here is that just as ordinary beings will be fearful of the mere mention of death, similarly whoever hears the words 'Omniscient One', 'Buddha', or 'Enlightened One' with good fortune has the power to attain nirvana. As nirvana is the ultimate state of overcoming death the words 'Omniscient One' thus have the effect of overcoming what we call death.

The main point here is that ordinary beings experience fear whenever death is mentioned, or when they think about death. The analogy uses the symbolic figure of the Lord of Death. Just as ordinary people are frightened by death the Lord of Death has a fear of the mere mention of the Buddha, or the Omniscient One, because the Lord of Death is not able to overpower the Omniscient One. Rather it is the reverse. By relying on the Omniscient One, or the Buddha, one has the power to completely subdue death.

The commentary further quotes from a sutra where it says:

Those who hear my name will attain nirvana in any of the three vehicles.

This passage indicates that whatever sentient being hears the Buddha's name, will attain nirvana. Here the word 'nirvana' is used in a generalised form, but when it mentions any of the three vehicles then it refers to either self-liberation or the ultimate state of enlightenment, therefore the ultimate state of all the three vehicles.

This understanding brings more weight and purpose to the recitation of the name of the Buddha as in, OM MUNI MUNI MAHA MUNAYE SOHA. If we recite it loud enough for other beings to hear, then it has the effect of leaving a profound imprint on oneself and others' minds. When we have this understanding, that serves as a great, great purpose.

### 1.1.3. Not answering fourteen questions is not suitable proof for lack of omniscience

This refers to doubts that others have about the state of buddhahood, or the Buddha being omniscient, because the Buddha Shakyamuni did not answer certain questions he was asked.

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks*  
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*Edited Version*

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## Study Group – Aryadeva’s 400 Verses

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*Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga*

*Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe*

31 October 2006

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As usual we will sit in a comfortable, upright position and generate a positive motivation, such as, ‘In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. For that purpose I will listen to the teachings and put them into practice as best as I can’.

### **1.1. Showing the greatness of buddhahood, the resultant attainment (cont.)**

#### **1.1.3. Not answering fourteen questions is no suitable proof for lack of omniscience**

This outline arises after having explained the qualities of the Buddha. Someone raises the question that the Buddha could not be omniscient, because he didn’t answer fourteen questions that were put to him. The text explains how that is not a reason proving that the Buddha is not omniscient, and in fact it proves the Buddha’s omniscience.

Assertion: Surely he lacked omniscience since he did not answer fourteen questions such as whether the self and the world are permanent or impermanent and so forth.

Answer: Rather than disproving, it establishes his omniscience.

*A subduer has [perception of] that* 103  
*Which should and should not be done or said.*  
*What reason is there to say*  
*That the Omniscient One is not all-knowing?*

The fourteen questions are:

- Four questions in relation to whether or not the self and the environment are permanent. Are they: 1) permanent? 2) not permanent? 3) both permanent and not permanent? 4) neither permanent nor not permanent?
- Four more questions in relation to whether or not there is an end to the cyclic existence.
- Four questions in relation to whether or not the Buddha remains after passing away.
- Two questions, as to whether the body and life force are the same or different.

When these questions were put to the Shakyamuni Buddha, he did not give a verbal answer. This is taken to mean that he did not know the answers, and hence cannot be regarded as being omniscient.

What is being explained here is that the very fact the Buddha did not answer is proof that he is omniscient.

A subduer directly perceives the right and wrong time for temporary and ultimate actions...

In every action that the Buddha does, there are times to act and times not to act. So even non-action is out of consideration for the benefit of others, and becomes a means to benefit others. What this connotes is the fact that the Buddha knows exactly the mental dispositions of sentient beings, and therefore acting or not acting indicates that he

knows exactly how to engage with sentient beings in order to benefit them. Likewise with the Buddha’s speech: knowing the mental dispositions of sentient beings, the Buddha knows exactly when to say something and when not to say something. When there is a benefit for the listener, the Buddha will say what is appropriate, but if there is no benefit, then the Buddha says nothing. Therefore what he says depends on whether or not there is a benefit to the other. As the text goes on to say:

...what actions should not be done, what is not beneficial, what is harmful as well as all that should or should not be said.

Therefore what is being explained here is that by not answering those fourteen questions, the Buddha was acting to benefit other beings.

Since the Buddha possessed such perception, he did not give an answer to these questions, which were based on a belief in the true existence of persons and phenomena. It is not feasible for a basis of attribution whose existence has been negated to have an attribute.

What this is explaining is how the Buddha knew that the questions were asked on the basis of person and phenomena having true existence. If the Buddha were to answer that person and phenomena do exist, then, to the mind of the questioner, that would assert that there is true existence of person, which would lead them to the extreme of eternalism. If the Buddha were to say that there is no person or phenomena, then that would lead them to completely negate the existence of person and phenomena, thus leading them to nihilism. Whatever answer the Buddha gave on that particular occasion would have contributed to the person who asked the questions following one of the two extremes. Therefore at that time the most appropriate response was for the Buddha not to answer, which saved them from falling into either of the extremes. As the commentary explains, that is why the Buddha did not answer those questions.

We can see that there is very sound, but intricate logic and reasoning here. The very argument used to show the Buddha is not omniscient, is used as a reason to prove that the Buddha is, in fact, omniscient. That is how the logic and reasoning becomes profound. As the Precious Garland also says:

Asked whether it had an end  
The Conqueror was silent.

Because he did not give this profound teaching  
To worldly beings who were not receptive vessels,

The All-knowing One is therefore known  
As omniscient by the wise.

The first line, ‘Asked whether it had an end’, refers to whether the environment, or the world has an end. ‘The Conqueror was silent’, means that the Buddha Shakyamuni, the Conqueror, did not give an answer. ‘Because he did not give this profound teaching to worldly beings who were not receptive vessels’, indicates that they were holding onto the wrong view that the world, or environment, as well as the beings who live in that environment are truly existent. Because of strongly holding onto that wrong view they were not receptive vessels, and they would have not been able to receive the teachings on selflessness of person and phenomena. ‘The All-knowing One is therefore known as omniscient by the wise’ means that because the Buddha did not answer, that in itself becomes the proof to the wise ones,

who know how the Buddha interacts, that the Buddha is omniscient.

The analogy refers to a king who wanted to penalise a rich Brahmin, telling him that the Brahmin that would be punished unless he quickly sent his family's well. Knowing that the king was giving them an impossible task to do, so that they can be penalised, the Brahmin's daughter gave a very cunning answer so as not to be punished. Then the further question is:

If Buddha does not say what should not be said, did he not say, referring to Devadatta, 'What of this boy who wears one piece of cloth and has taken the bait?'

At face value, that remark seems hurtful to Devadatta, but as the text says:

Although he said this, it was not to harm others but to turn them away from ill deeds.

The Buddha sees that there is a danger of pride arising in Devadatta's mind. If that is not stopped he could engage in negativity, and accumulate a lot of negative karma. So in order to save Devadatta from creating further negative karma, the Buddha said what he did in order to stop him from engaging in those negative deeds. The particular incidents of negative karma that Devadatta would have engaged in, would have created a schism, thus leading many followers of the Buddha astray and onto a false path. That would have created so much negative karma for Devadatta, as well as those he misled also creating negative karmas. Therefore, the Buddha had to say what he did in order to prevent a grave misdeed. The text is saying that even though the Buddha's words are unpleasant, they are entirely virtuous because they are said with the intention to benefit the other. Therefore even words which may sound harsh on the surface are in fact only to benefit and not to harm.

## ***1.2. Explaining how to practice bodhisattva deeds, the cause of buddhahood***

This has three subdivisions.

1.2.1. Special features of the motivation for training in these deeds

1.2.2. Merit of generating the altruistic intention

1.2.3. Actual mode of training in the deeds

### ***1.2.1. Special features of the motivation for training in these deeds***

Even by itself, the heading implies a very profound teaching that we can benefit from. This is subdivided into two.

1.2.1.1. Showing mind as the principal of the three doors

1.2.1.2. Showing how even that which is non-virtuous in others becomes supremely virtuous in bodhisattvas by the power of their attitude

#### **1.2.1.1. SHOWING MIND AS THE PRINCIPAL OF THE THREE DOORS**

Mind should be understood as paramount or foremost in all activities of the three doors.

The three doors indicate body, speech and mind, and of the three the primary one is the mind, which is the defining factor of motivation.

*Without intention, actions like going  
Are not seen to have merit and so forth.  
In all actions, therefore, the mind  
Should be understood as paramount.*

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This is because actions like coming and going are not seen to be meritorious or unmeritorious except through the power of the virtuous or non-virtuous intention motivating them.

The text is quite explicit in explaining how whatever actions we do depend entirely on our motivation. On the physical level, actions such as standing up, sitting down, walking can be virtuous or non-virtuous. Depending on the motivation one has in one's mind, the actions that one does on the physical and verbal level can be either meritorious, or non-meritorious, or even neutral, when there is no particular motivation. Let us take prostrations as an example. The teachings indicate that the physical activity of just prostrating in front of a holy object is in itself a meritorious act that we create on a physical level. Becoming a virtuous act is dependent on the motivation. With a mental state of knowing that bowing down to a holy object is meritorious, the physical action of prostration becomes meritorious or virtuous. Without an intention or motivation the actions of lying down, stretching out on the ground and standing up cannot, in themselves, be virtuous or non-virtuous.

To give another example of how physical activities can be virtuous or non-virtuous, take, for example, the very fact of deciding to come to the teaching. From the motivation of wishing to go to the teaching so as to learn and therefore to benefit others, all the activities that precede coming to the teaching, such as walking down from your room, coming in and taking a cushion can be said to be virtuous, because it is all done with a virtuous motivation to receive the teachings. On a negative side, from the moment that one decides to engage in the act of stealing, for example, all of the preceding actions prior to the actual theft, would also be said to be non-virtuous actions, because of the motivation that is involved. It is the same with all other activities.

As mentioned previously with prostration, without any proper motivation the act of just stretching oneself on the ground cannot be said to be virtuous just by itself. It only becomes virtuous in relation to the appropriate intention in the mind. This can apply to whatever actions we engage in. When we do certain virtuous actions like, for example, circumambulating a holy stupa, it is said that just the mere fact of going around becomes virtuous because of the power of the holy object. If on top of that, however, one has a good motivation then the merit that one accumulates is even greater. If we check up our motivation in whatever actions we do, then it can actually become a very appropriate way to accumulate merit. Hence in whatever actions we do we should try to be mindful of the motivation. It is the same with travelling to go on a pilgrimage and so forth.

#### **1.2.1.2. SHOWING HOW EVEN THAT WHICH IS NON-VIRTUOUS IN OTHERS BECOMES SUPREME VIRTUOUS IN BODHISATTVAS BY THE POWER OF THEIR ATTITUDE**

In this outline one must understand that 'others' refers to ordinary beings. Actions that would be considered as non-virtuous when done by an ordinary being become virtuous actions when done by bodhisattvas, who have obtained the grounds due to the power of their motivation.

As explained in other teachings, there are three non-virtues of body<sup>1</sup> plus four non-virtues of speech<sup>2</sup>. These seven non-virtues are said to be an exception for the bodhisattvas who

<sup>1</sup> Killing, stealing and sexual misconduct.

<sup>2</sup> Lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, idle gossip.

have obtained the grounds, which means the bodhisattvas who have reached the first ground and upwards. When they engage in one of these the seven physical or verbal activities, it is a means for them to accumulate merit rather than creating negative karma. This is because of the power of their motivation and intention to benefit others. So even if they were to engage in one of these seven activities it would be only for the benefit of others, therefore it would be a means for them to accumulate merit rather than negative karma.

The last three non-virtues are covetousness, harmful intention and wrong views, and there is no exceptions with them. They cannot be virtuous at any time. Therefore in relation to the motivation, the attitude in the mind, determines whether actions are virtuous or non-virtuous.

*In bodhisattvas, through their intention, 105  
All actions, virtuous and non-virtuous,  
Become perfect virtue because  
They are in control of their minds.*

As the commentary explains:

Since mind is foremost in all activities, virtuous actions such as giving or even such actions as killing, which in others would be non-virtuous, all become perfect virtue in bodhisattvas who are in control of their minds...

The main point is that there is no question that the activities that are normally considered as virtuous such as giving, generosity and so forth, are virtuous for bodhisattvas. Not only that, but even actions such as killing, which are non-virtuous in others, become perfectly virtuous for bodhisattvas.

This is because they have gained the ability at will to engage in virtue and not to engage in non-virtue.

The main point being made here is that bodhisattvas have complete control over their mind at all times. In the beginning, during the causal instance, as well as during the actual engagement of the activity, the bodhisattva is able to maintain a virtuous frame of mind. Whereas if we take ourselves as an example, then we find that even though the causal motivation may be virtuous, we may become distracted during the activity. Then delusions such as anger, or jealousy or attachment may arise during the performance of an action, for which we initially had a good motivation. Therefore even though the causal motivation is virtuous, the motivation during the activity can become non-virtuous. The reason why we are not able to maintain our motivation is because our minds are so easily influenced by delusions and thus distracted. Even though we may initially have a good motivation, it's hard to follow it up or carry it through all the way.

Bodhisattvas, on the other hand, have complete control over their mind at all times. During the causal time, as well as the actual time of performing the action, and at all times in completion, their mind remains in a virtuous frame. Therefore all becomes virtuous. Of the two motivations, the causal motivation and the motivation of the actual time of performing the action, it is said that the motivation at the actual time of performing the action is of greater importance.

According to the commentary the analogy is:

It is like the following analogy: A bodhisattva called Mahakaruna, who was a captain, used a short spear to slay a pirate captain who intended to kill a group of five hundred bodhisattvas on board.

The story is of how, in the past, a bodhisattva was travelling in a boat as its captain, along with five hundred bodhisattvas, who were manifesting as 'traders' being taken across the sea in order to trade. During the voyage, a pirate captain boarded the boat, intending to kill all five hundred on board and take their belongings. The bodhisattva captain, called Mahakaruna, knew that through his omniscience, so in order to protect the pirate captain from going into the hell realms, as well as to protect the lives of the five hundred traders on board, he killed the pirate. Out of his great compassion Mahakaruna knew that by killing the pirate captain he would be saved from the great misdeed of killing the five hundred traders, and it would also protect others. Knowing that it would be for the best and for the benefit of the pirate captain, and out of great compassion, he engaged in the deed of actually taking the life of the pirate captain. It was a skilful means that was enacted out of great compassion and without even an atom of malice. It is said that his actions became a cause to stop being reborn in cyclic existence for 500 years.

Because of these kinds of circumstances, and for the sole benefit for others, it is said that actions such as killing are permitted for bodhisattvas who are on the grounds.

### 1.2.2. Merit of generating the altruistic intention

This has two subdivisions.

1.2.2.1. Merit of generating the first ultimate altruistic intention

1.2.2.2. Specific merit of causing others to generate the altruistic intention

#### 1.2.2.1. MERIT OF GENERATING THE FIRST ULTIMATE ALTRUISTIC INTENTION

Question: When are such bodhisattvas known as 'ultimate bodhisattvas'?

Answer: After they have attained the first of the ten grounds.

*The merit of bodhisattvas with 106  
The first intention far exceeds  
That which would make all beings on earth  
Become universal monarchs.*

Ultimate bodhisattvas are those who have developed ultimate bodhicitta in their mind. Of course those who have studied the Madhyamika would know that that ultimate bodhicitta is only obtained on the first ground. The merits that are obtained are from having obtained the first ground.

As the commentary explains:

If the accumulated merit through which one becomes a universal monarch ruling the four continents is great, there is no need to mention that the merit required for all beings on earth to do so would be greater. The merit of a bodhisattva who has generated the first ultimate altruistic intention far exceeds the merit that would make all beings on earth become universal monarchs.

This is in relation to how much merit one has to accumulate just to be reborn as a universal monarch, which is a king ruling the three worlds. The merit that one being has to accumulate in order to achieve that status is said to be extremely great. But the merit that is acquired by a bodhisattva who obtains the first ground is far greater than the merit that all beings would have to accumulate in order to achieve the state of universal monarch, which gives an indication of how unimaginable it is. If you think about the

actual benefits of being a bodhisattva on the first ground, you could come to understand the extent of the merit that he or she has. The result of the merit to be reborn as a universal monarch is experienced in one lifetime. For as long as one has the karma to live as a universal monarch, then one enjoys the status and the riches and all the associated good things. But it is still limited to one lifetime as a universal monarch. Whereas the merit that a bodhisattva on the first ground accumulates is not exhausted. This is because the more one engages in virtuous activity, the more one accumulates merit. Therefore rather than exhausting merit, one continually adds to the merit on that level.

As explained in the commentary:

It is like the following analogy: A king issued an edict which made it easy to know what was permitted and not permitted. This brought the king wealth and his subjects security and so forth. Some failing to differentiate between the attributes of conventional and ultimate bodhisattvas, claim that if they are common beings, they cannot be fully qualified bodhisattvas.

Such claims and false understandings are a grave mistake because they lead to the creation of negative karmas.

#### **1.2.2.2. SPECIFIC MERIT OF CAUSING OTHERS TO GENERATE THE ALTRUISTIC INTENTION**

This section further explains how, there is not only great merit in developing the altruistic intention within oneself, but if one were to serve as the cause for others to develop that intention, a great amount of merit would be accumulated.

Question: How much merit is there in inspiring others to develop the altruistic intention of the Great Vehicle?

Answer:

*Someone may build a precious Reliquary, as high as the world; It is said training others to generate The altruistic intention is more excellent.* 107

As the commentary explains:

It is said that the merit of one who builds a reliquary for the Buddha's relics, as vast as the three thousand great thousand world systems and as high as the world "Beneath None," made of the seven precious substances such as gold and lapis lazuli and adorned with every kind of ornament is surpassed...

What is being explained here is that generally, erecting a reliquary, or stupa, which contains the relics of the Buddha, is incredibly meritorious. The analogy that is given here is of one person erecting a stupa reaching to the highest in the three worlds. From the lowest world where it begins, it is as vast as the whole world spreading out. Not only is it of such enormous size, but it is also adorned with all the precious jewels and many other offerings. The merit that is accumulated from that offering is inconceivably great. However,

...because it is more excellent, the merit of one who trains others to develop the altruistic intentions is far greater.

Therefore, as explained here, the merit that one accumulates from teaching and guiding others in the Mahayana path, and leading them to develop the altruistic intention is far greater than the merit that one accumulates from building a huge and beautifully adorned stupa.

The practical analogy given here is that if a man were to die and had two good friends, and if one were to look after the body of the deceased person, giving it proper funeral rites, and the other friend takes on the responsibility of looking after the deceased's wife and children and so forth, then the one who takes the responsibility of caring for the deceased's wife and children will naturally have far greater merit than just having taken care of the deceased person's body. That is quite obvious, because by looking after the surviving family he is helping the lineage to go on. So in that way it is seen to be a greater deed.

Likewise erecting a monument, and enshrining the relics of the Buddha, and making offerings is definitely a great meritorious deed, but that in itself will not immediately benefit other sentient beings to a great extent, nor does it help to keep up the lineage of the Buddha's teachings. Whereas the activity of guiding and teaching others, and inspiring them to develop the altruistic intention, is a practical means to keep up the lineage of the Buddha's teachings, prolonging them so they can benefit many other beings in the future. In that way we can see the extent of the benefit.

The significance and unimaginable benefit of guiding and teaching others with a bodhicitta intention, especially those who have already developed bodhicitta in their mind, is said to be unimaginably great. Bodhisattvas serve as a representative of the buddhas who have come in the past, and also the buddhas who have come to this world in our era, by helping the disciples who have not yet been liberated by the present buddhas to proceed on to the path to liberation and enlightenment. Therefore in all the past, present and future activities of the Buddha, the bodhisattva or anyone who gives teachings that inspire the development of bodhicitta in others, really becomes the greatest means to uphold the virtuous activities in the doctrine of the past, present and future buddhas, and is helping the teachings to remain for many eons. In this way we can see that that is of really incredible and great benefit. It is also good for us to contemplate in this way, thinking about the great benefits.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett  
Edit 2 by Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe  
Edited Version*

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## Study Group – Aryadeva’s 400 Verses

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*Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga*

*Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe*

7 November 2006

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As usual we will set our motivation for receiving the teachings, such as, ‘In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. So for that purpose I will listen to the teachings and put them into practice as best as I can’.

### 1.2.3. Actual mode of training in the deeds

This has five sub-divisions.

1.2.3.1. Physical and verbal conduct in acting for others' welfare

1.2.3.2. Specific attitude

The first and second sub-divisions include how to benefit others through one’s body, speech and mind.

1.2.3.3. Faults of deficient compassion

1.2.3.4. Faults of not appreciating bodhisattvas and suitability of cultivating appreciation

1.2.3.5. Why they can complete their deeds

#### 1.2.3.1. PHYSICAL AND VERBAL CONDUCT IN ACTING FOR OTHERS' WELFARE

This refers to the way bodhisattvas engage in benefiting others through both their physical actions and their speech.

Question: How do bodhisattvas act to benefit sentient beings?

Answer: They act according to those beings’ mental dispositions.

*A spiritual guide who wishes to help* 108  
*Must be attentive toward students.*  
*They are called students because*  
*Of not knowing what will benefit.*

This verse explains how a spiritual guide (meaning a teacher or a lama) will benefit other sentient beings. In the beginning the manner of helping their students is by being generous with material needs, as well as being kind in their speech, saying such things as, ‘How are you doing? Is everything going well?’. By checking in such a way the lama is serving the student physically by giving material needs, as well as by verbally asking to make sure that they are okay and so forth.

Normally, the six perfections combined with the four means for gathering students constitute the activities of a bodhisattva that benefit sentient beings. The first two means of gathering students, being generous and uttering kind words to other sentient beings, are specifically mentioned here.<sup>1</sup> Initially, kind speech is a means to gather students. It is a specific kind of speech in accordance with worldly concerns, which is checking up

on the students’ welfare and so forth. Along with the worldly aspect, there is also teaching Dharma with kind words. Here, however, uttering kind words refers to the general well being, from the worldly point of view.

A doubt is raised here concerning why the lama is serving the students rather than the other way around. The doubt asks: ‘Is that appropriate? Isn’t it the case that the students should serve the lama?’ What is explained here is that the students don’t initially have the wisdom or intelligence to know that serving the lama is meritorious and beneficial for themselves. As the commentary mentions:

They are called students because they do not know what actions are of benefit and need someone else’s advice.

What is being addressed here is the fact that the students do not initially have the wisdom to know what actions are to be adopted or what negativities should be abandoned. Therefore they are called students because they don’t have that knowledge, and need advice from a teacher.

The explanation given here is in accordance with how a lama or teacher subdues a student. First, to draw the student near, the lama is generous. Then through kind words the teacher allows the student to develop more trust and faith in the teacher. Once faith is developed, then the teacher can guide them with the teachings and lead them into the actual practice of the teachings. The analogy given in the commentary is that it is just like a wild elephant that is initially subdued with sweets and edible things. Once the elephant comes near and eats what is offered, they use the rope to tie the elephant and then a hook to tame it. That is the means of subduing a wild elephant.

The main points that are made here are good for us to contemplate and remember: the bodhisattva’s activities in benefiting others consist mainly of showing good physical conduct, being kind to others and also using kind words.

### 1.2.3.2. SPECIFIC ATTITUDE

This is sub-divided into five headings:

1.2.3.2.1. Analogy showing one must be compassionate towards a recalcitrant person

1.2.3.2.2. Stages of guiding trainees

1.2.3.2.3. Being particularly compassionate towards those with very strong disturbing emotions

1.2.3.2.4. How to act for others’ welfare according to their capacities and inclinations

1.2.3.2.5. The effect of strongly developed compassion

#### 1.2.3.2.1. ANALOGY SHOWING ONE MUST BE COMPASSIONATE TOWARDS A RECALCITRANT PERSON

Even though the heading refers to a person, it basically means a disciple.

Even if students are recalcitrant, one must endeavour to overcome their disturbing emotions.

I don’t know whether the English word recalcitrant has the same connotation as the Tibetan word *ngong me kor*, which has the connotation of not seeing one’s own faults.

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<sup>1</sup> The other two are: Leading others to practise the Dharma, and Practising what you teach to others.

If someone does not see their own misbehaviours as faulty and thinks that they are doing fine, then when they are told to change, they may become a bit rebellious about that. The meaning will be discussed later, but the main point relates to how, without a gesture of kindness from the lama, the student may become rebellious towards the lama at certain times. In that case the lama is patient and does not give up, but is persistent in taking care of the students.

*Just as a physician is not upset with  
Someone who rages while possessed by a demon,  
Subduers see disturbing emotions as  
The enemy, not the person who has them.* 109

The analogy refers to a possessed patient who rages at his doctor. Although the patient's condition is translated as being 'possessed', the connotation of the original Tibetan word is also 'being unstable in the mind'. We do definitely see examples of patients who have either a sickness that affects the stability of their mind, or who could be actually possessed. In either case, they may be rebellious and not appreciate help from a doctor. They may even be physically violent towards the doctor. There are definitely cases where we can see that. A physician with a kind heart would understand the situation, and not be upset with the patient. Rather they would try to help further. Of course if the physician didn't have kindness in their heart and was impatient, they might well become upset. A physician with a kind heart, who understands the sickness and the situation of the patient, does not become upset with the patient, however, but looks into how to help them.

The meaning of the analogy is:

Similarly, subduers see that because they make sentient beings unruly, the disturbing emotions in a trainee's mindstream are at fault and not the person who has them.

Here, subduers, refers to the ultimate Subducer, Buddha Shakyamuni and all enlightened beings, as well as the bodhisattvas. When the buddhas and bodhisattvas benefit sentient beings of a wicked nature who have unruly minds, they see the delusions as being at fault. They have a complete understanding that it is due to delusions that the sentient beings act in that way, and that serves as a means for even more kindness and more compassion for sentient beings to arise, and they extend their help accordingly. Also, because of their skilful means, buddhas and bodhisattvas are able to extend their help to beings who are unruly, or whose minds are disturbed, or who have strong delusions. Even though the sentient beings may not immediately appreciate their help, buddhas and bodhisattvas nevertheless extend their help with their skilful means. That is how the buddhas and bodhisattvas benefit sentient beings. As the commentary adds:

Those who wish to take care of trainees must learn to act like this.

We can definitely see how, even to this day, lamas benefit their students in very skilful ways, and through this the students naturally begin to develop a strong faith. There

are students who are really amazed about the extent of the lama's kindness and skilful ways of guiding and teaching. When the students have benefited in that way, then slowly and gradually they develop faith. It is also very important for us to think along these lines and try to put this advice into practice.

What we can take from this advice is to try and develop patience with others who seem to have very strong negative minds. We can develop patience by seeing that in reality it is the delusions within the other person's mind that cause the person to act in that way, rather than the person's intrinsic nature. If we can think along those lines and remind ourselves of this, then we can develop patience and not retaliate. Teachers and lamas, of course, use skilful means to benefit others in this way.

The great master Shantideva mentions in his work *Bodhicharyavatara* that it is a kind physician who does not become upset by seeing a patient affected by a disease that has altered their mind. Rather than becoming upset with the patient they will seek a means to cure the patient. Similarly, rather than becoming upset buddhas and bodhisattvas have great compassion, and they endeavour to help to cure us of our delusions, because they see delusions as the cause of problems and not our own nature.

#### 1.2.3.2.2. STAGES OF GUIDING TRAINEES

This refers to the ways and means of guiding disciples.

*That for which someone has  
Liking should first be assessed.  
Those who are disinclined will not  
Be vessels for the excellent teaching.* 110

This verse explains how a spiritual guide should teach their students in a gradual way.

A spiritual guide teaching students should discuss whatever practice, such as giving, appeals to a particular trainee. Having first taught this properly, an assessment should be made. One should only discuss the profound later...

If the profound teachings were given first, then the students' minds are not yet suitable to receive them. The mind is very easily distracted, therefore the mind should be slowly trained so that it becomes a suitable vessel to receive the profound teachings later on.

Those whose minds are disinclined because of being deterred by discussion of the profound at the outset will not be receptive vessels for the ultimate teaching. The miserly dislike talk of generosity.

This is a really vivid example of how not to force others to do things for which they are not ready. If someone is very miserly, then persisting with talking about how someone who is very miserly has to be generous would be hard for them to accept. However, if you talk about generosity as being a cause for wealth to someone who has a strong inclination of wanting to have wealth, then that is a suitable approach.

Similarly if you initially tell someone who is not able to maintain their ethics, 'You must keep your ethics. You must be moral', then it is very hard for them to accept or

even hear that. However if you tell someone who has an inclination to obtain a good rebirth in the next lifetime, that the cause to obtain such a rebirth, would be to observe ethics, then that would be something which would be accepted.

It is similar if you say, 'You should be patient' to someone who gets very upset and angry easily. It is very hard for them to accept that. However if you know that someone likes to have good features and look beautiful, and you say, 'If you practice patience you could be very beautiful' that sounds much nicer, and much more acceptable.

Actually, this is very sound advice that we should keep in our mind, particularly those who teach and guide others. It is actually very important advice. What is being indicated here is that just because something is right in the teachings, that doesn't necessarily mean that we have to initially mention it all explicitly. It seems that we have to find tactful means to convey the message to others.

#### **1.2.3.2.3. BEING PARTICULARLY COMPASSIONATE TOWARDS THOSE WITH VERY STRONG DISTURBING EMOTIONS**

A bodhisattva is particularly compassionate to one who, despite having been stopped from doing wrong a hundred times, again and again engages in improper actions.

*Just as a mother is especially  
Anxious about a sick child,  
Bodhisattvas are especially  
Compassionate toward the unwise* 111

We don't have to really look far for examples; we can use ourselves as examples for this! The main point being made here is with respect to the manner in which a bodhisattva helps those who have been told over and over again how they should avoid doing certain negative things that are wrong, and how to adopt positive actions. As mentioned here, a bodhisattva has more compassion for such beings.

The analogy used here is of the kindness and compassion a mother has for her sick child. For example, in general if she has five children, her compassion and love for all is equal. However if there is one with a particular illness, then she would naturally have more concern and compassion for that sick child.

As the commentary reads:

Similarly, bodhisattvas are especially compassionate toward the unwise.

What is being explained here is that the bodhisattva's compassion is of a stronger degree for those who are unwise. Here, 'unwise' refers to those students or disciples who are naturally inclined to engage in negativities because of their strong delusions and who are not naturally able to engage in virtue. The bodhisattva's compassion for them is much stronger, because they see the grave state of suffering that such people inflict upon themselves.

An analogy is:

A Candala woman greatly feared that the king would put her sixth son to death because of his wrong deeds.

This analogy shows how a mother of six children had equal compassion for all, but had very strong concerns for the sixth one who, having done wrong deeds, was going to be sentenced by the king. As he was likely to be sentenced to death, the mother had incredible concern for this child. Shantideva explained of how a bodhisattva has much more compassion for those who do wrong deeds, compared to those who are virtuous. The explanations given in the commentary also explain that vividly.

#### **1.2.3.2.4. HOW TO ACT FOR OTHERS' WELFARE ACCORDING TO THEIR CAPACITIES AND INCLINATIONS**

This refers to the fact that generally, students are categorised into three different levels or capacities. They are the very dull, the mediocre and the very intelligent, and this sub-heading describes how to benefit each according to their capacities. This explanation is actually practised in the monasteries. When the teachers are giving explanations of a text to the students, they always keep in mind that monks are students who are of these three capacities. Those who are quite dull may not be able to understand the profound meanings of the explanations of the text, and there are those who are of mediocre capacity and the very intelligent. So the teacher will then teach in such a way that all levels of students will be able to get something from the teaching, and when the teaching is over they will have something to keep in their mind. This is actually very beneficial and useful advice that we should remember.

When we do the Mandala Offering the last verse says 'Please release a rain of vast and profound Dharma, precisely in accordance with the needs of those to be trained'. Of course the teacher then has to act in accordance with the request to teach according to the disposition of the students.

Actually there is a very profound meaning here, showing that a bodhisattva's deeds in helping sentient beings do not discriminate between beings. It is not as though the bodhisattva only wants to help those who have an intelligent mind and who are thus able to follow a high level of teaching. That is not the connotation here. Rather the bodhisattvas help beings of all capacities – from the intelligent to the dull. A bodhisattva will help even a dull sentient being in accordance with whatever they can handle.

As teachers that is something that we need to understand and practise. It is not as though we put aside students saying: 'These are dull students. We don't want to teach them now, I only want to teach the intelligent students'. We should not discriminate in that way.

*They become students of some  
And become teachers of others,  
Through skilful means and knowledge  
Giving understanding to those who do not  
understand.* 112

As the commentary explains:

Since people's dispositions, interests and capacities differ, when bodhisattvas act for their good, they teach some what is of benefit after first becoming their students.



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This explicitly explains how bodhisattvas, through their skilful means, benefit sentient beings in many and varied ways. In some situations, they may even become disciples of others and in other cases act as teachers and guides. Manifesting as disciples of certain teachers would be a means to specifically benefit beings who have the knowledge and the ability to teach, but who may be having a problem with their pride. So in order to overcome their pride, the bodhisattvas would manifest as disciples and then slowly guide the teacher to overcome their pride.

This shows the very skilful ways and means that a bodhisattva uses to help some beings. If the bodhisattva just told the teacher, 'You need to work with your pride, so I will teach you, because you need to learn something from me', then because of their pride the teacher would never consider coming and listening to the bodhisattva. Therefore a bodhisattva's only means of helping them is to manifest as their disciple and then slowly begin to benefit the teacher, who becomes more acquainted with the 'disciple', and then slowly begins to see their qualities. As he sees these qualities, the teacher would slowly begin to notice that the 'disciple' has even more qualities than themselves. Then they will naturally begin to become more subdued, and will then maybe begin to listen and learn from the bodhisattva.

If the bodhisattva were to manifest initially as just another teacher, they would not have been able to subdue and help the teacher with the problem. This shows how bodhisattvas use skilful means in order to subdue other beings. Even if it takes time that will not discourage the bodhisattva. Serving and acting as a disciple will slowly, slowly enrich the teacher and help them to overcome their delusion of pride. As mentioned earlier, if the bodhisattva were to initially announce to them that the teacher has to learn something from them, the teacher would not have listened. This is how a bodhisattva is able to subdue through their skilful means. As the commentary mentions:

...when bodhisattvas act for their good, they teach some what is of benefit after first becoming their students.

The explanation in the commentary follows exactly the first two lines of the root verse itself. Becoming students of some, and teachers of others means that:

They act as spiritual guides to those who feel inferior and teach them by pointing out their special attributes. Through all kinds of skilful means and knowledge in training, they make sentient beings who do not understand the suchness of phenomena understand it.

The analogy which is given to explain that meaning is:

It is like the following analogy: A good physician will prescribe different diets to his patients, such as rich food or bland food.

This is of course a very vivid example. Depending on the sickness or the disturbed element that the patient has, the doctor may prescribe different diets at different times. When for example, the person is suffering from a disease

that contribute to a lot of stress and they are very weak in their body, then the doctor would prescribe rich foods, which would be grounding and nourishing and give them strength. Nowadays, for example, we hear a lot about high cholesterol, and if this is the case, the doctor will prescribe foods that have less fat. We talk about using diet food that is either rich in some kinds of things, such as minerals and proteins and so forth, or diet food that is low in fats and so forth. That is what is prescribed nowadays, and in ancient times doctors had similar techniques.

Therefore what is being described in this analogy is how the doctor may prescribe different kinds of foods for the same patient. That is not to punish or in any way torture the patient, but rather to benefit them. Depending on their sickness, they prescribe either a rich diet or a bland diet. Even if it is the same patient, the different advice is appropriate at different times. Likewise bodhisattvas act for other sentient beings, in dependence on their mental capacity and so forth.

More explicitly, the meaning of benefiting other sentient beings is specifically in relation to teaching the profound view, which is emptiness. Initially, when the being is not ready, they do not have the capacity to comprehend the teachings on emptiness, so it is not beneficial to teach that. However when their mind has ripened, then the teachings on emptiness become appropriate and can be taught. That is how a bodhisattva will guide sentient beings, just like a doctor prescribes the different kinds of diets at different times.

We don't have too much left in the fifth chapter, so we might finish it soon.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett  
Edit 2 by Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe  
Edited Version*

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## Study Group – Aryadeva’s 400 Verses

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*Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga*

*Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe*

14 November 2006

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As usual we will sit in an upright and comfortable position and generate a positive motivation, such as, ‘In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. So for that purpose I will listen to the teachings and put them into practice as best as I can’.

### 1.2.3. Actual mode of training in the deeds (cont.)

#### 1.2.3.2. SPECIFIC ATTITUDE

##### 1.2.3.2.5. THE EFFECT OF STRONGLY DEVELOPED COMPASSION

This is sub-divided into two:

1.2.3.2.5.1. When the strength of compassion is thoroughly developed, those who cannot be trained are rare

1.2.3.2.5.2. Faults of not giving encouragement for others' benefit

#### 1.2.3.2.5.1. When the strength of compassion is thoroughly developed, those who cannot be trained are rare

As the heading suggests, this section explains that when compassion has developed to a certain point then benefiting others is definitely possible, and it is only on very rare occasions that there is no benefit. This is explained with an analogy.

*Just as for an experienced physician* 113  
*A sickness that cannot be cured is rare,*  
*Once bodhisattvas have found their strength,*  
*Those they cannot train are extremely few.*

As the commentary reads:

A bodhisattva with a well-developed capacity for maturing sentient beings is like an experienced physician who only rarely finds a disease incurable and beyond treatment.

We can understand the point of this section very clearly through the analogy of a physician who is very well trained and skilled in his practice. Not only is it very rare for him not to cure a patient, but it is also very rare for the physician to give up on the patient. Rather he will look after the patient and use every means to try to cure them. Similarly, a bodhisattva with a well-developed capacity for compassion has the ability to nurture sentient beings under their care and benefit them.

Similarly, one should understand that when bodhisattvas who are able to discern superior and inferior aptitudes and are skilled in the four ways of gathering students have found their strength, those they cannot train are extremely few.

What is being related here is that, because of the bodhisattva’s capacities, such as knowing the mental disposition of the disciples, there are very few beings that they cannot train. As mentioned here, bodhisattvas are

also skilled in the four ways of gathering students, which are, as I mentioned before: being generous; uttering kind words; leading others to practise the Dharma; and practising what one teaches. When a bodhisattva is skilled in these four means then that definitely becomes the means to not only gather students, but also to be able to help and guide them. As the commentary mentions, with all these capacities and qualities, it is very rare that a bodhisattva will not be able to benefit their students.

It is good to remember that this description of the capacities and qualities of a bodhisattva refers to a bodhisattva who is still a state of training. If in the training stage one obtains such immense qualities, then by that measure one can gain an inkling of just how vast the qualities of a fully enlightened being are. Thus a very strong faith in the Buddha develops. With normal education we can see how the earlier stages of study are well structured. Knowing this we can predict the results that will be obtained by an intelligent student who is able to study in that way. The qualities that they will obtain can definitely be seen just from the structure of their studies. It is the same with seeing the qualities of a bodhisattva.

A further analogy is given to explain how knowing the mental disposition and capacity of the disciples can serve as a means to benefit the disciples.

It is like the following analogy: While all the other physicians did not realise it, the Master Nagarjuna recognised that desire for a woman had caused the mental illness of a king’s son and was able to pacify it.

Normal physicians who were looking for a physical cause for the son’s illness were not able to find what was causing the illness. But Nagarjuna, with his capacity for clairvoyance, was able to actually see what was really causing the king’s son’s illness. Even though the symptoms were physical, the cause was actually mental - a very strong desire for a woman. Having determined that, a cure was then developed.

What this analogy is explaining is that ultimately we can only really benefit others through reading their mind, i.e. through clairvoyance. Then we are able to really help to soothe the mental as well as physical sufferings. Clairvoyance is the way bodhisattvas benefit sentient beings. An analogy from the *Lamp on the Path* by Atisha is that just as a bird needs two wings to soar into the sky, those who are guiding and helping other sentient beings in the Dharma must have clairvoyance to be able to know their mind, and be able to teach according to the students’ capacity. As it has been explained, this is really essential.

#### 1.2.3.2.5.2. Faults of not giving encouragement for others' benefit

This subheading relates to a question as to whether it would be a fault if, having seen that others will fall into lower realms, a bodhisattva doesn’t act to teach them and guide them away from this fate. It may seem like a form of laziness, but for a bodhisattva it is much more than that.

*If some within a bodhisattva's sphere,  
Lacking encouragement, go  
To bad rebirths, that one will be  
Criticised by others with intelligence.*

114

As the commentary explains:

If a bodhisattva possessing the special ability to train sentient beings encourages trainees within his or her sphere of influence, they will not go to bad transmigrations. If some, lacking encouragement, go to bad rebirths, the promise to help all sentient beings will have been impaired.

As explained here, the main query is whether it would be faulty if a bodhisattva, who has the ability to teach and see the state of mind of others, sees that some will be reborn in bad rebirths because of their lack of Dharma practice, but doesn't then engage in teaching them. If the bodhisattva did not act to help other beings by teaching them, then the fault is that the promise to help all sentient beings would have been impaired. Therefore that bodhisattva would be criticised by others with intelligence. It is definitely a fault in a bodhisattva if he does not engage in helping sentient beings.

Thus one should encourage people by teaching them appropriate practices. It is like the following analogy: A leader who does not assist those in his care will be criticised.

It is very clear that a person would be criticised by others if they take on the responsibility of leading of others, but do not then extend their care to anyone in that circle who is facing problems, or difficulties such as illness.

### 1.2.3.3. FAULTS OF DEFICIENT COMPASSION

If there is a lack of compassion then that would be a fault.

*How can one unwilling to say  
That compassion for the oppressed is good,  
Later out of compassion  
Give to the protectorless?*

115

The main points being made here are that compassion is extremely important, and that compassion must always be present. It is explained in the teachings that compassion is extremely important in the **beginning**, because it is the basis for the development of bodhicitta in the mind. It is due to compassion for other sentient beings that one aspires to achieve enlightenment. That is why, compassion is extremely important at the very beginning, because it serves as the very reason for aiming to achieve enlightenment.

In the **middle** of one's practice in the Dharma, compassion is also important. Even after having developed bodhicitta, it is possible that one can become discouraged, because the number of sentient beings is as limitless as space. Furthermore these limitless numbers of sentient beings are of different mental capacities and dispositions, including some who are unruly, quite tough and difficult to tame. Faced with this it would be very easy to give up one's intention to achieve enlightenment, if one lacked compassion. Therefore towards the middle, compassion is important.

At the **end**, even after having achieved the goal of enlightenment, one will engage in benefiting the numberless sentient beings out of compassion. That is how it is explained that compassion is extremely important in the beginning, the middle and the end.

The commentary states:

If out of jealousy a bodhisattva who is a beginner is unwilling to admit that it is good to act compassionately toward other sentient beings who are oppressed by suffering and its causes...

Basically the specific meaning here is that it is a fault if through lack of compassion, and out of jealousy, one were not to engage in the act of benefiting others. A bodhisattva who is lax in developing compassion toward sentient beings from the beginning will not be able to give them protection and so forth later on. The main point being made here is that if a bodhisattva does not train well in compassion from the very beginning, then later on they will not be able to sustain practices such as being generous to others and serving them in various different ways, not just once or twice, but numberless times over a very long period of time. Bodhisattva have to train in benefiting other sentient beings for many aeons, so if there is any lack of compassion from the very beginning, then their practice of benefiting others could not be sustained. Therefore it is extremely important to develop strong great compassion from the very outset and to maintain that compassion.

We can relate the faults of not having a sustained concern or compassion for others to ourselves. In our regular activities, we can see that even though initially we may have a good intention to help someone else, after some time we find that it starts to become too demanding and too difficult. What is really happening is that our compassion and concern is waning. We are not able to maintain that concern for the other, and so it seems to become more and more difficult to help and benefit them. Thus we become discouraged. We may back out from initial involvement or we may slowly back out and not continue. That is a sign of our waning compassion. Compassion is even more important for bodhisattvas, who have made promises to benefit other sentient beings, to maintain their ability to help others and not give up. Thinking along those lines it is necessary for us to make an attempt to slowly develop our compassion as best as we can.

Because compassion is so extremely important for practice, there are many techniques for developing compassion, such as *tong len* - the giving and taking practice. These are practices that are tailored to train our mind in developing compassion. Once we train our mind well, then the compassion can become more and more firm and stable, and when it is developed, genuine compassion can be maintained.

The lack of compassion is further explained with the analogy that:

It is like stealing a blind man's things or killing for a pair of boots.

What is being explained here is that someone who lacks compassion would steal a blind man's things for very trivial reasons. Anyone in their right mind would consider such an act as very bad and very cruel. Stealing the possessions of a blind person, of all people, is considered to be particularly cruel. Likewise, killing someone for their shoes is also considered as an extremely grave misdeed. Such misdeeds prevail because of a lack of compassion, and we can see how the lack of compassion can lead to such grave misdeeds. Furthermore with a lack of compassion one cannot benefit others fully. Therefore it is important for us to really recognise from the very beginning how compassion is extremely important, and thus train in developing compassion in our mind as much as we can.

These analogies are quite a vivid representations of the faults of the lack of compassion. If a blind person had a meagre meal then snatching away their food would be a shameless act, because the blind person cannot see and therefore cannot prevent it. Stealing from them really shows the extreme of lacking compassion. Likewise with the extreme example of killing someone for their shoes: that is really something that can definitely happen because of a lack of compassion.

#### **1.2.3.4. FAULTS OF NOT APPRECIATING BODHISATTVAS AND SUITABILITY OF CULTIVATING APPRECIATION**

##### 1.2.3.4.1. Faults of not appreciating bodhisattvas

##### 1.2.3.4.2. Suitability of cultivating appreciation

These sub-divisions can also be understood as being similar to the faults of not relying properly on a guru. As we know from the *Lam Rim* there is a difference between the disadvantages of not relying on a guru and the faults of not properly relying on a guru. The fault of not relying properly on the guru comes from not appreciating the qualities of the guru. This lack of appreciation of the qualities of the guru then leads onto acquiring the faults of not properly relying on the spiritual guru. That is how the connection comes.

##### **1.2.3.4.1. FAULTS OF NOT APPRECIATING BODHISATTVAS**

Question: What are the faults of hating a bodhisattva who is governed by compassion?

Answer:

*When those [beings] suffer loss* 116  
*Who are indifferent toward*  
*One who stays in the world to help*  
*transmigrators,*  
*What doubt about those who are hostile?*

A bodhisattva who is governed by compassion has developed their compassion to the point where their whole being is completely imbued with it; everything that they do is influenced by that compassion. The worldly analogy that we use is that it is like someone who is completely obsessed with attachment; their whole being is imbued with that attachment and whatever they do is influenced by it. A bodhisattva is so completely imbued and influenced by compassion that they have no choice but to help other sentient beings.

It is a great loss for those who, through indifference, do not appreciate and render service to one who is

motivated by the wish for all sentient beings without exception to attain the final state of nirvana in which the aggregates do not remain...

The main point being explained here is that while a bodhisattva's goal is to obtain the ultimate state of nirvana, all their actions are to benefit other beings. It would be a fault if one were to have an attitude of indifference, which means not making any effort to serve, pay respect and so forth, to a bodhisattva. One is letting oneself down by not paying respect and so forth. If indifference towards a bodhisattva is a fault, then how much greater is the fault of intentionally developing negative attitudes of hatred and so forth towards the bodhisattva. It would be a great misdeed.

##### **1.2.3.4.2. Suitability of cultivating appreciation**

This heading refers to the activities of a bodhisattva. As mentioned previously, a bodhisattva will engage in great deeds over many aeons to benefit other sentient beings. Having realised that, then it is appropriate to appreciate the deeds that are difficult to perform, and the limitless qualities of the bodhisattvas.

This section therefore has two sub-headings:

##### 1.2.3.4.2.1. Suitability of appreciating deeds difficult to perform

##### 1.2.3.4.2.2. Considering their limitless qualities, one should appreciate them

##### **1.2.3.4.1.1. Suitability of appreciating deeds difficult to perform**

It is proper to rid oneself of animosity toward bodhisattvas and develop strong appreciation for them, since they do what is most difficult.

*One who to all lives has the five* 117  
*Super-knowledges [appears] as inferior*  
*With a nature like the inferior -*  
*This is extremely hard to do.*

As explained in the commentary:

A bodhisattva who has attained forbearance as well as the five kinds of super-knowledge [which is another translation of the five kinds of clairvoyance] which will not decline throughout all future lives...

The five kinds of clairvoyance are:

1. The clairvoyance of the gods' eyes;
2. The clairvoyance of miraculous feats;
3. The clairvoyance of hearing of the gods;
4. The clairvoyance of knowing other peoples' minds;
5. The clairvoyance of remembering past events, of past lives and so forth.

One that may sound a little out of place is the clairvoyance of miraculous feats. This is not indicating a clairvoyance which in itself is a miraculous feat. Rather, what is to be understood is that as a result of a particular kind of clairvoyance, one gains an ability to perform miraculous feats.

A bodhisattva who has obtained the forbearance of Dharma has obtained on a particular level on the path, as well as the five kinds of clairvoyance. Compared to an

ordinary being, such a bodhisattva has unimaginable abilities that they use to benefit other sentient beings. The capacities they have are superior compared with those of ordinary beings.

A bodhisattva with such qualities as having obtained the forbearance of Dharma as well as the five kinds of clairvoyance has the attributes to attain further higher levels. However, a bodhisattva uses those abilities and qualities as a means to benefit sentient beings. He or she may even take a lower rebirth such as dogs or other animals in order to benefit the beings in that realm. We can understand how the bodhisattva is almost making a sacrifice for the sake of others. If we had qualities that we could use to obtain even higher qualities, then we would put all our time and energy into obtaining those higher qualities. However a bodhisattva, out of their great compassion, uses the qualities that they have obtained for the service of other sentient beings, even taking a lowly rebirth such as an animal in order to be able to help the beings in that realm. There are many stories relating to how bodhisattvas have helped other beings in lower rebirths in that way. This is how the bodhisattvas' great activities are to be understood.

The analogy is:

It is like the bodhisattva who saw that many dogs would be harmed in the future and took rebirth as a dog to prevent it.

This is how one can understand the great limitless activities that a bodhisattva engages in so as to benefit other sentient beings. As explained here in the commentary, in order to benefit other sentient beings a bodhisattva even takes rebirth as a dog.

#### **1.2.3.4.1.2. Considering their limitless qualities, one should appreciate them**

One should develop faith in bodhisattvas by considering their boundless qualities.

*The Tathagata said that the merit  
Gathered constantly through skilful means  
For a very long time is immeasurable  
Even for the omniscient.* 118

As the commentary explains:

Through their ability effortlessly to accomplish difficult feats for sentient beings, the merit created constantly by their three doors and accumulated over an extremely long period of countless aeons is as limitless as space.

The three doors are understood as the doors of body, speech and mind. Through their body, speech and mind the activities and the efforts in which the bodhisattvas engage are as limitless as space. What is being explained here are the boundless qualities of a bodhisattva. As the text explains, the bodhisattvas engage to benefit a limitless number of sentient beings, with a limitless amount of knowledge, qualities and abilities, for a limitless period of time.

That being the case, even an omniscient mind is not able to fathom the qualities of the bodhisattvas deeds. As the text says:

It is said to be immeasurable even for the omniscient.

What is to be understood is that this phrase is a means of illustrating the extent of the qualities of a bodhisattva. Of course, we do not take it literally, as there is nothing that an omniscient mind does not know. It is because it knows all existence that it is omniscient! However Buddha himself has mentioned it in the sutras as a means of showing the qualities of a bodhisattva.

It would be appropriate to contemplate this, in order to further generate and develop our faith, and an appreciation of the qualities of the enlightened beings and bodhisattvas. When enlightened beings engage in the practices as a bodhisattva, they engage in deeds to benefit sentient beings, even to the extent of taking a lowly rebirth. If they were to take a very grand, high manifestation or remain in their natural manifested state, then it would not be possible for ordinary beings like ourselves to relate to them. Therefore a bodhisattva appears in an ordinary guise in order to lead us and guide us and teach us the Dharma. The kindness and the skilful means and the great abilities of a bodhisattva are something that we can relate to. So in that way, contemplating the limitless deeds, as well as the limitless ways and manners in which they benefit sentient beings, will develop our faith.

We should also note that, as the teachings mention, it is hard to detect where a bodhisattva could be. Therefore it is very important that we be careful about that. As Gyalsab Rinpoche has mentioned in one of his works, the obscurity of a bodhisattva is similar to a fire-pit that is covered up by earth. On the surface, it may look like normal ground, but if one were to fall into the pit or put one's hand into it, one would definitely be burnt. It is explained that we are not able to notice where bodhisattvas are. So if we are not careful, we could engage in great misdeeds in relation to bodhisattvas. That could mean that there could also be bodhisattvas amongst us here, so we must be careful!

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright  
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Edited Version*

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## Study Group – Aryadeva's 400 Verses

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*Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga*

*Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe*

21 November 2006

As usual we can sit in an upright and comfortable position, and generate a good motivation for receiving the teachings, such as, 'In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. So for that purpose I will listen to the Dharma and put it into practice as best as I can.'

### 1.2.3. Actual mode of training in the deeds (cont.)

#### 1.2.3.5. WHY THE BODHISATTVAS CAN COMPLETE THEIR DEEDS

This is subdivided into five:

1.2.3.5.1. Why they take special delight in generosity

1.2.3.5.2. Criticism of inferior generosity

1.2.3.5.3. Why they can accomplish all deeds

1.2.3.5.4. Why they do not strive just for their own happiness

1.2.3.5.5. Why they can take special physical forms or manifestations

#### 1.2.3.5.1. WHY THEY TAKE SPECIAL DELIGHT IN GENEROSITY

This heading corresponds to the explanation of other Madhyamika texts, which say that the bliss experienced by a bodhisattva from merely hearing someone asking for something, is much greater than the bliss experienced by an arhat who has reached non-abiding Nirvana.

Assertion: The life stories of the Buddha and so forth say that talk of ethical conduct does not interest bodhisattvas to the same extent as talk of giving.

*The word 'giving' indicates  
Death, practice and other existences.  
That is why the word 'giving' always  
Is of interest to bodhisattvas* 119

The assertion arises from the general explanation that bodhisattvas are the basis of many qualities. That being so, why is there particular reference to bodhisattvas feeling greater joy in the act of generosity.

The Sanskrit word for giving is *dana*. The literal meaning of the word can also have different meanings according to the context.

1. The etymology of the root word *dana* can be used to indicate dying or death, and thus it indicates impermanence. So one meaning of the word is death and impermanence.

2. Another meaning that it indicates is the practice of what we call generosity, and within the three types of generosity, it can include all of the six perfections as well.

The three types of generosity are:

- the generosity of giving material needs
- the generosity of giving of protection

- the generosity of teaching the Dharma.

The manner of how the three divisions of generosity include the practice of the six perfections can be understood as follows:

- The first of the six perfections, which is generosity, is included in the generosity of material wealth.
- The perfections of moral ethics and patience are included in the generosity of giving protection.
- The perfections of concentration and wisdom are included in the generosity of Dharma.
- The perfection of joyous effort is included in all three acts of generosity, as any practice of the Dharma needs joyous effort or enthusiasm.

3. The connotation of *dana* can also refer to the desire for a better rebirth, which is achieved by guarding the three doors and thus maintaining the purity of speech, the purity of one's physical actions and the purity of mind. So, guarding and controlling our speech, physical actions and the mind, serves as the basis for attaining what we call higher rebirths in future lifetimes. That is how *dana* has the connotation of practices for other existences.

The commentary explains why the word giving or *dana* is of special interest:

...since the word 'giving' denotes death, practices of certain dharmas and other existences [meaning serving causes for obtaining other higher existences in future lifetimes], it is always of interest to bodhisattvas who therefore take special delight in giving.

The analogy that is given is that it is like a man, who is condemned to death, hearing he is to be spared. When a person who is condemned to death hears that he is spared from that sentence, no other words could be sweeter to his ears. Similarly the very sound of the words 'giving' and 'generosity' are the most pleasing for a bodhisattva's ears. As the commentary further explains, because the word generosity (or *dana* in Sanskrit) connotes the purposes of accumulating extensive merit, and has a further connotation of death and impermanence, as well as a connotation of attaining higher rebirth in future existences, 'giving' is the highest, most pleasing word that is heard by the giver as well as the receiver. That is why the bodhisattva delights in the practice of generosity.

The main point that we can reflect on is how the division of the three types of generosity includes all of the practices of the six perfections. Then we can understand that there is no higher practice than that which includes all of the six perfections.

#### 1.2.3.5.2. CRITICISM OF INFERIOR GENEROSITY

Assertion or question: Is it only a bodhisattva's generosity, and not that of others, that is boundless?

*When one thinks that by giving gifts now  
There will be a great result,  
Receiving and giving are like trade  
For profit, which will be criticised.* 120

As the commentary explains:

To receive and give away things thinking that giving gifts in this life will result in great prosperity is like trade for profit and will therefore be criticised by the excellent.

The main point being made here is that generosity done with an intention to receive benefit for oneself is just like trading to receive something back in return. Generosity with such an attitude is an inferior generosity. Why? Because it is seen as inferior act of generosity, by superior beings.

The analogy that is given here is that 'it is like the profit from selling one's goods'. The analogy should be understood in the context of how, if you sell goods for a certain price with an intention to receive a profit, you don't obtain any more than whatever profit you have received from the trade. That means one does not receive any merit from it.

The merit of a generous act, made with an attitude of receiving something in return, such as wealth and so forth for future lifetimes, will be exhausted when good wealth and so forth are achieved in the future life. That is what we call the extended effect of an act of generosity, yet it is not a cause to obtain liberation.

Why is such an act of generosity not a cause for liberation? As explained in the commentary it is because the very attitude of achieving some material gain in this or future lifetimes becomes a cause to tighten the noose of samsara. Grasping at material wealth, and attachment or a desire for material wealth, are causes to remain in samsara rather than the means to be free from samsara. So the very aim of achieving that goal of material wealth is a cause to strengthen or tighten the noose of samsara.

As explained here, a bodhisattva's generosity is an act of generosity with the sole aim of benefiting other sentient beings. So that act of generosity becomes the ultimate means for achieving liberation and ultimate enlightenment. It is said that the merits from an act of generosity made with a bodhicitta attitude are not exhausted, but in fact increase.

Having understood that, it is good that we should try to avoid inferior acts of generosity. This means that when we engage in any kind of act of generosity we should try to generate an attitude of real love and compassion towards other sentient beings, wishing them to achieve the ultimate state of enlightenment. Then we should dedicate it towards the ultimate state of enlightenment, in order to benefit sentient beings. With that sort of attitude, whatever we actively engage in becomes a superior act of generosity.

### 1.2.3.3. WHY THE BODHISATTVAS CAN ACCOMPLISH ALL DEEDS

*For such a one, even previously* 121  
*Performed ill deeds will have no (effect)*  
*There is nothing one with virtue*  
*Considers should not be accomplished*

In explaining the meaning of the verse the commentary reads:

Though bodhisattvas who create limitless merit may even have performed a few ill deeds previously [i.e. when they were ordinary beings] these would not be able to produce an effect.

Because of the limitless merit that bodhisattvas, and in particular superior bodhisattvas, have accumulated over long periods of time, they have such vast merit that there couldn't be any trace of negative karmas left. Even if there were some traces of negative karmic imprints left, such as a residue from the negative karmas that they created as ordinary beings, that would not serve as a cause to bring a fully ripened effect.

It is said:

A few grams of salt can change the taste  
Of a little water, but not of the Ganges.  
Understand it is likewise with small ill deeds  
And expansive roots of virtue.

This analogy illustrates the meaning of what was explained earlier. If we put a few grams of salt into a small amount of water we can immediately taste its effect - the water will be salty. But if a few grams of salt were to be put in a vast amount of water such as the Ganges, then one would not notice the effect at all.

It is said that even if there were some small negative deed by a bodhisattva, it would be like a small spoonful of salt in the river Ganges. Because of the vast amount of merit that the bodhisattva has accumulated, the bodhisattva would not experience a negative result. Therefore, because of their great store of merit even a negative residue of an ill deed cannot cause a bodhisattva to experience a negative result.

There is nothing that bodhisattvas, whose virtuous activity is powerful, consider should not be done for others' benefit.

The main point being explained here is that because what we call the vast merit and virtuous activity of a bodhisattva is so powerful, the residue of small negative deeds or imprints cannot hinder their virtuous activities of benefiting other sentient beings.

The analogy can be understood from the earlier quotation about salt and the Ganges, which was quite vivid and clear.

### 1.2.3.4. WHY THE BODHISATTVAS DO NOT STRIVE JUST FOR THEIR OWN HAPPINESS

Question: Since superior bodhisattvas have a mind that is completely virtuous, and hence they will not be reborn out of delusions and karma, why wouldn't such a bodhisattva become completely engrossed in meditative equipoise on the bliss of peace and nirvana?

Answer:

*Even here nothing harms* 122  
*One with a powerful mind, and thus*  
*For such a one, worldly existence*  
*And nirvana are no different.*

---

Hearers and solitary realisers are striving towards the ultimate goal of achieving what we call the bliss of nirvana, or the bliss of abiding in peace. As you would have heard before, when they achieve that state they will remain in blissful meditative equipoise for many eons on end. The question is that if the bodhisattva has also the ability to do so, why does a bodhisattva not engage in that blissful state of meditation? We have to consider and understand this well.

Bodhisattvas whose minds hold a special wish, and who do not create even the slightest ill deed though remaining in cyclic existence, are not tainted by its faults. Since even in cyclic existence nothing harms them, there is no difference, in terms of harm, whether they remain in cyclic existence or enter into nirvana.

As the commentary explains, superior bodhisattvas are constantly engaged in accumulating virtue. Their every deed and activity has the intention of benefiting sentient beings. Whatever activity they engage in is an act of virtue, so even though they remain in cyclic existence they are not tainted by its faults. What this means is that they do not have to experience the disadvantages of being in samsara like an ordinary being does. As was explained previously and extensively in the earlier part of the teaching, the faults of being in samsara are understood as the various types of suffering that a samsaric being has to undergo, such as the suffering of birth, the suffering of sickness, the suffering of old age and finally the suffering of death. We all have to experience those sufferings as a result of being born as ordinary human beings. Even though a superior bodhisattva may appear to us as having an ordinary body, they do not have to experience the sufferings of samsara that an ordinary being does. That is the main meaning of bodhisattvas not being tainted by samsaric faults.

Since even in cyclic existence nothing harms them, there is no difference in terms of harm, whether they remain in worldly existence or enter nirvana. Thus that they do not prefer one kind of peace to another.

What is being explained here is that for a superior bodhisattva there is no difference in terms of the bliss that is experienced in singled-pointed equipoise upon the bliss of nirvana or in helping sentient beings in cyclic existence. Because there is no difference in the bliss that they experience, they do not prefer one over the other, because even though they abide in the worldly samsaric existence, they are not bound by the sufferings of cyclic existence of birth, sickness, ageing and death. Even though they appear to us as ordinary beings, and it seems that they have to depend on food and clothing and get sick and even have to die, that does not, in fact, affect their mind, and they do not experience suffering. Wherever a superior bodhisattva abides they have a perpetual experience of bliss and happiness, so therefore they choose to remain and benefit sentient beings.

As explained in the teachings, there is no difference between the bliss that is experienced by an arhat or hearers and solitary realisers in a state of nirvana, and

that experienced by superior bodhisattvas who have attained the first ground. Even though it may appear that those who remain in what we call equipoise, or the bliss of peace, seem to experience more happiness, the bodhisattva experiences that same bliss. Therefore there is no hesitation and they remain in cyclic existence and benefit sentient beings. The difference lies in the different attitudes of the arhats or solitary realisers and hearers, compared with the attitude of a bodhisattva, whose only intention is to benefit other sentient beings.

We can understand how a bodhisattva has no hesitation and no difficulty in benefiting other sentient beings with the analogy of a mother's great love for an only child, especially when the child is sick. She will have no hesitation in helping her sick child. Similarly the bodhisattva has no hesitation in benefiting sentient beings.

There are only three verses left in this chapter, which we can cover in the next session.

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks  
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett  
Edit 2 by Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe  
Edited Version*

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## Study Group – Aryadeva’s 400 Verses

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*Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga*

*Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe*

28 November 2006

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As usual we will sit in an upright and comfortable position, bringing our mind inward from external distractions. Let us try to keep a focused mind in a virtuous state and develop a motivation such as, ‘In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. For that purpose I will listen to the Dharma teachings and put them into practice to the best of my ability’.

### 1.2.3. Actual mode of training in the deeds (cont.)

#### 1.2.3.5. WHY THE BODHISATTVAS CAN COMPLETE THEIR DEEDS

##### 1.2.3.5.5. WHY THE BODHISATTVAS CAN TAKE SPECIAL PHYSICAL FORMS [OR MANIFESTATIONS]

Question: Why do bodhisattvas have mastery of most bodhisattva activities from the time they generate the first ultimate altruistic intention?

Answer:

*Why should anyone who takes birth  
Through constant control of the mind  
Not become a ruler  
Of the entire world?* 123

This refers to bodhisattvas who have obtained the first ground, which in turn refers to a bodhisattva who has attained the path of seeing. Of the five paths, it is on the path of seeing that the first ground is obtained.

#### Paths and Grounds

Bodhisattvas on the first two paths, which are the path of accumulation and the path of preparation are referred to as the ordinary bodhisattvas, while bodhisattvas on the three later paths, the path of meditation, the path of seeing and the path of no-more-learning are referred to as the superior beings. So when a bodhisattva attains the path of seeing they become a superior bodhisattva, realising emptiness directly. Enlightenment is achieved when the path of no-more-learning is obtained.

The first ultimate altruistic intention, refers to ultimate bodhicitta, which is attained on the first ground on the path of seeing. As we have previously learnt, the bodhisattva on that level has obtained the ability to manifest in a hundred different realms, the ability to see and hear the Dharma from a hundred buddhas and so forth.<sup>1</sup> There are certain superior achievements that a bodhisattva gains from that point onwards. That is what is being referred to here.

## The Five Paths

The commentary gives an explanation of the causes for achieving this attainment, however we can go further back to the initial causes. According to the explanations given in other teachings, these causes refer to the causes that are developed at the beginning of the path. On the **path of accumulation** the bodhisattva is training in achieving what we call the wisdom acquired from listening. When the wisdom realising emptiness acquired from listening is developed to the extent that it turns into the wisdom realising emptiness that is derived from contemplation, then the bodhisattva obtains the **path of preparation**.

When the bodhisattva further develops the wisdom realising emptiness to the point where it becomes a direct meditative perception of emptiness through the union of calm abiding and special insight, then that is the point when the bodhisattva attains the **path of seeing** and has a direct realisation of emptiness.

On the earlier paths of accumulation and preparation the activities the bodhisattva engages in are accumulating extensive vast merit and wisdom. This is the main cause for a bodhisattva entering the path of seeing, when he becomes a superior bodhisattva who has obtained the great miraculous feats.

We can take the causes back further, to before achieving the path. The understandings gained by an ordinary being serve as a cause to become the qualities that are needed to become a bodhisattva. Therefore when we refer to earlier causes we can refer to the very basic causes that we have within ourselves right now. We already have some intellectual understanding of emptiness, that is derived from the teachings that we have heard, and we also have some basis of love and compassion within ourselves. What we have now as an ordinary being, is further developed to become the causes to generate real bodhicitta and to develop an actual realisation of emptiness.

Therefore at a very early stage every single cause that we create counts; every small amount of merit that we accumulate, every understanding that we gain now, and every small negativity that we are able to avoid now, all serve as a cause to achieve further realisations. When we relate the teachings to ourselves in that way, then we can see the importance of both nurturing whatever small qualities we have now, and trying to avoid any negativity that we can. That then becomes the cause to achieve further realisations, all the way up to enlightenment.

When we relate the teachings to ourselves in this way then we can begin to feel that there is some worth in our existence, not just as a human being, but as a human being with the basis to achieve further realisations. As mentioned earlier, as human beings we definitely have some good qualities, so we can really begin to feel that we are fortunate.

Bodhisattvas who have attained the grounds can, through their constant mental control, take rebirth in worldly existences as they wish. Why then

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<sup>1</sup> See teaching of 9 November 2004, where the qualities of the grounds were discussed in detail.

would they not become rulers of the entire world with dominion over the welfare of sentient beings?

As explained here, the bodhisattvas who have attained the grounds refers to the arya bodhisattvas who have reached the first ground and upwards through their constant mental control. This means that they have been able to control the mind to avoid earlier negativities and so forth, and remain in constant contemplation. Through their constant mental control they are able to take rebirth in worldly existences. This means that they are able to manifest anywhere where they are needed to benefit sentient beings, and be reborn there to assist in the welfare of sentient beings.

Having constant mental control enables bodhisattvas to take rebirth in worldly existence at their wish, has a connotation of bodhisattvas intentionally taking rebirth in worldly existences or samsara. So the bodhisattvas who are reborn in samsara are not there due to forces out of their control, but they have voluntarily taken rebirth in samsara. That being the case why would they not become rulers of the entire world with dominion over the welfare of sentient beings? This is a rhetorical question, because bodhisattvas do have the ability to become rulers of the entire world. If it helps other beings why would they not want to be rulers of the world?

As the commentary further reads:

By taking birth as lords of the four continents and so forth, they accomplish the well-being of others. They are like a wish-granting jewel or swish-fulfilling tree, and a fine pot of treasure.

The quality of a wish-granting jewel is that it has the ability to grant whatever prayers or wishes that are made to such a jewel. Referring to a bodhisattva as a wish-granting jewel means that a bodhisattva is able to bring about benefits in accordance to the needs of sentient beings.

The main points that we can derive from this explanation is that bodhisattvas are able to engage in such extensive deeds through constant control over the mind. We need to try to take the importance of controlling the mind as the essential advice for ourselves, as that serves as the basis for achieving all other qualities.

Control of the mind is achieved through meditation, and that is why meditation is emphasised at all times. Engaging in meditation and slowly subduing the mind is a means to control the mind. As the teachings indicate the controlled mind is a happy and peaceful mind, and an uncontrolled mind is a mind of unhappiness, chaos and suffering. Therefore the importance of meditation cannot be underestimated, because it is the means to develop a controlled mind.

Of course one of the main obstacles to controlling the mind is all the negative thoughts and emotions that arise in the mind, which mainly come from previous imprints of negativity within our own mind. Therefore in order to remove the obstacles to meditation we need to engage in purification practices. The purpose of purification is to purify the negative karmic imprints within oneself, and as we purify the negative karma then we are also

naturally engaging in accumulating merit and virtue. In that way, as we purify we gain merit, and as we gain merit we purify. So purifying and gaining merit enhance each other. That is the manner of practising.

It should be understood that the Tibetan word *jang* is used for both purification and the accumulation of virtue and merit. How it should be understood is that *jang* could be translated as 'endeavour', so we endeavour to purify and we endeavour to accumulate merit. So, the same word is used in different contexts of avoiding negative karma and accumulating positive karma.

### 1.3. Proof of resultant omniscience

The omniscient mind or dharmakaya is achieved as a result of the various practices of a bodhisattva. This heading explains the proof of omniscience or dharmakaya mind.

Question: What is the result of doing bodhisattva deeds?

Answer: The inconceivable features of a fearless supramundane buddha's power is the result of bodhisattva deeds.

*Even in this world among excellent things 124  
Some are seen to be most excellent.  
Thus realise that certainly also  
Inconceivable power exists.*

The teachings explain in great detail the incredible miraculous powers of the body, speech and mind of the enlightened Buddha.

In order to explain this verse the commentary says:

The Mimasakas [a non-Buddhist school] and others, who lack conviction with regard to this, say that the Tathagata is not omniscient because of being a person, like any common man on the road.

The reasoning that the non-Buddhist schools such as the Mimasakas present is a syllogism: the Tathagata (the subject) is not omniscient (the predicate), because of being a person (reason). The commentary explains that 'This is inappropriate', and as a counter measure the author asks:

Are the subject and the predicate to which your reason is applied one or different? In the first case, the Tathagata is unsuitable as a subject, because subject and predicate are one, just as a pot cannot be its own attribute. In the second case the Tathagata is also unsuitable as such, because the subject and predicate are different and resemble in all respect a pot and a woollen cloth.

The manner of refuting the non-Buddhist schools view is presented with the assumption that the non-Buddhist schools view the subject and the predicate as being inherently existent. That being the case as the commentary further explains:

Similarly because of being asserted as inherently existent, if the reason and the thesis are inherently one, they should be inseparably one, and if they are inherently different they should be unrelated.

What is being explained here is that if the subject and the predicate are inherently one then a syllogism relying on

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them to give a reason is absurd, because they are inherently one. If they are inherently separate then that also is an absurdity, because then there is no connection whatsoever between the subject and the predicate. You cannot use the subject to explain the predicate because they are inherently independently separate, which means that there is no relationship whatsoever between the two. In that way the argument of those who lack conviction is being refuted on the basis of the assertion that the subject, the predicate and the reasons are all viewed as being inherently existent.

So a counter question or syllogism is put forth:

Furthermore, the subject, the sound of the Vedas, is not permanent, non-produced, self created or valid because of being sound like a madman's utterances.

What this refers to is that these non-Buddhist schools adhere to the belief that the sound of the Vedas is actually permanent. Therefore according to the non-Buddhist school they are non-produced and furthermore they are self-created and that's why they are valid. The counter syllogism is that the sound of the Vedas is not permanent, and furthermore is non-produced, and is not self-created or valid, because of being sound like a madman's utterances. This syllogism is used to counter the very reasoning that that the non-Buddhists gave, which is that the Buddha is not omniscient because he is an ordinary being. The counter syllogism that the sound of the Vedas cannot be valid is based on their reason that it is valid because it is permanent. However the sound of the Vedas is not permanent and is non-self-produced and so forth, so it cannot be stated as being valid, just like the sound of a madman's utterance cannot be considered as being valid.

Furthermore the text says that using your sort of line of reasoning you could say:

You are not Brahmins because you have hands like fishermen.

The non-Buddhists say that the Buddha is not omniscient because they see the Buddha as having the features of an ordinary being. The response here is that if that is the case then you cannot be Brahmin because you have hands and arms like fishermen. What is being indicated is that if you follow your line of reasoning then many other assertions that you make about yourself cannot be valid.

There are also other counter reasons that are presented in other texts such as: Is one's mother a suitable object for sexual copulation, because she is similar to your own wife? This would obviously be an absurd logical assumption. There are many other examples that use the line of reasoning of similarity to assert whether something is suitable or not.

The real reason why the Buddha is omniscient is:

Therefore, just as the excellent features of an effect are seen to arise through the special features of its cause, the existence of omniscience too can certainly be accepted.

The analogy that is given here is that:

Among exceptional and excellent things, some which are particularly excellent are seen even in this world.

Within our worldly existence, amongst excellent things there are certain things that are even more excellent. We have many examples in our worldly existence of certain things that are the supreme amongst the supreme. So in that way we can therefore say that within beings, because of particular causes the result can be a particular type of incredible being, such as an omniscient being - the Buddha.

The particular examples that are given are:

- When text was written the caste system was dominant, and even today the caste system is very much prevalent in India. Within the caste system the purest and best caste is the Brahmin caste.
- The most enjoyable and most pleasant state of existence within samsara is called the peak of existence.
- Amongst the various mountains, the most supreme is known as Mount Meru.
- Kings are prevalent in the world and among the various kings the most supreme king is known as the universal monarch.

These examples are prevalent in this world system. There is the caste system, and what was commonly accepted at that time was that the Brahmin caste was the most supreme; because there are different places where one can take rebirth in samsara, being reborn in the peak of existence is considered to be the best rebirth within samsara; because there are different types of mountains, the most supreme is Mount Meru; and since kings are prevalent in the world, the most supreme king is the universal monarch. Therefore the use of these analogies reflects what is commonly agreed and accepted by beings in the world.

As the commentary further explains:

Thus you should realise that the superlative awareness, the inconceivable power of Tathagatas, definitely exists, because of the stores of merit accumulated by bodhisattvas over three countless eons.

The **first countless eon**, where bodhisattvas accumulate merit, is from the first moment that a bodhisattva enters the path of accumulation, up to the path of seeing. At a certain stage of the path of seeing the bodhisattvas attain the first ground.

From the first ground up to the seventh ground is the **second countless eon**.

The last three grounds, the eighth, ninth and tenth ground, are **the third countless eon**

We can see how even bodhisattvas are at different levels all the way up to what is called the last continuum. The tenth ground of a bodhisattva is when they reach the stage that is called the last continuum of a sentient being. The next stage is an enlightened being, a buddha, which

is the most superior of all. When compared to the earlier stages the qualities that are achieved after attaining buddhahood are incredible and inconceivable. You can see how that all these different stages that we call attainments are superior to the ones preceding them, and the most superior of all is the enlightened state.

Therefore, as explained here, within the mental continuum the most superior mental continuum is the mental continuum of a buddha's mind, which is an omniscient mind.

As the commentary further explains:

Moreover you should accept this proof of omniscience established by reasoning without depending on scriptural citations.

What is being established here is, as we can see, a logical way of explaining how omniscience does actually exist. Furthermore when we relate that to other states of mind, for example the understanding of emptiness, we see that the realisation of emptiness begins with a conceptual understanding of emptiness. That conceptual understanding of emptiness, when further developed and refined, then becomes the direct clear understanding of emptiness. An understanding of emptiness at a conceptual level is not a direct perception, because it is mixed with a generic image. However when that crude understanding of emptiness is further developed, it can turn into what we call the clear and direct understanding of emptiness. So that proves that the mind progressively becomes clearer and more mature. That is how an understanding of emptiness is then related to all other realisations, and the mind itself becomes clearer and clearer, all the way up to becoming an omniscient mind.

#### ***1.4. Showing why those with poor intelligence fear the Great Vehicle***

If it is possible that as the development of a mind progresses one can attain a state of omniscience, and an omniscient being is considered a valid being, then this question arises: Why are most people afraid of the Great Vehicle and uninterested in attaining buddhahood?

Answer: It is because of their weak conviction.

*Just as the ignorant feel afraid* 125  
*Of the extremely profound teaching,*  
*So the weak feel afraid*  
*Of the marvellous teaching.*

Having explained that buddhahood is possible, and that buddhahood is an omniscient mind, then the next question or doubt that arises is that if that is so, then why are people so afraid of the Great Vehicle.

The response to the question mentions a weak conviction, which can refer to not having the ability to conceive that such a superior goal can be achieved. Because of not being able to conceive of such a goal the conviction is weak. Furthermore such people are ignorant.

As the commentary reads:

The ignorant, whose minds are untrained, feel afraid of the very profound teaching of dependant arising

free from inherent production with the feasibility of all actions and agents.

There are disciples and students of three different levels of ability: the very inferior level, the mediocre and the intelligent level. This explanation refers to beings of inferior intelligence who do not have the capacity to really grasp the meaning of the teachings, and whose minds are untrained. We can refer to them as being untrained in the understanding of reality. Such beings therefore feel very afraid of the profound teaching of dependent arising. What can be understood here is that the teaching of dependent arising is a profound explanation. The understanding that is gained from dependent arising is an understanding of emptiness, and the understanding of emptiness is when one gains the understanding of interdependentness. Like purification and gaining merit, which were mentioned earlier, emptiness and dependent arising enhance each other. Beings who are ignorant, or who have weak conviction, or who are untrained, are afraid of the profound teaching of dependent arising and emptiness, which, as mentioned here, are free from inherent production.

As the commentary further explains

Similarly those whose conviction is weak feel afraid of the marvellous profound and extensive teaching of the Great Vehicle and of the superlative power of a buddha.

The summarising stanza from Gyaltzab Rinpoche reads as follows:

Having considered the faults of cyclic existence well,  
Enter this profound and extensive Great Vehicle  
Of which those with poor intelligence feel afraid,  
And make bodhisattva deeds your quintessential practice.

This is quite clear so no further explanation is needed.

## **2. Presenting the name of chapter**

*This is the chapter on the Four Hundred Deeds showing the bodhisattva deeds.*

This concludes the commentary on the fifth chapter showing the bodhisattva deeds from the *Essence of Good Explanations, Explanation of the 'Four Hundred on the Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas'*.

We have covered the fifth chapter well. The sixth chapter presents the main obstacle to engaging in bodhisattva deeds, which is the delusions.

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks*  
*Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett*  
*Edit 2 by Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe*  
*Edited Version*

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# DISCUSSION

BLOCK: **6**  
WEEK: **10**  
5<sup>TH</sup> DEC 06

October 3<sup>rd</sup>

1. Some state that because animals are given by god for the purpose of sustaining humans, there is no ill deed in killing them. Explain the misconception. [2]

October 10<sup>th</sup>

2. Why would it be foolish to want to pursue a position of power such as being a King [2]

October 17<sup>th</sup>

3. How can these teachings on the caste system of ancient India be related to our everyday life? [2]

October 24<sup>th</sup>

4. The negative karma that one accumulates has to be experienced by oneself alone, even if one accumulates it with an intention to benefit others. Explain with the use of an example. [3]

October 31<sup>st</sup>

5. Why did Buddha refuse to answer 14 questions? [2]

November 7<sup>th</sup>

6. What advice is given to a teacher regarding the approach to guide others according to their inclination? [2]

November 14<sup>th</sup>

7. '*Clairvoyance is the way bodhisattvas benefit sentient beings*'. Explain why?

November 21<sup>st</sup>

8. If we put a few grams of salt into a cup of water we can immediately taste its effect- the water will be salty. But if a few grams of salt were to be put in a vast amount of water such as the Ganges, then one would not notice the effect at all. What does this analogy say about Bodhisattva's activity? [3]

**Tara Institute Study Group 2006 - 'Aryadeva's 400 Verses'**

**EXAM**

NAME:

BLOCK:

**6**

WEEK:

**11**

**12<sup>TH</sup> DEC 06**

MARK:

**/18**

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3. How can these teachings on the caste system of ancient India be related to our everyday life? [2]

## ***Tara Institute Study Group 2006 - 'Aryadeva's 400 Verses'***

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## ***Tara Institute Study Group 2006 - 'Aryadeva's 400 Verses'***

6. What advice is given to a teacher regarding the approach to guide others according to their inclination? [2]

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