
Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

13 September 2005

You should generate the virtuous motivation of bodhicitta thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. For that purpose I am going to listen to the following teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

2.2.3.1. ANALYSIS OF CAUSE - THE DIAMOND SLIVER REASONING (CONT.)

2.2.3.1.3.2. Actual refutation of generation from self

Refuting that it is impossible for an effect to not exist earlier and to be newly generated

*If the effect abides in the cause then [135cd]
One would eat faeces while eating cooked food.*

*One would have to pay the price of cloth [136ab]
For the seeds.*

The **Samkya** view of generation from self is that the result exists on the cause in an intrinsic partless manner, and these lines are the refutation of that view.

Shantideva: Since one can say that faeces are the result of the food that one eats, and that the clothes that one wears are the result of the cotton seed, then the faeces should be present in the food and the clothes that one wears should be present in the cotton seed. If the effect is present in the cause you might as well go to the market, sell your clothes, buy cotton seeds with that money and wear the cotton seeds!

Samkya: People normally don't do that, because due to their ignorance they cannot see that effect resides within the cause. Worldly beings don't know that the effect resides within the cause due to their ignorance.

Then **Shantideva** replies, 'You know that the effect resides within the cause due to your teacher, who you regard as omniscient. Since you know that the result abides in the cause you are certainly eating faeces when you eat food. Secondly, since you are able to understand it from your teacher, then other people should also be able to understand it. Why should worldly beings not see that the result abides within the cause?'

Trying to understand the view of the generation from self and the reasoning that is used for its refutation is very helpful for generating new insights.

Samkya: Worldly beings don't see it, because their consciousness is not a valid consciousness.

Shantideva: If it is the case that the consciousness of worldly beings is not valid, then what they see clearly (directly) also has to be untrue. For example the perception by worldly beings of the seed and so forth would also be flawed. One couldn't trust even what they see with their direct perception.

Showing that these faults do not apply to the Madhyamaka

*In case valid cognition is not valid [138ab]
Doesn't what it comprehends become not false?*

The **Madhyamaka** assert that every existing thing exists in a false manner.

Because the **Samkya** assert that everything exists truly they argue, 'Well, if valid cognition is not valid then whatever it comprehends would not be accurately comprehended as existing in a false manner. Doesn't what it comprehends become not false?'

*For that very reason your [138cd]
Meditation on emptiness is invalid.*

According to the **Samkya**, who assert that everything exists truly, a false valid cognition cannot comprehend a false object and for that reason they say that the **Madhyamaka** meditation on emptiness is invalid.

From the **Madhyamaka** point of view a false valid cognition can comprehend a false object.

Even though the words 'false' and 'true' are adjectives, here they refer to the adverbial meaning of 'falsely' or 'truly'. From the point of view of the adjectival meaning emptiness is true, because it exists the way it appears. But from the point of view of the adverbial meaning it exists falsely and not truly, because it lacks inherent existence.

Therefore the **Madhyamaka** say a false valid cognition can have a false object. Here 'false' refers to the way the object exists; i.e. as lacking true existence, inherent existence, intrinsic existence and so forth. In the adjectival meaning the object is true if it exists the way it appears, and the object is false as it does not exist the way it appears; i.e. there is a discrepancy between appearance and existence. That is the adjectival meaning. Here it refers to the adverbial meaning of whether it exists truly or falsely; i.e. lacking inherent existence.

Both the object possessor and the object are false, because they both lack true existence - they are empty of inherent existence. It becomes clearer in the next lines, which actually establishes the way the object and the object possessor are false.

*Without contact with the imputed object [139]
One won't apprehend its non-existence
Therefore the non-existence of any
False object is clearly false.*

This is another very crucial point to consider. Without the initial identification of the object of negation one will not be able to work towards the lack of the object of negation. 'The imputed object' refers to the true existence that is imputed by true grasping, and 'contact' means the identification of the appearance of that imputed true existence in the mind.

It is crucial that one initially identifies the object of negation that is imputed by true grasping. For example, the truly existent vase is imputed by true grasping, and likewise with the truly existent aggregates and so forth. Initially one needs to identify the appearance of the object of negation within one's mind, and only after one has done this can one start to establish the non-existence of that object of negation. It is very important that one

spends time identifying the object of negation, contemplating how objects appear to one's mind, and identifying the appearance of true existence that is imputed by true grasping.

The non-existence of the false object is clearly false because the false object of negation is impossible.

How the false object possessor can apprehend a false object

*Therefore, the thought thinking,
'The dream child has passed away'
Is the opposite of thinking that it
Exists, and is false.* [140]

The dream thought that the dream child has died is the opposite of the dream thought that the dream child is alive. They are counter-positives and they are both false. The thought thinking, 'Oh now the child has died!' cancels out the thought that the child exists, and both thoughts are false. Hence, one false object possessor can counteract another false object possessor. The **Samkya** assert a truly existent object possessor, but in the **Madhyamika** system it is possible for a false object possessor to apprehend the false object. The *King of Concentration sutras* give a variety of examples, saying that existence is like a dream, like an illusion, like a mirage and so forth. Even though it lacks true existence it appears as truly existent in nature, just like the horse or elephant of a dream appearing to be a horse or an elephant, when actually they are not and so forth.

If one realises the illusory nature of phenomena then worldly likes and dislikes will subside. On realising the dream-like nature of life and death of the dream woman or dream man, any like or dislike for them will cease. Similarly when one realises the lack of the illusory nature of the existence, then worldly like and dislike will cease.

2.2.3.1.4 Summary

*Therefore by analysing in such a way
There is nothing without a cause* [141ab]

By analysing in such a way there is no effect that is generated from other, such as Ishvara, there is no effect that is generated without cause, there is no effect that is generated from self and so forth.

2.2.3.1.5. Refutation of Generation from Self and Other

*It also does not abide on the individual
Conditions or the collection;* [141cd]

*It does not come from other,
It does not abide or go.* [142ab]

The result also does not abide on the individual conditions or the collections. The seed is the substantial cause of the sprout and it needs conducive conditions such as the elements of earth, fire, water, wind - the earth providing the basis, water loosening up the earth, fire provides warmth, etc. If any of those are missing then the seed won't ripen into a sprout. The sprout does not abide on any of these individual conducive conditions, nor does it abide in any of the collection of the conducive conditions.

The **Samkya** say that the sprout abides in the cause in a non-manifest form and then becomes manifest or clarified, which is according to them the generation of the

sprout. That the sprout does not abide within the conditions is something that can be very clearly observed. One can see that the sprout does not abide in any of the conducive conditions individually, or in the collection of the conducive conditions.

Also, it does not come from other; it does not abide or go. The sprout is not generated from an inherently existent seed, or from inherently existent conditions. It also does not abide inherently after generation or go inherently. It is merely generated from the aggregation of causes and conditions.

Therefore, for all those reasons there is no generation from self, other, both or no cause.

2.2.3.2. AN ANALYSIS OF NATURE, THE REASONING OF DEPENDENT ARISING

*How is that made true by ignorance
Different from an illusion?* [142cd]

*That magically generated by a magician
And that magically generated by a cause
Whence do they come from where do they go
You should analyse this* [143]

Is there any difference between the aggregates and the self, which are made true by ignorance, and the illusions that are generated by the magician and reflections?

Student: No, because they perform a function.

So are they similar?

Student: They are similar.

How are they similar?

Student: Because they don't exist in the way they appear to exist.

Are you sure?

Student: I think that is true, but I think maybe the answer should be that they are similar in that they are both products of ignorance.

They are the same in that similarly to the illusory horse actually not being a horse while appearing like one, the self and aggregates do not exist truly while appearing as if they do.

It is good to meditate on how phenomena are similar to illusions, and how they appear as truly existent but don't actually appear in such a way. Similarly to illusions appearing different from the way they actually exist, all phenomena appear to be intrinsically existent while actually lacking intrinsic existence.

For example, one can meditate on emptiness while one is watching a movie, because that is a very good example for the illusory nature of phenomena. One has right in front of one's eyes something that appears differently from the way it actually exists. Then one can transfer this meditation to other phenomena and their appearance of true existence. If one can grasp that, then one has understood a very important point. If one really thinks about the discrepancy between what appears and what is actually there, one will not generate attachment or anger for what appears on the screen, or in real life.

That magically created by a magician, and that magically created by a cause: where do they come from, where do

they go? You should analyse this. The illusions that are generated by the magician come about through causes and conditions, and likewise functioning phenomena also come about through an aggregation of causes and conditions. If they were generated in an intrinsic manner then at the time they were generated they would have to come from somewhere else, and then when they go, they would have to go somewhere else. So, analyse where these magical emanations that are generated from causes and conditions come from, and where they go to.

Generally, coming and going lack true existence, so if the sprout were to intrinsically come and go, it would intrinsically come from somewhere else, and go to somewhere else. One needs to analyse this absence of an intrinsic sprout that is coming and going.

Here one can use the syllogism: Take the self and the aggregates - they lack true existence - because they are dependant arising; like the reflection of form in the mirror.

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
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Edited Version*

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

20 September 2005

As usual generate a good motivation for listening to the teaching

2.2.3.2. ANALYSIS OF THE NATURE, THE REASONING OF DEPENDENT ARISING (CONT.)

Take the subject self and aggregates: it follows they lack true existence - because they are dependent arising; e.g. like the reflection of form in the mirror.

Illusion arises from the cause of ignorance, and the sprout arises from the cause of the seed. The sprout is generated through the aggregation of the substantial cause of the seed, and the conducive conditions of the earth, water, heat and the air. When these causes come together the sprout is generated. Hence the sprout is seen through its closeness to its causal seed. Elsewhere, illusion is seen through its the closeness to its causal ignorance. If the cause does not exist the illusion or the sprout will not be seen.

One can relate the example of the sprout, its substantial cause and all its conducive conditions, to the twelve interdependent links of dependent arising. Initially one has ignorance and from ignorance one generates karma. Without ignorance karma would not be generated and if karma is not generated there is no dependent link of consciousness. The dependent link of consciousness causes the dependent links of birth and name and form. From these the sources arise, and from these contact and then feeling. One can say that the sprout, the resultant illusion and so forth, lack true existence, because they exist in dependence on other phenomena - they are created. The meaning of being created is to exist in dependence on other phenomena, and that is the reason why they lack true existence.

Lama Tsong Khapa and his two sons labelled this reasoning of dependent arising the king of reasoning, because it is the supreme way to understand the lack of true existence. It contains all the salient points of all the other types of reasoning, and therefore it reigns over all the other types of reasonings just as a king reigns over his subjects.

Analysis using dependent arising overcomes all wrong views and conceptions. In the *Commentary to Bodhicitta* it is said that the reasoning of dependent arising is a supreme reasoning, because through it one establishes the karmic law of cause and effect. When some people investigate inherent existence they arrive at a nihilistic point of view, and this reasoning of dependent arising counteracts that misconception.

2.2.3.3. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULT, THE REASONING OF THE GENERATION AND CESSATION OF EXISTENCE AND NON EXISTENCE

We started with an analysis of the cause, followed by an analysis of the nature of the object, and now we have an analysis of the effect. If something exists from its own side, then why is it not feasible for it to generate an effect?

Student: Because it would have to be permanent.

Why should it be permanent if it exists from its own side? Actually, in that case it should not be permanent.

Student: Because it is would have to be unchanging.

It is acceptable to think that if it were intrinsic then it would have to be devoid of change and therefore it could not produce a result.

*What need is there for a cause [145]
For a functionality to come into existence?
Even in case it does not exist,
What need is there for a cause?*

If it is a functionality that comes into existence from its own side, then what need is there for a cause for that functionality? It does not need to be generated since it exists naturally. If this resultant functionality does not exist then what need is there for a cause, since it can not be generated.

*Even through one billion causes [146ab]
A non-functionality cannot be changed.*

Realists: I can understand why we do not need a cause if the functionality already exists, but one does need a cause if it does not yet exist.

Answer: Even with one billion causes an intrinsic non-functionality can never be changed into a functionality.

This is not negating that there is an effect that arises from the cause. Neither does this negation concern itself with negating that the effect exists at the time of the cause. What is being negated is that an intrinsic effect arises from the cause. In other words, an effect does not arise without a cause. So this is negating that an effect does not arise in dependence on causes and conditions.

*How can it be a functionality occasionally? [146cd]
How can a functionality be anything else?*

*If it can not be a functionality when it is not [147ab]
How can it become a functionality?
If it does not become a functionality*

It has just been argued that even with one billion causes a non-functionality can never be changed into a functionality. But if it were able to change, then does it change without abandoning its status of non-functionality, or does it change after abandoning its status of non-functionality.

In the case of the former, how can something that is a non-functionality also be a functionality, because being able to perform a function and not being able to perform a function are mutually exclusive.

In the second case the non-functionality becomes a functionality upon abandoning its status of being a non-functionality. This means one would need a third object, which is not possible. The reasoning is that if the non-

functionality becomes a functionality upon abandoning its status of non-functionality, then between abandoning its status of non-functionality and becoming a functionality it would have to be a third object, which is not possible.

How can it become a functionality? [147ab]
If it does not become a functionality

Further, if you assert that the non-functionality turns into a functionality without abandoning its status of non-functionality, then when does it become a functionality? At the time when it is a non-functionality it cannot be a functionality, because these two are a dichotomy. And when it ceases to exist it doesn't become a functionality, so both in existence and non-existence it does not become a functionality.

How can it become devoid of non-functionality? [147cd]

If it is not devoid of non-functionality [148]
It is impossible to be a functionality.
Also the functionality does not become non-existent
Because it would follow that it has two natures.

Further, if the non-functionality becomes a functionality upon abandoning its status of non-functionality, it cannot be devoid of non-functionality before being generated as functionality. As long as something is not devoid of non-functionality it is impossible to become a functionality, because both are mutually exclusive. This highlights the point that an object can only be one or the other. It can only be functionality or a non-functionality, and it cannot be something that has abandoned its status of non-functionality before turning into a functionality. In order for something to turn into a functionality it has to become devoid of non-functionality. For as long as something is not devoid of non-functionality it cannot become a functionality.

By showing that functionality and non-functionality are mutually exclusive, one can transfer this reasoning to inherent existence and non-inherent existence. Because it exists inherently a functionality cannot turn into a non-functionality. Here one has to relate it all to the object of negation. Non-functionality does not turn into functionality, because it exists intrinsically. Therefore all functionalities lack inherent existence.

2.3 Cutting off the mental fabrications of true grasping

Since it is not negated in such a way [149]
And functionalities do not exist
All migrators
Are never generated and never cease.

Take the subject 'the sprout': it is not generated from its own side - because it is not inherently generated as an existent, and neither is it inherently generated as a non-existent, for example, like a mule's foal.

Just as generation does not exist inherently, the cessation of the object also does not exist inherently. The sprout is not generated inherently and neither does it cease from its own side. The sprout is pacified from beginningless times and is refuted as being generated eternally. Basically this means that the sprout lacks inherent existence.

Migrators are like a dream [150]
When investigated they are like banana trees
Having gone beyond misery and having not gone -
They do not have any distinction.

Therefore all migrators always lack inherent generation and cessation. They are pacified from the beginning, and naturally liberated. Migrators are like a dream in that they seem to exist from their own side, findable at the time of analysis. However, they lack any type of inherent existence. Their actions and activities abide free and unmixed with inherent existence, despite appearing as though they possess inherent existence. When they are investigated with ultimate reasoning, then just like pulling the banana tree apart leaf by leaf, one will not find anything essential inside. Therefore there is no distinction between having gone beyond misery and not gone beyond misery - their nature is the same.

The person is the mere 'I' that is labelled in dependence on the aggregates. If one investigates how this 'I' exists one investigates the nature of the 'I'. An investigation of the nominal nature of the 'I' includes investigating the nominal nature of the person being the 'I' that is merely labelled in dependence on the aggregates, and investigating which of the three categories of functionalities it falls under - whether it is form, consciousness or non-associated compounded phenomenon, and so forth. This is the nominal analysis of the self. If one is then not satisfied with the self not existing in such a way and goes further, trying to find some intrinsic self that exists within the basis of imputation, then one is unsatisfied with the mere nominal existence of the self, and has gone into ultimate analysis.

Migrators of samsara are like a dream. They are not born, they don't die, and so they are like a water bubble and so forth.

2.4. The function of realising emptiness

The functions of emptiness are two-fold: to fulfil one's own potential, and for the purpose of others. Fulfilling one's own potential means meditating on the absorption of cessation in this life, while achieving the purpose of others means to meditate on love and compassion for them. This part of the text is very useful for one's practice.

Review

What is the definition for dependent arising?

Student: Produced by causes.

That which is established in dependence on its causes is the definition according to the Mind Only view, but that leaves out all non-compounded phenomena. If you say the definition is that which is established in dependence upon its parts, then that also includes non-compounded phenomena. In the Madhyamaka system all phenomena are dependent arising.

What reasoning do you have to use to oppose generation from no cause?

Student: If there is generation from no cause then anything can be generated from anything.

Doesn't Chandrakirti give the reasoning that being generated from no cause is actually contradicted by worldly direct perception?

What is posited as generation from other?

Student: An intrinsically existent effect arises from an intrinsically existing cause.

The generation of an inherently existent result from an inherently existent cause is the meaning of generation from other. Generation from self means that the effect is of a partless nature with the cause. Regardless of the text the same definition is always used.

Give me the syllogism that establishes the lack of inherent existence with dependent arising.

Student: Take the subject 'self and the aggregates': they lack inherent existence - because they are dependent arising; e.g. like the reflection of form in the mirror.

This reasoning would be posited to a person who has first realised that the subject self and the aggregates are dependent arising, and understood that if something is dependent arising it lacks intrinsic existence, and who is now investigating whether or not that makes the aggregates and the self also lack intrinsic existence.

To arrive at this **thesis** one has to all realise all three parts of the syllogism. One has to understand:

- the **subjects** of person, self and aggregates
- the **predicate**, lack of inherent existence
- the **reasoning** of dependent arising

To understand the **pervasion** one has to understand the reason of dependent arising on the subject, self and aggregates, and also the pervasion that if something is dependent arising it lacks inherent existence.

The person wants to understand the thesis that the self and aggregates lack inherent existence, which is a hidden phenomenon for that person. This is done by the reasoning of dependent arising. One firstly needs to understand that the self and aggregates are dependent arising, and then one needs to understand that if it is dependent arising then it will always lack inherent existence. That is how one arrives at the thesis that the person and the aggregates lack inherent existence. One can also use this model for other subjects and predicates, for example, 'take "sound": it is impermanent - because it is a product'. The system is the same. One has to contemplate how sound is impermanent because of being a product. If something is a product it is necessarily impermanent, and then one can arrive at the thesis that sound is impermanent.

If a person has understood that sound is a product and has understood that if something is a product then it is necessarily impermanent, then by combining these two understandings one can arrive very nicely at an understanding that sound has to be impermanent.

Hidden phenomena such as emptiness and so forth need to be understood in dependence on valid reason. One doesn't need any reasoning to understand obvious phenomena, such as the colour blue and so forth, because one can see them directly.

Emptiness has to be understood with reasonings such as the reasoning of dependant arising. One has to understand that the subject is dependent arising, and therefore it necessarily lacks inherent existence. By combining these two understandings one can arrive at the thesis or subject, for example 'the vase lacks inherent existence'. Then whenever one remembers the dependent arising of the vase one will also remember its lack of inherent existence. When one realises the emptiness of one subject then one realises the emptiness of all phenomena, because one can just simply just transfer the initial understanding.

First one investigates with reasoning and by following the path of reasoning one arrives at a valid cognition of the subject. Then one meditates on it repeatedly, thus deepening the understanding.

*Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
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Edited Version*

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

27 September 2005

As usual please generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. In order to do so, I am now going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

2.4. The function of realising emptiness

We have started with the outline of what one should do with the realisation of emptiness, which comes in two parts.

2.4.1. To achieve the purpose of self

2.4.2. Meditating on great compassion to achieve the purpose of others.

2.4.1. TO ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE OF SELF

This refers to subduing the eight worldly dharmas.

*How can functionalities thus empty
Be attained or lost?* [151]

*How could one be praised?
How could one be criticised?*

*Where do happiness and suffering come from?
Why does one like and dislike?* [152]
*Having investigated this very nature
Who craves, and for what?*

*When analysed, this life's worldly being,
How can it pass away here?* [153]
*What will arise, what arose?
What is a relative or friend?*

The eight worldly dharmas are the eight attitudes of worldly beings:

- ❖ a liking for gain and a dislike for loss;
- ❖ a liking for praise and dislike for criticism;
- ❖ a liking for being spoken to pleasantly and a dislike for being spoken to unpleasantly;
- ❖ a liking for happiness and a dislike for unhappiness.

It is important to know that the actual worldly dharma is that one generates happiness on receiving gain. Just receiving gain by itself is not a worldly dharma, as there are many superior bodhisattvas who possess great riches. The worldly dharma is that one is happy with gain and dislikes loss. Here dislike is anger. In *Letter to a King*, Nagarjuna told the king that he had to abandon the likes and dislikes of a worldly being.

As was the case in earlier investigations the eight worldly dharmas are empty of inherent existence. After meditating on the emptiness of the eight worldly dharmas, how could one have a liking for gain and a dislike for loss? How could one have liking for praise and

a dislike of criticism? How could one have a like or dislike for the gain or loss of functionalities that are empty? Where could happiness and suffering come from when functionalities are empty? If, as was explained before, functionalities are empty then why should one generate any likes or dislikes?

These lines of the text obviously deal with subduing the eight worldly dharmas. Getting a grip on the eight worldly dharmas is similar to meditating on immeasurable equanimity. One generates a state of equanimity that is free from like and dislike for gain and loss, and one also realises the lack of inherent existence of the subject and object. By comprehending the actual nature of their existence one can apprehend all of existence as being like a dream, and therefore not generate any of the eight worldly dharmas.

If one has an understanding of emptiness, then it is very helpful for lessening one's attachment and anger. Ordinarily, what happens is that when one encounters something that one likes such as gain, one generates happiness and attachment for that. If one encounters something that one dislikes such as loss, then one generates anger. At those times, there is a perception of the object as being truly existent, and also of oneself as truly existent.

For example, when one is criticised, there is a strong perception of oneself as existing independently from one's own side. There is also the perception of the words as existing from their own side, and the person criticising as existing from their own side and so forth. If one meditates on emptiness, seeing that the words, oneself and the other person are merely imputed by conception, then that is of enormous help in lessening and avoiding anger.

Similarly when one meditates on the emptiness of the pleasant appearance of the object, remembering that it is merely imputed by mind, then that helps to lessen one's attachment. Attachment is based on the appearance of intrinsic reality of the object and oneself. If one can overcome this perception, then one can greatly lessen one's attachment.

The generation of attachment and anger is based on the true appearance of the object. By perceiving an object as existing from its own side one generates attachment or anger for the object. Training one's mind in the meditation on emptiness - that the object lacks true existence, existence from its own side, inherent existence and so forth, and is therefore dream-like - will greatly help to lessen one's attachment and anger. The more the mind is consumed by the eight worldly dharmas, the less the person will be able to practice the Dharma.

As explained in the Lam Rim, one needs to subdue the eight worldly concerns in order to be able to practice the Dharma purely. Otherwise, one will not be able to free the mind from the likes and the dislikes of this life. The more the mind is consumed by the likes and dislikes for this life, the less the person is able to practice the Dharma, and the more difficulty the person encounters in this life. The more the eight worldly dharmas rule a person's mind, the more difficulty that person has in this life.

Emptiness is the antidote to all the afflictions. By meditating on emptiness one can counteract all afflictions. One should arrive at the awareness that it is essential to realise emptiness in order to be able to overcome the mental afflictions. Overcoming the mental afflictions will only happen relative to realising emptiness. So make a concerted effort to realise emptiness. Meditate on how the generation of the afflictions depends on the perception of true existence: then you can understand how overcoming the mental afflictions depends on an understanding of emptiness.

*Where do happiness and suffering come from? [152]
Why has one likes and dislikes?
Having investigated this very nature
Who craves, and for what?*

When one investigates the very nature of emptiness with ultimate analysis and reasoning, then one comes to an understanding that there is no ultimate person who craves, and neither is there an ultimately existing object of the craving.

*When analysed, this life worldly being, [153abc]
How can it pass away here?
What will arise, what arose?*

How can this worldly sentient being pass away in this life? What will arise in the next life? What arose in the past life? With such an analysis of the nature of the person, one realises that there is no intrinsic person. There is no inherently existent person who took rebirth in the past, who took rebirth in this life, or who will take rebirth in the next life.

*What is a relative or friend? [153d]
Everything is like space - [154ab]
That is how the likes of me should think of
everything!*

When investigated, there is no intrinsic relative or friend and everything is in the space-like nature of emptiness. As Shantideva says of himself, 'The likes of me should think of everything in this way'. Here, he is referring to himself from the point of view of an ordinary being. One should understand that the awareness of emptiness is the primary cause for the attainment of the qualities of liberation and enlightenment.

2.4.2. MEDITATING ON GREAT COMPASSION TO ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE OF OTHERS

*Those, who desire happiness, [154cd]
Through the causes of fighting and likening,
Are agitated or joyful; [155]
Are miserable, striving and arguing,
Cutting, stabbing, and creating negativity
With each other; It is a very difficult life!*

These lines explain the faults of cyclic existence as the focal object of compassion.

'Those, who desire happiness' refers to those who desire and crave happiness in this life. Despite desiring happiness, they are not beyond suffering. Why is that so?

Through attachment to the happiness of this life one regards the person who obstructs one's happiness and joy as an enemy. Then one starts fighting and arguing with them. One engages in all kinds of activities with one's

friends, which are supposed to bring joy, but they have the effect of agitating the mind and making the mind unhappy. In such a way, one is left in a situation where, regardless of what one does, one does not attain happiness, and becomes very miserable. This leads one to strive even further for happiness in those mistaken ways, and to start arguing with others out of frustration, and also to engage in physical fights, which can end up with stabbing.

One creates negativity by being negative verbally, and from one's mental non-virtuous attitudes towards each other. All of this causes lots of suffering and misery, therefore, looking at the situation of sentient beings, the sages don't generate any attachment for the happiness of this life. By reflecting on the situation of sentient beings in such a way, one can generate compassion for them.

Recognising this situation, those who are skilled don't generate any attachment for the four worldly perfections. Ordinarily, one spends a great amount of time accumulating and achieving worldly perfections. That is why one goes to work, earns money and so forth. But if one is proficient, one can recognise the fruitlessness of being attached to the worldly perfections and therefore give up attachment to them.

These points are very pertinent to one's life. How can one avoid generating happiness and suffering? With regards to the eight worldly dharmas, one can avoid generating attachment and aversion towards different objects. Reflecting on the sufferings of this life, and in this way trying to lessen the attachment to the perfections of this life is very relevant.

Everybody desires happiness, but ignorance always prevents the attainment of that happiness.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak
Edited Version*

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

4 October 2005

As usual please generate a virtuous motivation.

2.4.2. MEDITATING ON GREAT COMPASSION TO ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE OF OTHERS (CONT)

2.4.2.2. THE FAULTS RELATING TO FUTURE LIVES

Last week we talked about the outline that dealt with contemplating the faults of samsara relating to this life¹. Now we come to the point of contemplating the faults of samsara relating to subsequent lifetimes.

Taking a higher rebirth from time to time, [156a]

This line relates to the fact that occasionally, through the conducive conditions of having met a virtuous teacher and having accumulated merits, one takes a higher rebirth. Through the ripening of one's merits, one experiences contaminated happiness in this higher rebirth.

*And having experienced plenty of happiness there [156bc]
One falls after death into the lower realms,*

Here, one should contemplate that the times where one experiences happiness in cyclic existence are very rare, as one only takes a higher rebirth occasionally. Also, the happiness that one experiences in that higher rebirth is very brief. Once the merits to experience such a rebirth have been exhausted, one falls into the lower realms. So one should contemplate that the present happiness, which is being experienced by using up one's merits, is very brief. After that, one is going to fall into the lower realms. Therefore one needs to contemplate what happens after this brief human life that one is presently experiencing. These lines are trying to direct one's attention to the future.

Contemplating these points - the briefness of the present human life, and the certainty of falling into the lower realms in the next life - should induce one to practise the path in order to counteract such a rebirth. By practising the path one can counteract the likelihood of rebirth in the lower realms in the next life.

Experiencing long and unceasing sufferings. [156d]

There are a multitude of precipices in samsaric existence, [157a]

There are a multitude of precipices in samsaric existence, because the accumulation of non-virtue abounds in cyclic existence. Therefore rebirths in the abysses of the hell realms are predominant in cyclic existence. That's the reason why we find that in cyclic existence the beings in the lower realms far outnumber beings in the higher realms. The reason for this is that the karma one

accumulates is primarily non-virtuous karma, which is the cause for the lower realms.

*Where it does not exist and is contradictory [157cd]
With the likes like this,*

What Shantideva is talking about is the wisdom realising selflessness, which does not exist in cyclic existence. Indeed it is contrary to a state in cyclic existence. Why has one taken rebirth in cyclic existence? It is because one has not realised selflessness. The realisation of selflessness is contrary to being in cyclic existence. Samsaric beings grasp at the true existence of a basis, path and result. For as long as there is grasping at the true existence of basis, path and result, then one will not realise selflessness. For as long as one has not realised selflessness, one will not be liberated. So, one has to realise the non-true existence of basis, path and result.

*Hence nothing like it exists in the world [157cd]
Additionally, [in Samsara] there is the inexhaustible
limitless*

Ocean of suffering without example. [158a]

Nothing like the wisdom realising selflessness exists in the world because samsaric beings grasp at true existence. In samsara, there is such a great ocean of suffering that it is impossible to find a single example to illustrate that suffering.

2.4.2.3. EVEN THOUGH ONE IS REBORN IN A HAPPY REALM THERE IS NO OPPORTUNITY FOR DHARMA PRACTICE

*Where thus it is weak [158bcd]
And one's life is short.
There are actions to live*

*And stay healthy; thirst and fatigue, [159]
Sleep and harm; likewise life passes by
Meaninglessly due to purposeless childish friends
and acquaintances -
The opportunity to think is extremely rare.*

This refers to the practice of virtue. Even if one is reborn in a higher state within this limitless ocean of suffering, it is very difficult to create any virtue, because as a samsaric being one's practise of virtue is weak. One's life is also short. That's easy to understand. Because one's life is so short, there is no opportunity for the practice of virtue.

In addition to having limited time in which to practise the Dharma, one needs to engage in actions to prolong one's life. But even if one lives a little bit longer, it is just a further opportunity to accumulate non-virtue.

All the activities that one engages in to prolong one's life, and live in good health without obstacles and so forth, take up a great amount of time. For example, the amount of time that is spent on cleaning and grooming one's body is vast. Some people stay in the bathroom for hours on a daily basis! I might for stay a half an hour having a shower and so forth. If one adds it all up, and looks at how much time in one's whole lifetime one spends in the bathroom, one realises what a great amount of time for the practice of Dharma and virtue is lost. For myself, while washing, having a shower and so forth, I recite mantras and meditate on bodhicitta and so forth, so that the time is not lost.

¹ Last week heading, 2.4.2.1. The faults relating to one's present life, was accidentally omitted.

Then there are also many other actions that one does to serve the body, such as clothing it, nourishing it and so forth. If one looks at all the time that is spent in supporting the body, it takes up a major part of one's life. Then there is also the time spent preventing the body from becoming sick; taking medicine and so forth. All of that adds up to virtually no opportunity to practise the Dharma, even though one is in the human realm.

Then the verses list thirst and fatigue, sleep and harm. In between looking after one's body, one becomes thirsty and hungry, which again makes it difficult to practise the Dharma. One finds it nearly impossible to practise the Dharma when one is thirsty or hungry, because the first thing on one's mind is to get something to eat or to drink.

People become tired and fatigued, which also makes it difficult or impossible to practise the Dharma. Rather than practise the Dharma the first thing one wants to do is to rest. Then there is sleep: while one sleeps, one doesn't practise the Dharma, and sleep takes up a major part of one's life.

Inner and outer harms also prevent one from practising the Dharma. Inner harm includes sicknesses and outer harm refers to being harmed by other human and non-human beings, which of course interferes with one's Dharma practice.

Not only does one not have time to practise the Dharma because of hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleep and harm, but what life time is left passes by meaninglessly, due to the influence of purposeless, non-virtuous, childish friends and acquaintances, who induce one to engage in all kinds of non-virtuous and meaningless activities. Thus time is wasted in accumulating non-virtue.

The opportunity to actually contemplate emptiness is extremely rare. Therefore, since emptiness is the method to become liberated from cyclic existence, one should endeavour to engage in listening, thinking and contemplation on the topic of emptiness.

2.4.2.4. CONTEMPLATING THE RARITY OF THE PRECIOUS HUMAN REBIRTH

*How can the method to overcome
Habituation with distraction possibly exist there?* [160ab]

Objection: I can meditate on emptiness while I have rebirth in a happy realm.

Response: One has been habituated to true-grasping and has engaged in limitless, different distractions since beginningless time. How could any method to overcome these different predispositions possibly exist? Essentially it's not possible. Even though it might be a happy rebirth, adverse conditions to meditating on emptiness still predominate. Conducive conditions to meditating on emptiness are exceedingly rare, even in a higher rebirth.

*Demons work there to throw one
Into the vast hells;* [160cd]

*There are many wrong paths,
And it is difficult to contradict doubt.* [161ab]

There are many obstacles even in a high rebirth. One is confronted by many inner and outer demons that work at throwing one down into the vast hells. There are many

misleading teachers who proclaim many different wrong paths. It is extremely difficult to contradict and clarify doubt. It is exceedingly difficult to find the inner and outer conditions in cyclic existence to generate wisdom, accumulate merit and find virtuous friends. One is now in this extremely fortunate situation, where one has found these conditions, and is free from many of these obstacles. If one does not practise the Dharma now, then it is extremely unlikely that one will be able to practise the Dharma later, when these conditions are not present. This is a reference to the precious human rebirth as the basis for the practice of the Dharma.

Next week is discussion night and after that you have the exam. On the first Tuesday after the exam, we will finish this chapter. Then we will continue with the tenth chapter on dedication. It is very useful to know how to dedicate one's merits. That will probably take us through to December. There are many verses, but we can just go through it as a word commentary.

I've heard good things: students who don't usually come to the Tuesday class attended the Seminar and they were very impressed not only with the depth of knowledge, but also the demeanour of the students - the way the questions were posed and the answers given in a very calm and nice manner. I am very happy with that.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak
Edited Version*

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DISCUSSION

BLOCK: 6
WEEK: 5

ASSIGNED: 11TH OCT 05

1. Can a false object possessor apprehend a false object? Give an example to illustrate your answer, and describe the end result of correct realisation of this premise. [3]
2. Is there any difference between the aggregates / self - which are made true by ignorance, and the illusions that are generated by the magician and reflections? [2]
3. Can one meditate on emptiness while watching a movie? Give an example to illustrate your answer. [3]
4. Explain the reasoning that comes to the conclusion that functionality and non-functionality are mutually exclusive. How does this become another useful proof for emptiness? [4]
5. Name and describe the two-fold function of realizing emptiness. [4]
6. State the proof that establishes the lack of inherent existence with dependent arising. [3]
7. List the eight worldly dharmas. What does it mean to eliminate these eight? [5]
8. Describe an emptiness meditation that can help a person who is overwhelmed by the eight worldly dharmas? [2]
9. '*Despite desiring happiness, they are not beyond suffering.*' Discuss this statement and explain why '*those who desire happiness*' are a worthy object of compassion. [2]
10. What factors of this life prevent opportunities to practise virtue? [4]

EXAM

NAME:

BLOCK: **6**

WEEK: **6**

ASSIGNED: 18TH OCT 05

/32

MARK:

1. Can a false object possessor apprehend a false object? Give an example to illustrate your answer, and describe the end result of correct realisation of this premise. [3]

2. Is there any difference between the aggregates / self - which are made true by ignorance, and the illusions that are generated by the magician and reflections? [2]

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3. Can one meditate on emptiness while watching a movie? Give an example to illustrate your answer. [3]
4. Explain the reasoning that comes to the conclusion that functionality and non-functionality are mutually exclusive. How does this become another useful proof for emptiness? [4]
5. Name and describe the two-fold function of realizing emptiness. [4]

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6. State the proof that establishes the lack of inherent existence with dependent arising. [3]

7. List the eight worldly dharmas. What does it mean to eliminate these eight? [5]

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8. Describe an emptiness meditation that can help a person who is overwhelmed by the eight worldly dharmas? [2]

9. '*Despite desiring happiness, they are not beyond suffering.*' Discuss this statement and explain why '*those who desire happiness*' are a worthy object of compassion. [2]

10. What factors of this life prevent opportunities to practice virtue? [4]

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

25 October 2005

As usual please generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. In order to achieve that aim I am now going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

THE ACTUAL MEANING OF THE TEXT

2. THE ELABORATE EXPLANATION OF THE NEED TO GENERATE WISDOM

2.4. The function of realising emptiness

2.4.2. MEDITATING ON GREAT COMPASSION TO ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE OF OTHERS.

2.4.2.4. CONTEMPLATING THE RARITY OF THE PRECIOUS HUMAN REBIRTH

We have reached the part in the text that explains the rarity of one's precious human rebirth. It says that even though one has now taken a human rebirth, there are many obstructing conditions that can lead one astray and prevent progress and so forth. For example, the presence of many misleading teachers and many misleading tenets can easily generate distorted and afflicted wisdom, and even though one has a human rebirth there are many conditions that make Dharma practice extremely difficult and sometimes virtually impossible.

Therefore one should not allow oneself to be lulled into a false sense of comfort thinking, 'Oh, now I have a precious human rebirth and everything is going well, and even if it doesn't go well now I will just do better in the next life'. In fact it will be extremely difficult to find another precious human rebirth with all the good conducive conditions, such as qualified virtuous friend and so forth, in the future.

Searching for and gathering all the conducive conditions such as finding a pure virtuous teacher and finding the Dharma is extremely difficult, but one is actually in the presence of both of those conducive conditions now. They are extremely difficult to find. So making the mental excuse, 'Oh, even if I don't practise the Dharma purely this life, I can always do better in my next life' is an extremely misleading notion. In fact one can say that gathering these conditions again will probably not happen.

Finding freedom again is difficult [161cd]
And the coming of a buddha is extremely rare to find.

It is difficult to abandon the river of afflictions [162ab]
And weighted down by these one continually suffers.

'Finding freedom again is difficult' refers to the precious human rebirth that is endowed with the eight freedoms. It is extremely *difficult* to find this rebirth *again*. It is *extremely rare* to be reborn when a *buddha* has *come*. Even if one manages to do that, being reborn with a body

that has the freedoms necessary to practice the Dharma is even rarer.

The coming of a buddha is extremely rare and therefore to be reborn at a time when a buddha has come is even rarer. On top of that, to be reborn with the freedoms to practice the Dharma is rare, and to have to other conducive conditions to practice the Dharma is even harder to find. So it is an extremely rare occurrence to have a precious human rebirth.

If one does not rely properly on the virtuous friend that one has found now, and, following the instructions of that virtuous teacher, enter the path realising emptiness, then will be extremely difficult to extract oneself from the continuity the river of afflictions.

Without realising emptiness it is not possible to abandon the afflictions, because emptiness is the sole antidote. If one does not abandon the stream of afflictions then just as a river continues to flow one will be continuously weighed down by the different waves of suffering.

2.4.2.5. IT IS APPROPRIATE TO MOURN THE SUFFERING OF ONESELF AND OTHERS IS SAMBARA

Those that do not see their suffering [162cd]
Despite suffering to the extreme,

These, submerged in the river of suffering [163ab]
It is appropriate to mourn.

Compassion focuses on those who mistake suffering for happiness and who, despite extreme suffering do not see that they are suffering.

It is appropriate to mourn sentient beings who are in this situation. While meditating on sentient beings and their situation, one generates a feeling of grief for those suffering sentient beings, and that is an appropriate reaction. The Tibetan word conveys the unhappiness and grief that arises in the mind from this contemplation on the suffering of these sentient beings.

Who could not feel grief after watching sentient beings repeatedly go into a fire again and again, and who, even though they abide in extreme suffering, believe that they are happy, continually acting as if there is no old age and death for them?

*For example, some, after having washed repeatedly, [163cd]
Go into fire again and again.*

These two lines relate to sentient beings being lead astray by misleading teachers and misleading tenets. The words 'some after having washed repeatedly go into a fire again and again' relates to practitioners who believe that they can purify their negativity by washing in certain springs and rivers. Then they do other things such as sitting in rings of fire, believing it will lead to liberation, or they engage in other acts of self-mutilation and so forth, such as lying on a bed of nails, in the belief that these practices will lead to liberation. In actuality all that happens here is that further causes for suffering are generated. Even though there is the perception of happiness, all they have done is to generate further causes for samsara. Therefore these sentient beings become the object of one's compassion.

*Thus, even though abiding in extreme suffering, [164]
They make-believe that they are happy.
Thus those continually acting
As if without old age and death
Are first killed, [165ab]
And then the lower realms come without respite.*

There are those who, even though they abide in *extreme suffering*, mistake that suffering for samsaric happiness – they delude themselves into thinking that they lead a *happy* life, and behave as if they are already arhats who do not need to worry about experiencing the sufferings of *old age, sickness* and death; they believe that *old age, sickness and death* do not apply to them. *Continually acting* like an arhat who does not experience the sufferings of birth, aging, *old age and death, first* they experience death and then *the lower realms*.

An arhat is liberated from the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death and does not need to worry about them anymore, but sentient beings behave recklessly as if, like arhats, they have already abandoned these sufferings, and need not fear these sufferings anymore. They act as if they will live forever, believing that death will never come. But, through different adventitious conditions, death always comes. Then they experience the lower realms without respite.

That completes the explanation of the **focal object** of one's compassion.

The aspect of compassion

The aspect or the mode of apprehension of compassion is the wish for sentient beings to be free from those sufferings. The aspect of compassion is that one has an inability to be able to bear that sentient beings should experience these sufferings, and the wish that sentient beings be free from these sufferings. The aspect of love is a wish for sentient beings to experience happiness.

*Thus may I become someone from whose [165cd]
Clouds of merits a rain well borne*

*Accumulation of happiness pacifies those [166ab]
Tortured by the sufferings of fire.*

'*Thus may I* refers to a person who has reflected on sentient beings in the previously prescribed way, seeing them as being tortured by the sufferings of the fires of the lower realms and so forth. From one's *clouds of merits* may a *rain* of happiness flow down and *pacify* the *sufferings* of sentient beings.

This explains the aspect of compassion after having first focused on sentient beings who are tortured by the fire of the different sufferings. Then one generates the wish that from one's clouds of merits may a rain of well-borne accumulation of happiness (which refers to the different things that make sentient beings happy) fall and pacify their sufferings. May a rain of these accumulations of happiness (the different things that are necessary for a livelihood and so forth) be born from one's clouds of merits, and pacify the fires of the sufferings of sentient beings and establish them in happiness.

*May I, by respectfully building up the accumulation [166cd]
of merits
In the way without focus,*

May I, by respectfully building up the accumulation of merits, and by viewing the accumulation of merits as lacking *focus*, because of one's accumulation of wisdom... This is a reference to the accumulation of wisdom which does not apprehend the object of true grasping in any way.

By *building respectfully* and joyfully *the accumulation of merits* through the practices of generosity, morality and so forth in a vast and extensive manner, and by building up the accumulation of wisdom that lacks the object of true focus, may I be able to show emptiness to those who are destitute because of having the focus of true grasping.

*Be able to show emptiness to those [167]
Who are destitute because of having focus.*

May I be able to show emptiness to all sentient beings liberating them in such a way from cyclic existence.

In such a way *may I be able to show emptiness to all those* sentient beings who are destitute of the wisdom realising emptiness, *because of having* the *focus* of true grasping, and liberate sentient beings.

In such a way may I attain the state of omniscience to bring emptiness to all sentient beings.

A bodhisattva's practice of bodhicitta is the unification of the wisdom realising emptiness and great compassion. This is a reference to bodhicitta that unifies method and wisdom. Therefore one should likewise train in the bodhicitta that unifies compassion and emptiness and train in the path of the middle way.

Lama Tsong Khapa says that regardless of how much one meditates on renunciation and bodhicitta, for as long as one has not realised emptiness, one will not even attain liberation. Therefore one should train in the method of dependent arising. This is just another way of saying that one should train in the method of emptiness.

Gyaltsab Rinpoche says likewise that, without realising the view of the middle way, one will not even attain the state of liberation, and the state of an arhat. Therefore one should train in the path of dependent arising.

Therefore, seeing that samsaric perfections are empty of any essence just like the banana tree, one should give up samsaric perfections and rely on a Mahayana virtuous friend correctly in both in thought as well as in action. By training in the different methods for generating bodhicitta, which is the entrance to the Mahayana path, and by practising the supreme perfection of wisdom, one should accomplish one's own potential and the purpose of others.

The name of the ninth chapter is the chapter of the Perfection of Wisdom of the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.

Next week we will continue with the tenth chapter, just by going through the verses. There will be no exam unless you have a specific wish to have one. The tenth chapter doesn't deal with very complicated philosophical themes so it is very accessible to everybody. It should be advertised that it is also suitable for people who usually come only on the Wednesday and Monday night classes.

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga
Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

1 November 2005

As usual please sit yourself comfortably in a good posture, and generate the motivation of wanting to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. Then think, 'For that purpose, I am now going to listen to this profound teaching and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

We have previously completed the ninth chapter of the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* and now we go onto the tenth chapter. Of the six perfections, the tenth chapter explains the perfection of generosity, in the form of dedication. This chapter comes in two outlines:

1. An explanation of the dedication in brief
2. A more elaborate explanation

1. An explanation of the dedication in brief

*By the virtues of me writing the
Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life
May all migrators
Enter the Bodhisattva's Way of Life.*

[1]

This is quite clear. 'By the virtues of me' refers, of course, to Shantideva the author, explaining in *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* all the bodhisattva practices and their path to enlightenment.

By the virtue of me Shantideva writing *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* and also students listening to *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life may all migrators enter the bodhisattva's way of life.*

Shantideva dedicates all the virtues created from the composition and explanation of *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, so that all migrators may be able to enter the bodhisattva's way of life. The purpose of dedication is to save one's merits for complete enlightenment, and also to increase one's merits. By dedicating merits to a great aim, such as complete enlightenment, even small merits can be greatly increased and produce a big result. In such a way, once the merits are dedicated to complete enlightenment, they are also protected from being destroyed by anger.

In order to make a dedication, one needs to have some merits that can be dedicated, which is what differentiates a prayer from a dedication. A mere prayer is merely wishing and aspirational, and one does not necessarily have to have anything to dedicate towards that aim. But a dedication is a prayer where one actually has something to dedicate. One can say that if it is a dedication then it is necessarily a prayer, but if is a prayer it is not necessarily a dedication.

When one dedicates merits to the welfare of others and combines that with the wisdom realising the lack of inherent existence of the substance given and so forth, one can see how dedication is the perfection of generosity. By practicing dedication in such a way one places imprints on one's mind to attain both the form-body as well as the wisdom-truth body of a buddha.

The dedication of merits to the attainment of complete

enlightenment is the practice relative to conventional truth. Meditating on the emptiness of the three circles is the practice relative to ultimate truth. On the one side are the motivation, the actual action and the dedication of the merits, which is all relative to conventional truth. On the other side, there is the meditation on the emptiness of the practice of giving, the substance that is given etc., which is relative to ultimate truth. So one has both method and wisdom complete there.

2. The extensive explanation

This comes in three parts:

- 2.1. Dedication for the welfare of others
- 2.2. Dedication for the achievement of one's own potential
- 2.3. Dedication both for the purpose of others and self

2.1. Dedication for the welfare of others

This comes in two parts:

- 2.1.1. Dedicating that the unfortunate ones are relieved of their suffering
- 2.1.2. Dedicating for the completion of realisations of those who have already advanced

2.1.1. Dedicating that the unfortunate ones are relieved of their suffering

This comes in two outlines:

- 2.1.1.1. Dedicating that the beings of the three realms are free from suffering in general
- 2.1.1.2. Dedicating by relating it to the individual sufferings of the three lower realms

2.1.1.1. Dedicating that the beings of the three realms are free from suffering in general

*Those in all directions
Suffering in body and mind
May they through my merits
Attain an ocean of bliss and happiness.* [2]

In a way the verse is quite self-explanatory. *Those in all directions* refers all the beings residing in all directions, who are experiencing different mental and physical sufferings. *May they, through my merits, attain an ocean of bliss and happiness.* Compassion should also be generated in one's mind when meditating on this dedication.

*For as long as they are in cyclic existence
May they never fall from happiness;
May migrators attain the highest
Happiness for ever.* [3]

For as long they are in cyclic existence, may all sentient beings, when *migrators, never fall from happiness,* and *may they attain the highest happiness forever.*

2.1.1.2. Dedicating by relating it to the individual sufferings of the three lower realms

This outline concerns dedication to the alleviation of specific sufferings relating to the lower realms - the animal realms and so forth. We will go through the verses without mentioning the individual outlines, because there are quite a lot of them.

Even the wish for another sentient being to be relieved of a mere headache is an incredibly powerful virtuous thought. Therefore, there is no question that the thought of wishing all sentient beings to be free from all sufferings has limitless power and potential. One might ask, 'How is one's own purpose achieved by dedication?'. Well, the answer is right here. By generating this strong compassion and wishing sentient beings to be free from all their sufferings and so

forth, one accumulates a vast amount of merits because of the incredibly powerful virtue of these thoughts. By dedicating to complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings, one creates the cause for enlightenment, and as the practice of method, places an imprint to achieve the form body of a buddha. By meditating on the emptiness of the three circles, one practises wisdom and places an imprint to attain the wisdom-truth body of a buddha. In such a way all the aspects of the path are present. Compassion has great purifying power. We know this from the life story of Asanga. Therefore one purifies vast amounts of non-virtuous karma by generating all this love and compassion while dedicating.

There are forty-four verses in this outline. We are not going to read them all at once - they will come in instalments [laughter].

*May all beings existing
In the all the hell realms found
In the transitory worlds
Become happy and attain bliss through happiness.* [4]

May all beings that exist in all the hell realms that are found in all the transitory worlds be alleviated from their sufferings of heat and cold, and attain happiness and bliss through happiness.

*May those burdened by cold become warm. [5]
May water from
The great clouds of bodhisattvas,
Refresh the limitless beings burdened by heat.*

May those suffering the cold in the eight cold hells become warm and happy sentient beings. May the water from the great clouds of the two accumulations of the bodhisattvas alleviate the suffering of heat of the limitless beings burdened by heat.

*May also the forest of blade leaves, [6ab]
Become a beautiful pleasure tent.*

This relates to the sufferings of the neighbouring hells. After having prayed for relief from the hot and cold hells, one then prays for the alleviation of the sufferings of the neighbouring hells. *May the forests where all the leaves are sword and knife-like blades become a beautiful pleasure tent.*

This refers to a neighbouring hell where beings experience being cut and stabbed, because of having to go through a forest where all the trees have double-edged blades. Sometimes when you go into the bush, there are some types of big leaves that are quite sharp on both sides. If one goes through them without protection one could be quite badly cut. This neighbouring hell is similar. One dedicates that may these become a pleasure tent for those in this hell.

*May the trees of knife fruits [6cd]
Become wish-fulfilling trees.*

*May they be beautified by the melodious sounds of [7ab]
Wild ducks, red ducks and geese.*

This refers to a similar type of hell where one is walking through a forest and hears the screams and voices of those who were near and dear to oneself coming from the top of the trees. So one climbs up the tree but as one climbs up, the leaves and the fruits of the tree are knives that are turned downward. As one climbs up through them one is cut by them. Then, when one has reached the top, one's near and dear ones cannot be found. But there are many wild birds that will pick at one's head. [laughter] This contemplation is

very good because it instils the fear of non-virtue.

In ancient times there were wish-fulfilling trees, and if one prayed to these then one's worldly wishes would be fulfilled. So here one prays that these trees of knife fruits become wish-fulfilling trees. As to the knives and birds that are picking at one's head in this terrifying place, one prays, *May they be beautified by melodious sounds of*, and then the verse lists all kinds of birds that could be melodious such as *wild ducks*, a specific kind of *red wild duck and geese* and so forth.

After having gone through all the suffering of climbing up the tree and being cut in the process, and having one's head being pecked and one's brains being picked at by the birds, one hears the voices from the root foot of the tree and one starts to climb down and this time, the knives all point upwards [laughter]. So one goes through the same process again.

*May through lakes with greatly scented lotus flowers [7cd]
The realms of hell become happy places.*

*May the heaps of burning coals become heaps of [8]
jewels;*

May the burning ground become like a crystal ground.

May the grinding mountains become the crystal palace

Of offerings; May it become the abode of the Ones Gone to Bliss.

In another hell one experiences being ground up between these *mountains*. *May they become like a crystal palace of offerings and may it all become the abode of the Ones Gone to Bliss.*

*May the rain of burning coals, embers and weapons [9ab]
Become forthwith a rain of flowers.*

In China, it happens from time to time that it rains stones. Similarly, in these kinds of hells all kinds of hurtful things rain down. *May all of that become a rain of flowers*. For example even the human realm there are hail storms where the hail is the size of tennis balls. In the animal realm there are many experiences like that.

*May those cutting each other with knives, [9cd]
Forthwith throw flowers for fun.*

This relates to a particular type of hell rebirth where one is constantly engaged in knife fights to the death with an opponent. Then after both have died and fallen to the ground, a voice comes from the sky saying, 'rise up again' and one has to go through the whole cycle again and again. This verse asks that instead of fighting *each other with knives*, may these beings *throw flowers* at each other *for fun*.

*May all these beings [10]
Through the power of my virtue,*

Obtain the divine body of a god

And then enjoy themselves with goddesses.

This relates to the suffering where beings are boiled in hot water and so forth, until the flesh falls from the bones, which then turn white.

May the beings that are being boiled in hot water until all flesh falls from their bones obtain, through the force of my virtue, a divine body of a god and then enjoy themselves with goddesses.

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

8 November 2005

Generate a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I need to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. For that purpose I am going to listen to this profound teaching and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

2.1. Dedication for the welfare of others

2.1.1.2. Dedicating by relating it to the individual sufferings of the three lower realms

The following three verses dedicate that the beings in the hell realms be liberated by the trinity of Vajrapani, Chenrezig and Manjushri, through the power of prayer and mental stabilisation.

The first of these three verses dedicates in relation to Vajrapani, who is the emanation of all the Buddha's power. The second verse dedicates in relation to Chenrezig, who is the embodiment of all the Buddha's compassion, and the third verse dedicates in relation to Manjushri, who is the embodiment of all the Buddha's wisdom.

*Why am I afraid here of the men, crows and vultures
of the lord of death?* [11]

*Whose power created this pure bliss and happiness
that dispels darkness completely?*

*Having thought this, may they look up, and see
Vajrapani blazing in the sky.*

*May they be separated from their negativities
through their joy of seeing him and become his
companion.*

Previously one dedicated that the sufferings of the hell realms cease. Here it says that after the terrifying noises made by the *vultures*, the *crows* and the different minions of *the lord of death* in the hell realms (who instil very great fear in the beings that live there) cease, may the hell realms be transformed into places of *pure bliss and happiness*. Then the beings there wonder how this has come about and look up into the sky.

After all the different fears, the terrifying noises and beings, and the darkness of the hell realms have been pacified, and the hell realms have become beautiful blissful and happy places (as one has prayed for in the previous verses) may all the beings *look up* and behold the powerful form of *Vajrapani blazing in the sky*. May great joy be generated in their minds *through seeing him* and through that *joy* may they become free from all *their negativities* and join Vajrapani as *his companion*.

*Having seen the fires of hell extinguished
By a rain of flowers and scented water* [12]
*May the hell beings think about where this
adventitious satisfaction of happiness
Came from, and see the lotus in Vajrapani's hand.*

This verse prays for the sufferings of hell realms to be relieved through the compassion of Chenrezig. It is somewhat similar to the previous one in that initially the sufferings of the hell realms are extinguished, and the sentient beings wonder about the cause of this. Then they

see the deity, which in this case is Chenrezig. *Having seen the fires of hell extinguished by a rain of flowers and scented water, may all the hell beings*, for whom one has previously prayed, *think about where this adventitious satisfaction of happiness has come from*, and may they *see the lotus*, which is Chenrezig, *in Vajrapani's hand*.

*Friend, come hither, far away from the dangerous one
within. You* [13]

*Will become free from all sufferings and be gone in
the power of joy.*

*The one who generates bodhicitta and love to rescue
all migrators,*

*Who will come to Manjushri with the radiant top
knot eliminating all fears?*

*A hundred gods make offerings to his lotus feet, he
has eyes moistened with compassion* [14]

And a rain of various flowers falls on his crown.

*He has a pleasant house, hundreds of thousands of
goddesses Melodiously singing his praises; behold
him!*

*Having seen Manjushri may the hellish minds
emerge.*

Here the scenario is that one of the hell beings is Manjushri, who invites all the other hell beings to join with him to get away from *the dangerous one* - the lord of death. He tells them that if they go with him then they *will be free from suffering, and be gone in the power of joy*, and *will join Manjushri* who has *the radiant top knot illuminating all fears, the one who generates bodhicitta and love to rescue all migratory beings. A hundred gods make offerings to his lotus feet*, and *his eyes are moistened with compassion. A rain of various flowers fall on his crown and he has a pleasant house where hundreds of thousands of goddesses melodiously sing his praises. Behold him!*

May all beings in the hell realms, after having seen Manjushri in such a way, break out in praises from joy and happiness.

There are two ways of viewing Vajrapani, Manjushri and Chenrezig. One, as the trinity explained above, and two, as three of the eight close disciples. The remaining five close disciples are Samanta-bhadra (Always Pure), Namka'i Nyingpo (Essence of Space), Sa'i Nying-po (Essence of the Earth), Jampa (Love) and Dripa Namsel (Pure from Obscurations)

The next verse relates to the remaining five close disciples.

Thus, by the roots of my merits, [15]
*May the hell sentient beings be delighted
By seeing fresh and nice smelling blissful rain falling
from clouds
Unobscured; like the bodhisattvas completely pure
and so forth.*

Shantideva prays that *by the roots of my merit, by the power and ability of the remaining five close disciples may a rain of fresh and nice smelling rain*, which is *blissful* to the touch and *unobscured* by obscurations, *fall from the clouds*. When the *hell beings* see this rain may *they be delighted* and happy.

That completes the dedication relating to the merits. In this context the eight close disciples are viewed as bodhisattvas who always accompany the Buddha.

May animals be free from the [16ab]
Fear of one being eaten by the other.

Animals have the particular suffering of living in a realm of

constantly being eaten by other bigger animals. *May the animals be free from the suffering of being eaten by others.*

May all hungry ghosts be happy [16cd]
Like the people in Draminyen.

May the hungry ghosts be purified and satisfied [17]
By a stream of milk flowing down
From the hand of the powerful transcendent
Chenrezig
And be satisfied forever

The continent of Draminyen is endowed with many fortunes - steady wealth, food, life span and so forth. *May all hungry ghosts* have this happiness, like the *people* who took rebirth in *Draminyen*. *May the hungry ghosts be purified and satisfied by a stream of milk flowing down from the hand of the powerful transcendent Chenrezig and be satisfied forever.*

This relates to a visualization of the milk flowing down from the hand of Chenrezig into the mouth of the hungry ghost, purifying them from their negativities. By doing this meditation you are satisfying their hunger and thirst, and placing them in a state of everlasting happiness.

The previous prayers were for beings reborn in the lower realms; one has dedicated for beings that were reborn in the hell realms, the beings that were reborn in the preta realm, and one dedicated for those that were reborn in the animal realm.

2.1.2. Dedicating for the completion of realisations of those who have already advanced

Now one dedicates for beings that have been reborn in the higher realms so that they become free from suffering. Initially one dedicates so that those with incomplete faculties have complete faculties.

May all that are blind behold form [18]
And all that are deaf always hear sounds.
Like the magical goddesses
May pregnant women be protected and without harm.

One dedicates for those who have incomplete faculties to have complete faculties: for *the blind* to be able to see and for *the deaf* to be able to *hear* and so forth. One also dedicates for *pregnant women to be protected* from difficulty and harm *like the Magical Goddess* (which is the name of the Buddha's mother), who had a very problem-free pregnancy.

The subsequent prayers are dedicating to all the different individual physical and mental sufferings of the beings in the happy realms.

May the naked ones get clothes [19]
Those hungry get food
Those thirsty get water
And sweet drinks.

May those destitute attain wealth [20]
May those miserable and downtrodden attain happiness.
Those depressed by uplifted
And attain perfect stability.

May those who lack *clothes get* nice, beautiful *clothes*, may *those* who are *hungry get* very good and delicious *food*, may *those* who are *thirsty get water* and other kinds of nice drinks such as good tea and so forth. *May those* who are *destitute attain* perfect, stable *wealth*.

May *those* who are *miserable and downtrodden* be uplifted and attain *happiness*. May *those* who are *depressed* and discouraged, because of not achieving their aims, be uplifted and cheered up though achieving their aims. May they attain inner strength and a life of perfect stability and harmony, where suffering and mental unhappiness can harm them.

May those who are low and miserable attain happiness. May those who are burdened by many sufferings, and who are low and miserable attain happiness, and may they attain the objects that make them happy and so forth. May the minds of those who are depressed and miserable be uplifted and may they also attain happiness. Sometimes there are things that can uplift the mind of somebody who is miserable and depressed. May they all experience or receive those things and may their minds be uplifted and happy.

May all sick sentient beings quickly [21]
Be liberated from their sickness
May all the sicknesses of all migratory beings
Be eternally banished forever.

May those with anxieties, paranoias and fears become fearless, may those in bondage be liberated, may the powerless ones become powerful and empowered. *May all sentient beings* who are *sick be* cured of *their sickness*. *May all* the mental and physical ailments and *sicknesses of migratory beings be banished forever*. May they never arise ever again.

Praying that may those who are fearful, with anxieties, paranoia and so forth become fearless, is a very good prayer for these times where many people are very afraid.

May those who are in bondage and in serfdom and [22]
Under the power of others become liberated.
May those who are powerless
Become empowered.

May sentient beings who are powerless become empowered and may their minds become mutually friendly, One can often observe that people don't interact in a very friendly manner with each other. May all this harmful intent and spite and so forth be pacified in their minds, and may they live together harmoniously.

A note on variations in translations

Different translations come about because some translators do a word commentary, and others concentrate on the actual words that are there in the root text. It could be that some don't stick to the words of the root text, but give more of an explanation of the words.

Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks
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Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak
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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

15 November 2005

As usual generate the virtuous motivation of bodhicitta thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. In order to achieve that aim I am going to listen to this profound teaching, and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

Dedications for the success of those who set out on journeys

May all the travellers in all directions [23]
Have happiness;
May the purpose for which they set out on the
journey
Be accomplished effortlessly.

May all travellers who journey in all kinds of different directions in order to attain wealth, success and other aims, achieve those aims and have happiness. May whatever aims they have be achieved *effortlessly*.

May those who sail on small and big ships, [24]
Achieve their aims according to their wishes.
May they safely and happily reach the shore of their
destination
And be happily reunited with their family.

May those who set out on small boats and big ships achieve the wealth and so forth, for which they set out.

In the past people set out on boat journeys primarily to seek wealth, precious jewels etc. So here one prays that they find all the wealth that they are looking for. *May they safely* return to their home *and be happily reunited with their family*. Also, may they not experience any sickness or accidents and so forth.

This is a very nice and useful prayer to do. For example, sometimes it happens that, when one returns home from a long journey, for some reason one cannot be happily reunited with one's family.

May those who wander about, lost on dry plains,
mistaken paths and so forth, [25]
Meet with travellers
May they be free from dangers such as bandits,
thieves, tigers and so forth
May they be able to walk their paths untiringly and
happily.

May those who wander about lost on remote plains and mistaken paths meet up with other travellers. May they be protected from all *dangers such as bandits, thieves, tigers and so forth. May they* be able to proceed along the journey *happily, untiring* in body and mind.

Repeatedly people who go hiking in remote places get lost, and have to live off what they can find in the forest, until they meet up with others or find their way and so forth.

May those who are lost in isolated places, [26]
Who have experienced suffering, who are elderly,
without protector
Whose minds are deluded, crazy or sleepy and so
forth
May all of these be looked after by the gods.

May those who are lost in isolated places, regardless of whether they are young or old, or who are of unstable and disturbed mind and *without* protection, *be looked after by the gods*.

Prayers for the good fortune of fortunate beings to continue

To this point the prayers have been for the alleviation of the different sufferings of human beings. Now one prays for different happinesses - for the increase of fortune and wealth, freedoms and endowments and so forth - to increase.

May they be liberated from inopportune states; and
may they in all their lifetimes, [27]
Be endowed with faith, wisdom and love and
compassion;
May they always have food; and
May they always be aware of good actions and
behaviours;

Here inopportune states relates to the inopportune states to practice the Dharma. *May* beings be free from the eight *inopportune states* for the practice of the Dharma. *May* their lives *be endowed with faith, wisdom, love and compassion. May they have* good and tasty *food. May they,* through their *actions,* always have the mindfulness that remembers all past lives. This refers to the clairvoyance that remembers past lives.

May they receive unceasing wealth [28ab]
Equalling the space-like treasure.

There is a specific type of concentration that is referred to as the space concentration. When *one* has achieved this specific type of concentration, then one will effortlessly achieve great *wealth*.

May they live together without quarrels and
arguments; [28cd]
May they without harmfulness, attain independence;

Usually when sentient beings achieve wealth, they very quickly they start to quarrel amongst themselves and start to harm each other in various ways. *May they* be able to *live without quarrels and disputes,* live *independently,* enjoying their wealth *without harming* each other.

May sentient beings who have little splendour and
charisma [29ab]
Achieve splendour and charisma.

May those sentient beings who have a bad complexion, *little charisma and splendour* and so forth, *achieve* a good complexion and lots of *charisma and splendour* and so forth.

For those who are sick and diseased with physical
defects, [29cd]
May their forms become completely perfect and
whole.

May all the bodies of those who have physical problems, difficulties and any kind of *physical defect* and so forth, *become perfect, whole*, beautiful, healthy and so forth.

May all women become men; [30]
May all who are low
Achieve a high status; and
May all those who are proud become humble.

The first line has to be read carefully. In Shantideva's time women had a very, very hard time. He was praying from that point of view. Observing the suffering of women, and seeing that they were suffering much more than the men, because of being suppressed, having to work harder and so forth, he prayed that they be reborn as men.

Some people use this line to criticise Shantideva, but I think it is important to understand that Shantideva does not have a low view of women, and that this dedication is not from the point of view of seeing women as inferior. Therefore one should not use these two lines to say that Shantideva discriminates against women. One should not listen to people who say such a thing, because that places a very harmful imprint on one's mind to be separated from bodhicitta for many lifetimes.

May those of *low* family lineage *achieve a higher status*, and *may* they not *become* very *proud*, but remain *humble*.

Quite often there is increasing pride when somebody rises from a lower social status to a higher social status. That's why Shantideva prays that they remain humble.

By my merits, [31]
May all sentient beings
Having abandoned all negativity,
Continuously practise virtue.

Shantideva prays, '*By my merits may all sentient beings abandon all negativity and continuously practise virtue*'. Shantideva prays that by the merits he has accumulated through engaging into the bodhisattva practices, all sentient beings will abandon the negativity of the ten non-virtuous actions, and through that, continuously practice virtue.

Dedication for sentient beings to progress along their path to liberation

May sentient beings never be separated from
bodhicitta, [32ab]
And engage in the bodhisattva practices.

May sentient beings never be separated from the wishing *bodhicitta*, the engaging *bodhicitta* and so forth, and practise the different *bodhisattva practices* such as the six perfections and so forth.

First there is the motivation of bodhicitta, in dependence on which one engages into the practice of the six perfections. May sentient beings to be able to engage in these practices.

May they always be looked after by the buddhas [32cd]
May they always abandon the actions induced by
different demons.

This refers to abandoning actions that are harmful towards one's progress along the path. *May* sentient beings *looked after by the buddhas* and virtuous teachers,

the conducive condition for the path. Here 'virtuous teacher' refers to the buddhas themselves. *May they always abandon the actions* that are counter-productive to progress along *the path*.

As we did last week, we can recite the chapter from the beginning. Here one can pray for everything. People repeatedly ask for prayers to be done for those who have exams, or for people who are sick and so forth. Here you can pray for all of that.

Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

22 November 2005

In dependence on the root of great compassion generate a good motivation, the motivation of bodhicitta.

Dedicating for sentient beings to be reborn in the pure realms and to have a long life

May all sentient beings have [33]
A limitless life span;
May they always enjoy a happy life,
May the sound of death not ring.

May all the sentient beings (the limitless sentient beings of all directions) *have limitless life span*, and in that life span *may* their *life* be *always happy*. May they also be free from untimely *death*, before their natural lifespan runs out.

May all places become [34]
Gardens where wish-fulfilling trees grow,
Where everywhere buddhas and bodhisattvas
Listen to the profound sound of Dharma.

Then Shantideva says, by all my merits may all the impure worldly realms become a pleasure *garden* full of *wish-fulfilling trees*, filled with *buddhas and bodhisattvas* proclaiming and *listening* to the melodious *sound of Dharma*.

May the ground everywhere be free from unevenness [35]
Caused by pebbles, thorns and so forth, and
Become as smooth as the palm of one's hand
And the smooth nature of lapis lazuli.

May the ground everywhere be without *unevenness*, without *thorns, pebbles*, stones that stand out and so forth, and be *smooth*, like *the palm of one's hand* or *lapis lazuli*.

In the pure lands there is no unevenness, and beings who live there just lightly touch the surface of the ground when they walk, rather than leaving behind an impression. So this prayer is the accumulation of merit that causes one to be reborn in the pure lands.

Initially you pray for a long life of sentient beings, but having a long life is not enough. You also need to have a happy life, and you also have to have the Dharma, because having a life without Dharma is pointless.

You pray here for everything to be like a pure land, a pleasure grove of wish-fulfilling trees, where everything is pervaded by the sound of Dharma taught by buddhas and bodhisattvas, and for sentient beings to have all of these qualities. This prayer is the accumulation that causes one to be reborn in the pure lands, which is where one wants to be reborn.

May there where the circles of retinues are [36]
Many bodhisattvas abide
By adorning the ground

With their qualities.

May bodhisattvas abide in *the places* where the buddhas turned the wheel of Dharma and *adorn them with* their wonderful *qualities*.

May all sentient beings [37]
Hear the sound of Dharma continuously
From birds in the trees and from the sunlight.
May they always meet buddhas and bodhisattvas.

May all sentient beings continuously hear the sound of Dharma from space, *from the sunlight*, from the *trees, birds* and so forth. At present one hears more non-Dharma sounds than Dharma sounds. So here one prays that all sentient beings continuously hear the sound of Dharma, which is a good thing, because the Dharma is essential.

May all sentient beings always meet perfectly
enlightened buddhas [38]
And their children the Bodhisattvas.
May they make limitless offerings with infinite
offering clouds
To the guru of migrators.

The guru of migrators sometimes refers to a teacher, but in this case it refers to Shakyamuni Buddha.

Praying for conducive conditions not to degenerate

May the rain always be timely, [39]
May a perfect crop ripen
May the king act in accordance with the Dharma
May the Dharma spread in the worldly realms.

May the gods (of the white side) *always* let *the rain* fall on time, and may *the crops* also *ripen* well and plentifully, which is a very important worldly purpose.

May the king act in accordance with the Dharma. This is also important, as it is not enough to have a good crop and plenty of food if that is misused by the people who rule the country. It is important that the people who rule the country also act in accordance with the Dharma.

May medicine be powerful, [40]
May the recitations of secret mantra be successful,
May sky dwellers, yakshas and so forth
Be endowed with the mind of compassion

May the life force and merits of worldly beings increase, and *may medicines be powerful* and effective.

May all the recitations of secret mantras be that are done with a good motivation, and which belong to the white side, be accomplished and fulfil the needs of all sentient beings.

May the space dwellers and (literally) the blood drinkers be free from harmful intent, anger, viciousness and so forth, and *be endowed with a mind of compassion*. There are different kinds of demon-like beings who harm human beings by drinking their blood and eating their flesh. There are other kinds of beings who dwell in space who also harm human beings. May all the anger, viciousness and harmful intent of those different types of non-human beings who harm to other sentient beings be pacified, and may they become *endowed with the mind of compassion* with love and compassion.

May sentient beings not experience the slightest suffering [41abc]
And be free from dangers and criticism and
May they not experience the slightest mental unhappiness.

May no sentient being experience any physical suffering. When one offers this prayer then it should be pervaded by love and compassion.

May no sentient being experience any fear, or be bullied, or harmed by others, because if one is mentally anxious and fearful or otherwise mentally unhappy then physical wellness alone is not sufficient for a happy life experience. You can see Shantideva's thoroughness here; he has put a lot of thought into his dedication. The dedication chapter is complete: it prays for sentient beings in the hell realms, in the hungry ghost realm, in the animal realm, then for human beings and so forth.

Dedications for the ordained community in general and for different types of ordained practitioners

May the monasteries abide and expand and prosper [41d]

Through reading and reciting; [42abc]
May the Sangha always be harmonious and
May the Sangha always accomplish their purpose.

May the monasteries prosper, abide and increase through the writing, reading and reciting Dharma by the ordained practitioners who live there.

May ordained practitioners who live in the monasteries always have pure morality, free from any kind of unbroken morality and always interact *harmoniously*

May the studying and propagating of the scriptural and realised Dharma of the ordained community be successful, and may the three types of activities - study, debate, practice of meditative concentration - and the different types of karma yoga in the monastery be successful and be *accomplished*.

May the bhikkhus who aspire towards the trainings [42d]

Attain isolation and, [43abc]
Upon having abandoned all distraction,
Attain a mind of pliant meditation.

May the bhikkhus¹ who aspire to practise the trainings attain a state of isolation free from physical distraction. Then, *having abandoned* mental wandering, may their mind become pliable, and may they meditate on virtue. This refers to the practice of single-pointed concentration where the single-pointed mind becomes pliable and virtuous.

May the bhikkshunis² always be successful and [43d]

May they abandon harm or strife. [44a]

May bhikkshunis always have all the necessary conditions for Dharma practice, and may they abandon criticism and *harm*. This refers to the situation where, on being able to keep pure morality, the practitioner starts to think of themselves as being superior, and begins to criticise others, or even tries to harm them in some way.

May that not come about because the progress of the practitioner is harmed when their mind is distracted by such harmful attitudes.

Praying for the practice of morality to be successful

Initially there was a dedication for the ordained community in general, then one for monks, and one the nuns. Now the dedication is for the practice of morality in general to be successful.

Similarly may all those who are ordained [44bc]
Never degenerate their morality.

The literal meaning of the Tibetan word for being *ordained* describes those who have definitely left the householder's life, meaning that having left, one does not fall back into that lifestyle. It does not refer to a state of not having a home or a place to live.

The literal translation of the actual words is somebody who has *definitely left behind*. But the meaning here is that the ordained practitioner does not fall back into the state of a householder. For example, Geshe-la says that in his case he left home to go to the monastery and never returned, so this literally applies in his case. *May all of those ordained practitioners never degenerate their samayas.*

If they have committed a breach of their morality [44d]

May they always immediately purify their negativity, [45abc]

On having attained a higher rebirth
May their ethics never degenerate.

May they never degenerate their *morality*, and when their mind has become burdened, or when there is *a breach of morality in their mind*, or some unethical thought has arisen, *may they always completely purify their negativity*.

When unethical thoughts have arisen in the mind may the ordained practitioners always exhaust their negativity, and engage in purification (which is like an exhaustion of the negativity), to purify the negative karma.

Upon having attained a happy rebirth through the practice of morality may their practice of morality and discipline in that future happy rebirth *never degenerate*.

May the sages always be praised [45d]

And always receive enough alms, [46abc]
May their continuum always be pure and
May they always be renowned in all directions.

May those of pure morality and pure learning be praised by all. May they also *receive* offerings. *May their continuum* not be affected by that reverence and respect. *May they be humble without pride and without any other afflictions and be renowned in all the directions.*

Transcribed from tape by Jenny Brooks
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
Edit 2 by Venerable Tenzin Dongak
Edited Version

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¹ Fully ordained monks

² Fully ordained female practitioners

Study Group - Bodhicharyavatara

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Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

29 November 2005

As usual please generate the motivation of bodhicitta thinking, 'I have to attain complete enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. In order to achieve that aim, I am going to listen to this profound teaching and then I am going to put it into practice as much as possible'.

We have completed praying that all those who are suffering be liberated from their sufferings.

Dedicating for the experience of happiness

May they not experience the sufferings of the lower realms and [47]

*May they without any difficulties
Attain the state of enlightenment
Through the superior (divine) body;*

Dedicating for the purpose of sentient beings

May all sentient beings repeatedly [48]
*Make offerings to the buddhas and
Through the infinite happiness of the buddhas,
May they always be endowed with happiness.*

Praying for the accomplishment of the prayers of the buddhas and bodhisattvas

May bodhisattvas always establish the purpose [49ab]
Of sentient beings in their heart.

The two-fold purpose is the temporary purpose of a higher rebirth, and the ultimate purpose of liberation and enlightenment. *May bodhisattvas always* hold the two purposes of sentient beings *at their heart*, and may they also accomplish those two purposes.

May whatever the protectors think, [49cd]
Also be established for sentient beings.

Here one dedicates that the aims of the buddhas be accomplished. The word 'protector' refers to the Buddha. Of course generally protector has different meanings, but the Protector of the three realms is the Buddha. May the aims and thoughts of the Buddha always be achieved, i.e. the Buddha wishes all sentient beings to have happiness. *May whatever* the Buddha wishes immediately *be* accomplished *for sentient beings*, such as the wish for all of them to have happiness.

Likewise, may self-liberated buddhas [50ab]
And hearers also attain happiness.

Here one dedicates that self-liberators and hearers achieve their aims. Similarly, as said before, *may the self-liberators and the hearers* achieve the *happiness* of liberation that they aim for.

2.2. Dedicating for the fulfilment of one's own potential - the achievement of one's own enlightenment¹

Dedicating for the achievement of the temporary purpose

May I also, through the kindness of Manjushri, [50cd]
Until I attain the ground of supreme joy,

In all my lifetimes I always attain [51ab]
Mindfulness and ordination.

May I in all my lifetimes always be endowed with *mindfulness* and always attain the state of having gone forth. We talked about this state of having gone forth the other day; it refers to the state of having left a household to become an ordained person. These verses show that Shantideva had direct access to Manjushri. That's why it says here, 'May I also through the kindness of Manjushri...' and so forth.

May I be splendours and [51cd]
Live, regardless of my food.

After having prayed to be able to be ordained, one prays that one will always have a healthy and strong body, regardless of whether the food one receives is good or poor. May the body always be strong, healthy and well balanced. Regardless of the kind of food I have, may my body be always look, full with a very healthy glow.

May I in all my lifetimes, [52ab]
Abide in solitude and attain perfection;

'May I in all my lifetimes' refers to all of one's lives, which are like a rosary. There are not just one or two lives, but a vast succession of lives coming one after the other like the beads of a rosary. *May I in all these lifetimes always abide in solitude.*

Then follows the prayer to be endowed with perfection, which does not relate to external perfections such as a perfect body or perfect wealth, but to perfect realisations. Since the first line is the dedication to be able to abide in solitude, the perfection that Shantideva is praying for here is the perfection of inner realisation.

Dedication to be looked after by Manjushri

Whenever I wish to study, [52cd]
Or have even small questions,

May I always be able to behold without obstructions [53ab]

The protector, Manjushri.

This is a prayer to be always looked after by Manjushri.

May I always, when I aspire to the teachings of the Buddha, *or have questions* regarding difficult points of the Buddha's teachings, *be able to* directly *behold* Manjushri.

Dedication to abide in the bodhisattva practices

May my actions, in order to accomplish [53cd]
The purpose of all sentient beings

That pervade all ten directions, [54ab]
Equal the actions of Manjushri.

¹ The headings of the previous weeks have been part of 2.1. Dedicating for the purpose of others.

May my actions always equal the actions of Manjushri, so as to accomplish the purpose of all sentient beings who pervade the space of all ten directions.

Here, it literally refers to all sentient beings who are so vast that they touch the edge of space of the ten directions. That of course is not literally possible, because space is limitless and there is not really an edge of space that can be touched by sentient beings. What he means here is that sentient beings are so vast that they pervade the space of all ten directions. May one's actions equal the enlightened actions of Manjushri, in order to accomplish the purpose of sentient beings.

This is a very nice prayer. Manjushri practiced the bodhisattva actions in order to free all sentient beings, equalling the expanse of space in the ten directions. May I be able to practice the bodhisattva actions likewise.

The prayer for the perfection of the purpose of others

*For as long as space abides, [54cd]
And for as long as sentient beings remain,*

*For that long may I also remain and [55ab]
Eliminate the sufferings of sentient beings.*

For as long as space abides means for as long as samsara abides. *For as long as migrators abide, for that long may I also abide and free migrators from their suffering.*

Here one generates very strong mental courage of wanting to abide until the end of cyclic existence in order to liberate sentient beings.

*May any suffering of migrators [55cd]
Ripen upon myself.*

This doesn't discriminate between migrators or suffering, and Shantideva meditates on taking on all the suffering of all sentient beings.

*Through the power of the transcendent bodhisattva
Sangha, [56ab]
May all sentient beings enjoy happiness.*

Dedication for the increase and spread of the Buddhadharma, the source of all happiness

May the only medicine for the suffering of migrators, [56cd]

*The source of all happiness - the Dharma,
Abide long [57ab]
With praise and high regard*

The Dharma is truly *the source* for the both the ultimate and temporary *happiness* of sentient beings. Here then, Shantideva prays for the Dharma of sentient beings to *abide* for a *long* while. Not only should it abide for a long while, but *may* it also always be held in *high regard* and may it always be *praised*. There is the scriptural as well as the realised Dharma.

As it says in the prayer: May I be able to perfectly subdue my mind by not engaging in any negativity and by perfecting virtue. This is the teaching of the Buddha.

When one prays, 'May the teachings of the Buddha abide for a long time', it is good to relate it to this verse and to one's own practice. It is not necessary to think about some Dharma over there, but rather to relate it to one's own practice. In this context it is the realised Dharma when one, for example, generates refuge with a prayer.

May that never degenerate, but abide for a long time.

The Dharma is really the source of both temporary and ultimate happiness for all sentient beings. For that reason it is very precious, and so it is very important that it abides. The higher trainings of morality, concentration and wisdom, or whatever practice one has in one's continuum, is the teaching of the Buddha. So one prays, 'May that abide for a long time'.

Prostrating to Manjushri by recalling his kindness

*I prostrate to Manjushri, [57cd]
Through whose kindness the virtuous mind arises*

The words here are quite clear - *I prostrate to Manjushri through whose kindness the virtuous mind arises.*

*And I also prostrate to the virtuous teacher, [58ab]
Through whom oneself develops.*

Here of course, the second half is general: it includes all teachers. But in the first half Shantideva specifically prostrates to Manjushri, which shows that he is a direct student of Manjushri.

I prostrate to the virtuous friends through whose kindness I develop.

Identifying the title of the chapter

*This is at the tenth chapter of dedication [58cd]
Of 'Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life'.*

That completes the tenth chapter.

*Transcribed from tape by Bernii Wright
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
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Edited Version*

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